Guns in the Ideal Society

An Essay Presented

by

Justin Lucas Sola

to

The Committee on Degrees in Social Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for a degree with honors
of Bachelor of Arts

Harvard College
March 2014

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: An Introduction to Guns in America's Social Order

> *Let him therefore consider with himself: when taking a journey, he arms himself and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors; when even in his house he locks his chests; and this when he knows there be laws and public officers, armed, to revenge all injuries shall be done him; what opinion he has of his fellow subjects, when he rides armed; of his fellow citizens, when he locks his doors; and of his children, and servants, when he locks his chests. Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions as I do by my words?* [1] - Thomas Hobbes

There are few more symbolically charged issues in the United States than gun ownership. Policy opponents often speak past one another as one declares that guns kill people, while the other believes that guns ensure freedom and safety. Using qualitative research among a sample of participants in Vermont and Massachusetts, this study aims to explore the following questions: How do armed Americans imagine their social order, and how do guns, the preeminent tool of personal violence, fit into that order? America has both a high rate of firearm ownership and high rates of crimes perpetrated with firearms. However, most American gun control measures have had inappreciable or statistically insignificant effects on public health outcomes, in part due to incomplete data sets.[2] The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is currently engaged in a multi-year project to gather health and crime data for renewed analysis, after legislation in 1996 and 2011 "effectively halted all firearm-related injury research."[3] In that context I decided that the most fruitful line of inquiry would be trying to understand how gun owners and law enforcement

[1] Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Prepared and edited for the McMaster University Archive by Rod Hay. London, 1651, 78.
[2] National Research Council. *Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review.* Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2005, 3.
[3] National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. "Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence." Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2013, 23.

officers consider violence, responsibility, and gun ownership in their social order ideals.

This thesis explores three interlinked questions about participants' ideals of social order: What do participants believe about the citizen's claim to firearms and the administration of deadly force? How do their claims interact with potentially competing claims on deadly force by centralized authority? How do participants believe society should be structured, particularly in relation to these claims on firearms and deadly force?

The goal is to create a topography of CGO and LEO social order ideals, and how these ideals relate to participants' gun ownership beliefs and behavior. To inform this topography I developed a semi-structured interview methodology and interviewed 26 participants (15 CGOs, 11 LEOs) in Vermont and Massachusetts in 2013, accruing more than a dozen hours of recorded interviews, dozens of hours of participant observation, and extensive demographic and gun ownership information. Sociological theory suggests that actions are embedded in socialized frameworks of context, belief, and practice. Thus knowledge of the social and political ideals of Americans with access to guns is relevant to the discussion of American gun ownership, policy making, gun culture, and social movements. Gun violence remains a pressing social issue, but there is a dearth of prior research on these relations and ideals. Policy-making and sociological understanding are therefore underserved, and this research is a step to address that gap.

At the beginning of my research I hypothesized that gun owners who had an ideology of self-defense and were ardent in their gun ownership interests would

have a common set of social order beliefs. I expected these gun owners, who I refer to as ideological gun owners, to advocate for: 1) deregulated access to an unrestricted variety of firearms; 2) a conception of gun owners as modern-day minutemen capable of providing protection and order where the state or community falls short; and 3) celebrating and disseminating a culture of firearms ownership and armed citizenry in America. This hypothesis was based on my prior research on CGO internet communities, which I summarize at the end of this chapter, and on sociological theorists, particularly Jennifer Carlson. I also hypothesized that LEOs would express more deference to regulation and hierarchical structures of access to violent force (police and military forces with greater access than citizens), while CGOs would show greater variance depending largely on subtype of gun ownership: sporting/hunting more amenable to regulation and hierarchy, and self-defense/constitutional prerogative more suspicious of legislation and hierarchy.

My result was mixed and suggests a multidimensional view is in order, rather than a spectrum from regulation-friendly to minuteman-aspirations for LEOs and CGOs. While the most ideologically ardent supporters of gun ownership do see firearms as a guarantor of social relevance and a ward against victimization, the vast majority of CGO participants do not fit neatly into Carlson's neo-radical privatization framework. Members of the sample express both support for government intervention to augment their welfare and support for gun ownership – a view shared by many LEO participants. This mixed result suggests that the ideology of American gun ownership is complex, does not cleanly align along an axis of

neo-liberal privatization, and is partly shared by the law enforcement officers who enforce gun regulations.

Before I proceed, I want to clarify three points: what this thesis isn't, what this thesis is, and why it's important. First, although I describe and analyze participant views on gun control, my thesis is not an evaluation of gun control regulation nor a moral critique of gun ownership. This thesis describes and analyzes participants' beliefs about guns, gun ownership, and the relationship therein to participants' ideals state and society. I do not take sides about which relationships and ideals are good.

This thesis is important because there is a dearth of prior research on these highly charged beliefs. The data I present are often conflicting – participants would contradict themselves or reconsider past questions, leading to complexity. Of course gathering knowledge, absent purpose, is data entry – not social science! This data, and my interpretations of it, are compelling because there is a gap in the literature, both descriptively and theoretically, where the social tenets of Americans with access to guns should be considered, compared, and better understood.

Sociological theory suggests that actions are embedded in socialized frameworks of context, belief, and practice. Thus knowledge of the social and political ideals of Americans with access to guns is relevant to the discussion of American gun ownership, policy making, gun culture, and social movements. Kopel, a libertarian writer and researcher, claimed that, "people's taking the law into their own hands has always been a core principle of the American...system, and the American attitude towards guns is simply one manifestation of that principle."[4] If so,

[4] David Kopel. "THE IDEOLOGY OF GUN OWNERSHIP AND GUN CONTROL IN THE UNITED STATES." Quarterly Journal of Ideology, 1995, 6.

then the modern gun concepts in this work are ideal vessels to explore while looking for glimpses of these substantive principles of America. I am sure that guns comport social meaning; my thesis is an attempt to excavate and process some of it. While my sample is not representative, a qualitative methodology allows me to draw out structures of meaning from the patterns of individuals.

Thesis Structure

In this introductory chapter I first survey the demographics of American gun ownership. I then situate myself with respect to prior qualitative research on American gun ownership and draw upon sociological theories of the place of violence in modern society. In my methodology section, I justify a qualitative approach towards my questions. Next, I describe my sampling process, interview questions, and overall progress. To conclude my methodology, I delve into the binary classifications and narratives. Finally, I explore the origins of my research questions and methodology, revisiting my prior study of a particular subgroup of gun ownership advocates who, designating themselves as 'citizen sheepdogs,' evangelize firearms as a check on state dominion and a means of social responsibility. I do so to provide a substantiated pole to compare my thesis research against, and to show how I came to my research question and methodology.

My thesis has five chapters and two appendices. The first and fifth chapters are my Introduction and Discussion. The three central chapters are substantive, including primary empirical work explored using available literature sources and analyzed according to the methodological texts discussed in the introduction. In Appendix A I include my interview guide. In Appendix B I include a complete

spreadsheet of the demographics of my interview participants and their group placement in the three ideological spectra (Access and Regulation, Locus of Responsibility, Gun Ownership and the State).

The first two substantive chapters focus on data interpretation and context – lengthy, more descriptive endeavors. The first substantive chapter analyzes the citizen gun owners that compose my sample, grouping them across my three spectra according to the binary classification and narrative analysis methods I use. The third chapter does the same with the law enforcement officer sample.

The fourth chapter briefly compares the CGO and LEO sample groups and the Vermont and Massachusetts gun culture divide. I argue that law enforcement officers and citizen gun owners significantly overlap in their interpretations of social order and gun ownership ideals. Both groups strongly emphasized safety and responsibility as the core variable when asked to describe good versus bad gun ownership. With exceptions, law enforcement officers expressed greater support for existing and some proposed forms of gun control, while citizen gun owners expressed greater suspicion of gun control beyond existing practice. Both groups expressed frustration due to the perception that gun crimes are not pursued by the criminal justice system, and anxiety about the threat of violent crime in society.[5]

In my discussion, I partly agree with Jennifer Carlson's argument that ideological gun owners effect a neo-liberal privatization of the means of violence.[6] While the most ideologically ardent supporters of gun ownership do see firearms as

[5] Violent crime and gun homicide rates have fallen since an early 1990s peak according to the FBI.
[6] Jennifer Carlson. "'I DON'T DIAL 911': American Gun Politics and the Problem of Policing." British Journal of Criminology (52), 1113–1132, 2012, 1127.

a guarantor of social relevance and a ward against victimization, the majority of participants do not fit neatly into Carlson's neo-liberal to neo-radical privatization framework. My results suggest a multidimensional view is necessary to understand gun ownership, rather than a strict and single neo-liberal to neo-radical spectrum. Several participants express support for government intervention to augment their socioeconomic status and support for gun ownership. This mixed result suggests that belief systems underlying American gun ownership are complex, do not necessarily align along an axis of neo-liberal privatization, and are partly shared by the law enforcement officers who enforce gun regulations.

Demographics

While the academic community has produced limited qualitative work on the topic, surveys have shed light on American gun ownership. The United States of America holds the largest stock of civilian firearms in the world – estimates range upwards of 300 million firearms.[7] Firearm saturation exceeds 90 guns per 100 Americans (the highest in the world), but less than 40% of households possess them, so most gun-owning households have several firearms.[8] Americans purchase between 3-6+ million firearms every year.[9] Guns are durable: firearms produced in the early 20th century remain functional.[10] Thus newly purchased firearms typically add to the stock rather than replace a commensurate number of defunct firearms.

---

[7] William J. Krouse. "How Many Guns Are in the United States? - Number." Gun Control Legislation, pp. 8-9. Washington DC: United States Congressional Research Service. November 14th, 2012.
[8] Gallup Historical Trends. "Gallup: Guns." www.gallup.com/poll/1645/Guns.aspx?version=print Accessed November 9th, 2013
[9] Richard L. Legault. Trends in American Gun Ownership. New York: LFB Publishing LLC, 2008, 3 and 6.
[10] Tom Dias. "Gun Industry Marketing of Lethality." American Bar Association: The Brief (Vol 29 No 1), 20-27, 1999.

The demographics of gun owners have held steady since the mid-20th century, [11] with wide agreement that "gun owners in the United States are predominantly male, usually middle to upper-middle class, Protestant, married, and white."[12] [13] [14] The Chicago-based National Opinion Research Center (NORC) indicates that gun owners tend towards being "middle aged" (30-65) and politically conservative, and that gun ownership is lower in urban areas and lower in the Northeastern part of the country. [15] The Northeast has lower overall gun-ownership due in part to a high level of urbanization, which does not apply to Vermont. While these differentials are important, "gun ownership is appreciable among virtually all segments of society."[16]

Using NORC data, Smith explores trends among gun carriers, a subgroup of citizen gun owners who carry a concealed firearm on their person. Those who carry a gun are three times more likely to be male than female and have an average salary of more than $50,000 per year; ethnicity does not differ significantly from the general population of gun owners.[17] All types of gun owners support laws restricting criminal access (e.g. the ability of convicted felons to legally purchase) to firearms, while ownership is negatively associated with support for most other gun controls.[18]

Exposure to crime is positively correlated to gun carrying and to suspicion of law enforcement efficacy. Smith describes gun owners' reasoning: "Those who have

[11] The Gallup poll began accruing national-sample data on gun ownership in 1960.
[12] Abigail A. Kohn. Shooters: Myths and Realities of America's Gun Cultures. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, 8.
[13] Legault 2008, 43.
[14] Gallup 2013.
[15] Tom W. Smith. "2001 National Gun Policy Survey of the National Opinion Research Center: Research Findings." December 2001, 6.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 9.
[18] Ibid., 11.

been victimized, think they will be victimized, and disagree that the police will respond quickly when needed are more likely to carry guns."[19] Finally, the general population's viewpoint on the safety of concealed carry is evenly split, as, "44% see permissive concealed gun-carrying laws as making things safer, 44% as less safe, 10% as neither safer nor less safe, and 3% are unsure."[20] Some gun owners believe that state authorities cannot assure their freedom from victimization, and view their gun ownership as a means to take up the responsibility of their own security.

Literature Review

The criminological scholarship of American gun ownership has arguably been more compelling and sophisticated than the study of legal American gun ownership. Criminological and law scholars began to seriously consider gun ownership in the 1970s, concurrent with rising homicide and drug crime rates in America's inner cities. Sociologists have not seriously studied legal gun ownership until recently.[21]

Qualitative Research

From my position, I cannot determine the legality of the gun owners in my sample group. When referencing legal American gun owners, I describe those gun owners who present their affiliation as law-abiding citizens. Bernard Harcourt, a legal scholar, has done extensive research with illegal gun owners in California. A law professor at the University of Chicago, Harcourt wrote on the semiotics of language employed by youths discussing guns at the Catalina Mountain School, a

[19] Ibid., 9.
[20] Ibid., 13.
[21] Most qualitative research has been published in the last five years. Modern research on American gun ownership began in the early 1970s with the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.

California juvenile detention center.[22] In *Language of the Gun*, Harcourt sought to critique the assumptions of policy by interview and analysis: "the Catalina interviews serve to explore, unveil, and dissect the assumptions we embrace when we espouse a particular law or policy. The interviews helped answer the fundamental question of law and public policy: "Why do we believe what we do about youths' gun carrying, and at what cost do we believe it?"[23] With detailed photographs of handguns as prompts, Harcourt found that the youths who associate death with handguns report a greater penchant for illegal carry.[24] However these clusters were from an illicit subculture and not necessarily representative broader American gun culture.

By 2014, only one peer-reviewed book had used qualitative interview techniques to explore legal gun ownership in America. That book, Abigail Kohn's *Shooters* (2004), analyzed the West Coast's Western Action Shooting community.[25] Designating her research participants as 'shooters,' Kohn found that "most of the shooters with whom I spoke attempt to differentiate themselves from those they consider 'amateurs,' people who do not take gun ownership and handling seriously." [26] Gun owners depicted their possession as a symbol and tool to assert choice and protect the individual from disempowerment: "another shooter, a heavyset man in his mid-fifties ... crossed his arms, shook his head, and stated definitively, 'Well, if he's packing, you'd better ask his permission first.' There was a murmur of agreement..."[27] The gun owners Kohn studied believed that guns affected discourse.

---

[22] Bernard E. Harcourt. *Language of the Gun.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006, 15.
[23] Ibid., xii.
[24] Ibid., 11.
[25] Kohn 2004.
[26] Ibid., 77.
[27] Ibid, field note 81.

The findings of this sole qualitative study left me to wonder about the other ways in which Americans conceptualized their guns.

In reference to Abigail Kohn's 'ethnographic description of firearm enthusiasts in the American West,' Richard Legault (a statistician) recognized, "More work of this type is needed to inform future data collection and analysis."[28] 'This type' referred to both method and subject. Researchers practicing qualitative research methods could conduct research that, "provides a window for the social world of any given group. These are the 'warrants of ethnography' that provide the main reasons why ethnographic accounts have wider relevance than their small samples might suggest."[29] While significant, Kohn's fieldwork stemmed from the late 1990s. Angela Stroud, a sociologist, interviewed 20 Texas concealed carry license holders for a 2012 article.[30] However, as the article focused on the propagation of white privilege and hegemonic masculinity structures, I used more aspects of its methodology than its content.[31]

Jennifer Carlson, a sociology professor at the University of Toronto, published several theoretical and qualitative research papers based on interviews with gun owners. Carlson conducted a recent exploration into the ideation of a 'neo-radical' segment of gun owners who "situate [their] guns in terms of not only the state's inability to protect, but also its propensity to violate; within this set of beliefs, guns are tools of self-protection against both criminal citizens and violating police."[32] This

[28] Legault 2008, 11.
[29] Kohn 2004, 5.
[30] Angela Stroud. "GOOD GUYS WITH GUNS: Hegemonic Masculinity and Concealed Handguns." Gender & Society, Vol. 26 No. 2, April 2012, 222.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Jennifer Carlson 2012, 1127.

group contrasted with the 'neo-liberal' gun owners, who were less concerned with oversteps by police than with their perceived lack of protection. These gun owners countered this inadequacy though their firearms, assuming self-policing power.[33] This thesis aims to contribute to the empirical research by exploring exactly *how* police and citizen gun owners converge and diverge according to a question set exploring ideals of social order, responsibility, and the place of guns in society.

Theory

Thomas Hobbes was one of the first political theorists to address how a state, if it gained access to violence that overwhelmed individual access, could gain legitimacy.[34] Referencing a social contract by which individuals agreed to give up wanton violence to the 'common force,' Hobbes specified that without such acquiescence to a sovereign common power, life was "nasty, brutish, and short.... The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law."[35] As the purpose of this social contract was to achieve order and security, there were immutable limitations on laws. Namely, Hobbes specified that there were "some rights which no man can be understood by any words, or other signs, to have abandoned.... A covenant not to defend myself from force, by force, is always void."[36] Western social philosophy has continued to wrestle with questions about how society should balance individual and state access to force.

[33] Ibid., 1114.
[34] Hobbes 1651.
[35] Ibid., 78-79.
[36] Ibid., 82.

Max Weber, in his 1919 lecture "Politics as Vocation," described a possible answer.[37] Weber defined the modern state (as opposed to prior iterations, such as feudalism) by its "monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force"[38] within its territory; the state was thus the "sole source of the 'right' to use violence."[39] In Weber's formulation, a modern state could lend this right to individuals and organizations, but never cede its position as the judge of rightful violence. Weber agreed with Sir William Blackstone's formulation of English common law, which held that subjects had the right "of having arms for their defense, suitable to their condition and degree, and such as are allowed by law."[40] The American law tradition was derived from this English precedent, but gradually grew distinct.

The Pennsylvania Constitution,[41] passed in 1776 as the first state constitution, incorporated a declaration of rights, including a general "right to bear arms for the defense of themselves and the state; and as standing armies in the time of peace are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be kept up ."[42] Instead of being coupled with the 'as are allowed by law' language of the British precedent, this right included an exhortation against standing armies. In effect, this constitution challenged exclusive government authority regarding arms regulation.

---

[37] Max Weber. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. Edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946, 77.
[38] Ibid, 78.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Sir William Blackstone. Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books (Volume 1). (1753) Edited by George Sharswood. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1893, 144.
[41] The Republic of Vermont's constitution, ratified in 1777, was an almost exact copy of Pennsylvania's. I reference both the Vermont and the Massachusetts state constitutions in Chapter 4.
[42] Pennsylvania Legislature. *Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776: A Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants of the Commonwealth, or State of Pennsylvania – Article XIII*. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/pa08.asp

In this context Kopel, the libertarian writer and law researcher, claimed that, "When citizens use or threaten force to stop the law-breaking, they are taking the law back from the criminals, and restoring the law to its rightful owners (under American legal ideology): themselves."[43] In this view, America became a special case of state – unlike its neighbors in the Western world, citizens could and would use force to maintain social legitimacy. In a curious twist of Hobbes and Weber, this American special case concept contended that state monopolization of force would *de-legitimize* state power. Richard Hofstadter, the American historian, summarized this point of view in 1970 (after the passage of a 1968 omnibus crime bill that included gun controls) as a popular, "notion that the people's right to bear arms is the greatest protection of their individual rights and a firm safeguard of democracy." [44] The line between the citizen and the state was muddy. Whose job was security? Whose vision of rights was accurate, let alone just?

Responding to these developments, Jonathan Simon wrote about a new neo-liberal movement (specifically, a 'constitutional moment') in a 2004 journal article, analyzing the discussion of firearms and criminality across criminological scholarship and public discourse.[45] Simon described three key viewpoints of this neo-liberal movement: mistrust of government actions and welfare agencies, 'a zero-sum game' between victims and criminals, and lethal force as a justifiable recourse for potential victims.[46]

---

[43] Kopel 1995.
[44] Richard Hofstadter. "America as a gun culture." American Heritage Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1970.
[45] Jonathan Simon. "Gun Rights and the Constitutional Significance of Violent Crime." William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal, (Vol 12, issue 2), 2004, 339.
[46] Ibid., 356.

These three positions presaged the Supreme Court's 2008 Heller decision, which affirmed a limited right to keep and use arms for personal defense. This legal context echoed aspects of Kopel's argument – that application of force under certain circumstances was not only permissible, but a core principle of a just society in America. O'Malley, a law professor, described this privatization of security as part of a general approach – neo-liberalism – of deregulation and market control of aspects of the state.[47] David Garland (a law professor) introduced 'responsibilization' to describe citizen assumption of crime control functions previously associated with the state.[48]

In 2013 Carlson introduced the theory of a Sovereign Subject: a new breed of gun owners who assumed police roles and powers through legal means. Carlson identified this as a suggestion that "sovereignty – as coercive practice rather than simply a coercive institution – has exceeded the confines of the state."[49] Thus the state was reconfigured around a new entity – the armed citizen, sovereign in an ability to dispense lethal force commensurate to that of the state,[50] but simultaneously subject to state laws. Hence a 'Sovereign Subject.' Carlson suggested that, due to the potentially contesting claims on force between a Sovereign Subject and agents of the state, that "scholars must also understand how police themselves make sense of, and respond to, laws that determine the ability of civilians to own,

[47] Patrick O'Malley. "Risk, Crime and Prudentialism Revisited." University of Sydney Law School Legal Studies Research Paper series No. 09/122 October, 2009, 2.
[48] David Garland. "The Limits of the Sovereign State: Strategies of Crime Control in Contemporary Society." British Journal of Criminology (Vol 36 No 4), 1996, 452.
[49] Jennifer Carlson. "States, subjects and sovereign power: Lessons from global gun cultures." Theoretical Criminology, November 25, 2013, doi:10.1177/1362480613508424, 11.
[50] Police carry pistols that are available to citizens – in fact, surplus police duty pistols are routinely resold on the American market after their service rotation.

carry and use firearms and how these laws, in turn, shape the work that police themselves do."[51] The theories presented thus far provided the setting to conduct comparative research between gun owners and the police in order to explore my interlinked questions on participants' social order ideals.[52]

I argue that these views are embodied by a few of the most ideological gun owner participants, but that they also shaded some of the law enforcement officers' responses. Do these gun owners link their pursuit of gun rights to other aims which conflict with state legitimacy? Carlson concluded that, in such a complex interaction of state and citizen claims on force, "scholars must also understand how police themselves make sense of, and respond to, laws that determine the ability of civilians to own, carry and use firearms and how these laws, in turn, shape the work that police themselves do."[53] This demonstrates a need for more comparative research between gun owners and the police.

Methodology

There is a gap in the sociological literature on gun ownership in the United States. But why pursue research using qualitative interview methods, given the problems of generalizability and haphazard sampling, rather than surveys and statistical analysis? I view gun ownership as a complex phenomenon that cannot be understood and addressed solely by quantitative analyses. To do so irretrievably

[51] Jennifer Carlson. [unpublished manuscript]. "Policing the Second Amendment: Unpacking Police Attitudes toward Gun Policies." University of Toronto, 2013, 20.
[52] To reprise: What do participants believe about the citizen's claim to firearms and the administration of deadly force? How do their claims interact with potentially competing claims on deadly force by centralized authority? How do participants believe society should be structured, particularly in relation to these claims on firearms and deadly force?
[53] Jennifer Carlson. [unpublished manuscript]. "Policing the Second Amendment: Unpacking Police Attitudes toward Gun Policies." University of Toronto, 2013, 20.

reduces the social connections, stances, and habits of gun ownership to atomized traits. Geertz would label such observations as thin – missing the contextual clues necessary to adequately study social phenomena.[54] A survey questionnaire, while impressive in breadth, may not offer adequate depth to the researcher trying to understand a system of group practices and beliefs.

Such an understanding requires answering 'why,' and not just 'what,' questions. Exploring gun subcultures qualitatively is one way of addressing those questions. As Randall Collins said about the study of American gun ownership, "it is not a sociological explanation of behavior to invoke the reasons given, especially on occasions of public justification and debate.... Instead we should ask, 'Why do particular people come to believe in these reasons, or rather, in what circumstances do they invoke them.... What is it that possessors of guns do?'"[55] Research must compare and analyze the reasoning and behavior of gun owners, not just catalogue them.

Collins' questions point towards sociology's disciplinary view that individual social interactions are entangled with, and contextualized by, systems behavior; institutions guide interactions, and those interactions simultaneously renew those institutions. As Pierre Bourdieu described, "objective structures tend to produce structured subjective dispositions that produce structured actions which, in turn, tend to reproduce objective structure."[56] A system is at work, and the snapshot

[54] Clifford Geertz. The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
[55] Randall Collins. Interaction Ritual Chains. Princeton Studies in Cultural Sociology. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004, 100.
[56] David Swartz. "Pierre Bourdieu: The Cultural Transmission of Social Inequality." Harvard Educational Review Vol. 47, No.4 November 1977, 548.

of a survey is limited in its ability to reveal the underlying processes of this system. Processes in this system can be approached with many different samples and qualitative techniques.

Sample Selection

In the spring of 2013, my intention for my thesis was *not* to study gun owners and law enforcement officers in Vermont and Massachusetts. I had just completed research into 'civilian sheepdogs' - gun owners who depicted themselves as modern day minute men. Such gun owners were exemplars of an anti-federal strain of CGOs, as I subsequently describe in the Civilian Sheepdog Research section. Positing a 'gun-fighting community,' I wanted to research action shooting competitions, 'tactical' firearm training organizations, and their constituent participants. However, that research was not within the scope of available summer grants. Thus I reconsidered my focus.

I was still interested in the same questions about ideals of society, firearms ownership, and social order – I just needed to shift my gaze to places and populations I had access to. As I grew up in rural Southern Vermont, I had access to several gun-owning contacts in the community who in turn introduced me to gun owners and police officers.[57] During the summer of 2013 I talked to law enforcement and gun owners in Vermont, and in the fall of 2013 I continued conducting interviews in Massachusetts. With my revised thesis plan proceeding, I secured $1,000 in funding from HCRP to complete my research.[58] Having developed contacts

[57] I did not interview any friends or acquaintances. I met every participant for the first time in the context of this research. I did contact friends and acquaintances to help find and secure the help of participants.
[58] Utilized for Zipcars and public transportation to interview Massachusetts participants.

from prior interview research in 2012[59] with gun-owning communities of Massachusetts, I was able to gain access to a set of CGOs through established connections and relationship rapport.

During the summer of 2013 I reached out to law enforcement and gun owners in Vermont, and in the fall of 2013, I continued fieldwork in Massachusetts. With my revised thesis plan proceeding, I secured $1000 in generous fall funding from HCRP to complete my research.[60] Having developed contacts (from prior interview research) [61] with gun owning communities of Massachusetts, I was able to gain access to a set of citizen gun owners whose suspicion of academia may otherwise have waylaid me. I reached out to more than 50 CGOs in both states. Though the majority declined to interview or did not respond at all, I managed to secure 15 participants, beyond my previous fall 2012 interview set, via snowballing (asking for leads to potential participants after the interview). I interviewed several members of a sporting club in Massachusetts, taking advantage of my proximity, which also allowed me to easily follow up on acquired research leads.

I was less successful recruiting among Massachusetts law enforcement officers. Though I reached out to 10 agencies, I was only able to secure the cooperation of officers in one department. Most departments that responded categorically stated: "We don't talk to the press." Vermont law enforcement was more accessible, with

[59] Under the direction of Anya Bernstein in Social Studies 98nb, Inequality and Social Mobility in America, during the fall of 2012 and Lisa Stampnitzky in Social Studies 98ns, Culture and Politics in American Society, during the spring of 2013.
[60] Utilized for zipcars and public transportation to interview Massachusetts participants, and for transcription costs.
[61] Under the direction of Anya Bernstein in Social Studies 98nb, Inequality and Social Mobility in America, during the fall of 2012 and Lisa Stampnitzky in Social Studies 98ns, Culture and Politics in American Society, during the spring of 2013.

four departments willing to speak with me. My sample of LEOs was smaller, with only 11 participants. I retained the LEOs in the sample in large part because I received guidance and research advice from sociologist Jennifer Carlson, who advocated for police as a worthwhile study subject on the topic of American gun ownership. Dr. Carlson shared two manuscripts and several bibliographic recommendations in October of 2013. Lastly I joined the Harvard shooting club in the fall of 2013. I sought to make contacts and start participant observation research. This also had the beneficial effect of allowing me to find more common ground so that I could better relate with CGO participants.

Unfortunately there was not enough time, textual space, or shared themes to incorporate this line of research into my thesis. I hope to continue my research in the future, and perhaps address the existence and nature of the citizen 'gun-fighting community' at a later point.

Without the resources to do extensive participant observation, semi-structured interviews were the best option to explore the viewpoints of law enforcement officers and citizen gun owners alike. The Vermont and Massachusetts sampling was not only practical – it also explores a fascinating boundary. Vermont and Massachusetts, while often lumped together as 'liberal' states, have nearly opposite gun control laws. *Guns and Ammo* magazine rated Vermont 2nd (not first due to its lack of explicit Stand Your Ground laws) and Massachusetts 48th (due to relatively high regulation of concealed carry licenses, magazine limits/weapon bans, and several classes of ownership permits) in their "Best States for Gun Owners 2013"

rankings.[62] During the course of this research, additional differences in gun culture emerged between these two states. Social ideals differ somewhat between my samples of Massachusetts and Vermont residents, a topic I explore in in Chapter Four.

Interview Method

I utilized a 12-question, semi-structured interview format (approved by the IRB13-0840, please see Appendix A for the interview schedule/question set) to conduct my research. I had three primary sources of guidance for my question set: Abigail Kohn's book *Shooters*, Jennifer Carlson's article manuscript (recently published) on gender and concealed carry,[63] and Angela Stroud's 2012 article on gender and concealed carry.[64] From these sources I drew questions about background, including family firearms exposure, concealed carry habits, firearms owned, early childhood experiences with firearms, gun usage, gun enthusiasm, and gun symbolism.

Upon meeting with a subject I first explained my research goal of "understanding guns in American society." Then I requested permission to record the ensuing interview. Before recording I asked my set of demographic questions, which also served the purpose of establishing rapport prior to the interview. During the interviews I asked participants to describe binary classifications, and then asked them to explain their views. For example, my first question along these lines was

---

[62] James Tarr. Laws for Firearms: Best States for Gun Owners in 2013. (Guns and Ammo Magazine Online) http://www.gunsandammo.com/2013/03/14/ga-ranks-the-best-states-for-gun-owners-in-2013/ Posted March 14th, 2013, Accessed November 5th, 2013.
[63] Jennifer Carlson [unpublished manuscript, later published by Feminist Criminology in 2014] . "The Great Equalizer? Crime, Vulnerability, and Gender in Pro-Gun Discourse." University of Toronto, provided on October 10th, 2013 via email correspondence.
[64] Stroud 2012, 222.

"Who should and should not own firearms? Why?" I discuss these questions and their results in Chapters Two and Three.

Participants commented positively on the interview process, and often provided more information after the interview. Afterwards I gave participants a card with my contact information and their identification number. I linked the number to a pseudonym in a locked ledger. Appendix B presents participants' demographic data in spreadsheet form. I then sent the audio files to a secure online transcription service after listening to ensure audio quality and transcribing a subset of my question set. The transcription service performed verbatim transcriptions, which was ideal to help capture the nuances participants' expressions. After verifying and correcting the transcriptions, I began analysis.

Analysis

My goal was to form a topography of views, agreements, and dissensions across socio-political beliefs in my dataset. To fill this topography I created spectra of beliefs, grouping the participants along these spectra. My method of analysis was to use binary frameworks and narrative analysis to group the participants.

I used the binary classification and analysis system devised by Alexander and Smith. In their view, culture is a "structure composed of symbolic sets," providing "categories for understanding the elements of social, individual, and organic life."[65] Asking questions in a binary framework, such as *"What defines a good gun owner?"* and *"What defines a bad gun owner?,"* enables a researcher to evoke aspects of participants' internal categorizations and compare them. This is for two reasons: "First, [binary

[65] Jeffrey C. Alexander and Philip Smith. "The discourse of American civil society: A new proposal for cultural studies." Theory and Society 22: 1993, 156.

classifications] are internalized, and hence provide the foundations for a strong moral imperative. Secondly, [binary classifications] constitute publicly available resources against which the actions of particular individual actors are typified and held morally accountable."[66] These classifications are binary heuristics that people use and transmit – binary 'memes', if you will. I used this method of binary questions and analysis to compare participant responses, allowing me to find and explore trends, both convergent (the rubric for good versus bad gun owners) and divergent (whether citizen gun ownership contested or complemented the state's monopoly on force).

I used Robin Wagner-Pacifici & Barry Schwartz's work as a guide while analyzing interviewee narratives. Speaking about the Vietnam Veterans' memorial, Wagner-Pacifici & Schwartz explain how to uncover a narrative: "To understand memorial making in this way is to understand it as a construction process wherein competing 'moral entrepreneurs' seek public arenas and support for their interpretations of the past. These interpretations are embodied in the memorial's symbolic structure."[67] Rather than a physical object or memorial, I looked for stories about the American gun owner in society. I scouted for parables – archetypal stories that illustrate the author's principles and how the author translates those principles into action. As such, I quote narratives and then deconstruct them along my spectra. I created three spectra to group these ideals and provide a topography of participants' social order ideals: 1) Access and Regulation, 2) Locus of Responsibility,

[66] Ibid., 196.
[67] Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz. "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past." American Journal of Sociology, 1991.

and 3) Gun Ownership and the State. Within each spectrum, I assigned participants to groups of common norms, narratives, and viewpoints on socio-political ideals.

Access and Regulation sorts participants according to their views about who should/shouldn't be able to acquire (gun access) different types of guns (gun regulation). Specifically, the Access and Regulation spectrum explores the claim to firearms, asking what types of firearms and what types of people are permissible.

Locus of Responsibility sorts participants according to their conception of responsibility for safety and welfare – did the locus lie more towards the individual, society, government, or a mixed definition? This spectrum addresses participants' ideals of how society should be structured, separate from their specific beliefs about firearms.

Gun Ownership and the State sorts participants according to their conception of how gun ownership interacts with state authority – do their responses indicate a competitive, complementary, or mixed conception of this interaction?

Civilian Sheepdog Research

Civilian sheepdogs, whom I researched in the spring of 2013, are citizen gun owners (CGOs) who seek to assume community protection and policing power via their firearms. I include an abridged version of this research because it was antecedent to my current (1) theoretical literature, (2) questions of Gun Ownership and the State, and (3) comparative qualitative methodology. Furthermore, the civilian sheepdog concept provided one extreme of how CGOs envisaged their rights and responsibilities versus those of the state. My thesis research came about as I sought

to compare this 'pole' of beliefs against actual gun owners and law enforcement officers.

I first researched this topic in the spring of 2013, using various Internet sources of data to address my questions. I utilized a methodology of binary and parable identification (see Methodology) to address three questions: What did these sheepdogs believe about the individual citizen's claim to firearms and the administration of lethal force? How did this claim interact with potentially competing claims on deadly force by centralized authority? How did they believe society should be structured in relation to these claims on firearms and deadly force? I worked with highly accessible media – open-access pages on websites, news media, blogs, YouTube, and forums. I found this data by surveying forums, YouTube clips, gun-fighting technique websites, and blogs (and include only a fraction of my research here). The inclusion criteria were:

1. Significance, which I evaluated from outside reference and traffic relevance (viewership and ranking via search engines).
2. The authors must have presented themselves as CGOs.
3. Reference to the civilian sheepdog. I used a mixture of search terms: sheepdog, citizen, civilian, gun, sheep, concealed carry, political, constitution, Grossman, and Nutnfancy.

I grouped these many primary sources into three sections for analysis. The written works of David Grossman, a military psychologist and public speaker, were my first set of sources. With the 1995 publication of *On Killing*, Grossman first popularized the sheep, sheepdog, and wolf categories.[68] He then expanded the sheepdog definition during the ensuing years. This origination and evolution in

[68] David Grossman. On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society. New York: Back Bay Books, 1995.

meaning of the sheepdog concept set the stage for a popular redefinition of the sheepdog concept in 2009.

The second set of sources included YouTube videos. Prominent among these clips were those by Nutnfancy, described as "a popular YouTube reviewer of knives, guns, and other practical and tactical equipment."[69] Nutnfancy posted a YouTube video espousing the civilian sheepdog concept in November of 2009,[70] and the rest of my video selections related or responded to this original broadcast.[71] As a concealed carry permit holder for 20 years, Nutnfancy embodied the archetypal armed citizen.[72] I selected Nutnfancy's channel because it was highly relevant to my inclusion scale criteria: High output (1,000+ videos) and viewership,[73] broadcasts addressed to citizen gun owners, political content, and propagation of the civilian sheepdog ethos.

The third set of sources included online texts such as blogs, forums, and websites.[74] I selected these texts via search engine result rankings, which related to both relevance and viewership. The online texts ranged from discussions of Nutnfancy's and Grossman's sheepdog concepts to independent manifestos about 'sheepdog'-ness.

---

[69] Urban Dictionary (by ArktikWarfare). "Nutnfancy." http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Nutnfancy Posted April 26th, 2010, Accessed March 27th, 2013.

[70] For selection purposes, I used the date of Nutnfancy's "Concept of the Sheepdog" YouTube video – November 9th, 2009 - as a cut off. All blogs, websites, and forum posts in this research were posted after this broadcast. However, all material originally created prior to 2009 was not invalid. Rather, the material need only have been referenced and discussed after November 2009.

[71] Nutnfancy. "The Sheepdog Concept." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OW8BZ7pRt28 Posted November 4th, 2009, Accessed March 25th, 2013.

[72] Nutnfancy. "The Concealed Carry Protocol." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei8OK4WdoW0 Posted Jan 7 2010, Accessed April 26th, 2013.

[73] As of April 28th, 2013, the Nutnfancy YouTube channel had over 300,000 subscribers and had accumulated over 125 million video views.

[74] Examples being www.weaponsrelated.com (a blog), www.forum.opencarry.org/ (a forum), and www.sheepdogconcept.com/ (a website).

Definition Shift

In his 1995 book *On Killing* Grossman described a categorical model for the range of people's capacity for, and inclination towards, violence: sheep, sheepdogs, and wolves. The numerous sheep were "gentle, decent, kindly creatures who are essentially incapable of true aggression," and are thus vulnerable to coercion.[75] They were potential prey for wolves, violent individuals with no qualms about coercion (i.e. psychopaths). The buffer between the wolves and the sheep were the sheepdogs, who were the "soldiers and policemen of the world... environmentally and biologically predisposed to be the ones who confront these predators."[76] In Grossman's original conception sheepdogs were people capable of meeting violence with violence, but who subordinated themselves to a command structure (military or police) and established moral code. This was a simple, straightforward narrative that coincided with the traditional sociological view that legitimate violence is controlled or approved by the government.[77] Citizens were automatically assigned to the dependent sheep designation.

However, a shift occurred in this semiotic of the sheepdog as Grossman became increasingly popular. This process began in earnest with his second book, *On Combat*, published in 2004. Grossman kept his definitions of the wolf and the sheep similar, but extended and emphasized the qualities possessed by the sheepdog, asking the reader "what if you have a capacity for violence, and a deep love for your fellow citizens... [you could be] a sheepdog, a warrior, someone who is walking the

[75] Grossman 1995, 183.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Weber 1946, 78.

hero's path. Someone who can walk into the heart of darkness, into the universal human phobia, and walk out unscathed."[78] The sheepdog took on a heroic dimension in this more expansive portrait. However, in this version, society (composed of sheep) had an aversion to the power and "capacity for violence" that sheepdogs possessed.[79]

This change related to a post-Columbine and post-9/11 world.[80] Grossman specifically cited the passengers of Flight 93 (who overpowered hijackers and brought down the plane prior to its target) as exemplars of sheepdogs confronting the wolf. Moreover Flight 93 helped discriminate between sheep and the "sheepdogs, the warriors, [who] said, 'Dear God, I wish I could have been on one of those planes. Maybe I could have made a difference.'"[81] Mindset, not just official role, was now an aspect of Grossman's conception. The responsibility of the sheepdog was to "make a conscious and moral decision every day to dedicate, equip and prepare yourself to thrive in that toxic, corrosive moment when the wolf comes knocking..."[82] The onus was on the individual to choose their allegiance to the sheepdog code, or to accept being a sheep. Grossman insisted those people legally entitled to carry a gun orient themselves towards their sheepdog status: "If you are authorized to carry a weapon, and you walk outside without it, just take a deep breath, and say this to yourself.

---

[78] David Grossman and Loren Christenson. On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace. WSG Research Publications, 2004, 2.
[79] Ibid.
[80] David Grossman and Loren Christenson. "On Sheep, Wolves, and Sheepdogs," in Warriors: On Living with Courage, Discipline and Honor, L. Christensen (ed), Paladin Press, 2004, 3.
[81] Ibid., 2.
[82] Ibid., 3.

Baa."[83] This was an address to concealed carry permit holders. Grossman's vision was no longer specific to the military and police.

Grossman's expanded conception inspired Nutnfancy, who posted his *Sheepdog Concept* video in late 2009. Weighing in at over 35 minutes long,[84] Nutnfancy's broadcast was a detailed exposition on the ideal attributes of a sheepdog. Catering to his citizen audience, Nutnfancy addressed and lauded all possible types of legal gun owners. During the introduction, Nutnfancy stated that the video was for all comers, welcoming "my civilian sheepdogs, my law-enforcement sheepdogs, my military sheepdogs.... responsible, good people of all sorts and descriptions, who can step in and save the day."[85] As an exemplar, Nutnfancy related the story of Lenny Skutnik, who risked his life to save a drowning passenger of the 1982 Air Florida crash.[86] Rather than choose a figure defined by capacity for righteous violence, a key aspect of Grossman's concept, Nutnfancy's first exemplar was a courageous rescuer. Nutnfancy's sheepdog definition encompassed individuals closely resembling 'good Samaritans'.

The good Samaritan aspect of the sheep dog was one part of Nutnfancy's vision. In a 2012 interview with Glenn Beck, Nutnfancy described the "other half" of the sheepdog concept as willingness to confront a shooter, even where prohibited: "Columbine, Virginia Tech... these people go in these free-fire zones – you know they call them gun-free zones but what they are is [sic] free-fire zones – and they just start doing their business and killing innocent people. I think a sheepdog could

[83] Ibid., 4.
[84] Most videos produced by Nutnfancy extended between 30 and 50 minutes.
[85] Nutnfancy 2009.
[86] Ibid.

step in and change that."[87] Thus, the sheepdog could assume a new level of civic authority; guided by inalienable rights, they could contextually breach laws to serve higher goals. They became exemplars of American democracy, embodying and defending freedom (though not necessarily the law).

Nutnfancy recast his equipment reviews and gun fighting gear/tips as a resource for the burgeoning sheepdog. The credo of his YouTube channel became: "Preparation. Self-reliance for my sheepdog audience – whoever they are."[88] If so equipped, the citizen could rise to the occasion like Jeanne Assam did in Colorado Springs in 2007:

> ...He [the gunman] was going to do the same thing in the church, start killing more people. Except for one thing – there was a sheepdog there that day... who saved the day... She had a civilian conceal [sic] carry license, *she had her gun on her that day*... The sheepdog is prepared for the worst – they're not paranoid, they're not vigilantes. But underlining [sic] those daily activities is a preparation, a readiness.... *and this is critical, all you sheepdogs*, she had the mindset![89]

Nutnfancy presented an operational definition. Rather than being socially instilled or biologically determined, a person adopted the sheepdog mantle at will. Rather than being a public occupation as Grossman had posited, being a sheepdog was a personal commitment unrelated to "your calling in life."[90] The sheepdog would be privately prepared for the "worst." The worst could be a plane crash, but Nutnfancy's primary interest was in firearms, knives, and their accessories. Thus Nutnfancy, while acknowledging a humanitarian aspect in the sheepdog,

---

[87] Nutnfancy, Glenn Beck. "OFFICIAL VERSION Nutnfancy on Glenn Beck TV." http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=yokMOTkCcsg#t=1208s Posted February 9th, 2012, Accessed May 5th 2013.
[88] Ibid.
[89] (Italics on stressed words) Nutnfancy 2009.
[90] Ibid.

concentrated on the vigilant and citizen, armed and empowered by via concealed carry. This was well matched to his CGO audience, who did not have access to the public credentials of military or law enforcement, nor necessarily any interest in a career in public service.

In his video *Conceal Carry Protocols*, Nutnfancy declared that all horrific shooting narratives could be stopped by a good, armed, citizen: "That guy didn't have a chance...to continue on his killing spree. Again, a gun stopped the gun – just like we've talked about."[91] Displaying his handgun to the video camera, Nutnfancy challenged his audience to consider the implications of their carry habits, asking them, "Have you thought what it means to carry your gun, on your person? It means you're willing to shoot another human being, under certain circumstances."[92] These circumstances were the perception of imminent harm, determined by the 'reasonable man concept.'[93] The purview of the sheepdog was not usually to initiate violence, but to conclude it by applying their own.

Nutnfancy's greatest divergence from Grossman's definitions was advocacy for sheepdogs as a safeguard against American tyranny. In a 2010 video, *The Minuteman Prerogative*, Nutnfancy introduced his broadcast by holding up an AK47-analog rifle and asked the audience rhetorically why many Americans find this threatening.[94] The eponymous "prerogative of a citizen, in the United States of America, [is] to arm themselves just like that [gestures towards rifle]... it's a normal course of events if

---

[91] Nutnfancy. "The Concealed Carry Protocol." 2010
[92] Ibid.
[93] A concept taken from English common law, providing an affirmative defense of violent action. This defense would apply if the jury could imagine an average person, experiencing similar circumstances, to reasonably take a similar course of action.
[94] Nutnfancy. "The Minuteman Prerogative." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZ4_V2sBsw8 Posted May 11th, 2010, accessed May 7th, 2013.

you have an understanding and grasp of the constitution."[95] Tying self-defense to inalienable rights, Nutnfancy extended his argument that the "minuteman prerogative says that your rights are god-given, and recognized by the founding fathers."[96] The argument developed into a declaration that guns, enshrined in the 2nd Amendment and part of the inalienable right to self-defense, secured society. Far from being "dangerous to society to have a gun like that," citizen-owned firearms were "a safeguard for society – a safeguard!"[97] Nutnfancy concluded by linking the minuteman prerogative and military-derived firearms to sheepdogs: "The vast majority of people with these guns are good people – they are the sheepdogs of society."[98] Nutnfancy's sheepdog definition was far more expansive than Grossman's initial and revised theories.

Grossman (1995)	Grossman (2004-2008)	Nutnfancy (2009 onwards)
- biologically/ environmentally predisposed (set role) to be able to commit violence while retaining empathy - military and police - due to membership in military or police, is armed and trained in the usage of firearms - buffer against wolves - acknowledged by society - ready to confront wolves - obeys warrior code	- biologically/ environmentally influenced, but chooses (a continuum rather than binary between sheep and sheepdog) to assume the mantle of sheepdog - legal access to firearms and skill/willingness to use them - buffer against wolves - onus on individual, not society, to certify status - enthusiastic to confront wolves - ready with equipment, training, and mindset	- Mindset is the primary factor – anyone can assume the role of a sheepdog if that are willing to assume the responsibility - access to firearms and skill/willingness to use them - buffer against wolves - buffer against violations of inalienable rights - enthusiastic to fight wolves - protects person, property, and community - onus on individual, a personal matter, to practice

[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

		- Prepared to exercise watchdog 'prerogative' over government

Table 1.1 – Sheepdog Definition Shift

Sheep-Sheepdog Binary

In the Civilian Sheepdog forum, members questioned the relationship between the gun owner and the sheep. Administrator youonlywish began a discussion on the definition of the civilian sheepdog, wondering about the two halves of Nutnfancy's sheepdog concept: humanitarianism and armed vigilance. To prompt a response, youonlywish posed a question: "Is there a difference in PRINCIPAL [sic] between giving a homeless guy a bottle of water (read: not CASH) and defending your Wife from an intruder?"[99] Member archer550 responded to the post, claiming that while aid was admirable "a sheep dog should not be defined as helping hang [sic], but a protecting hand... I do not believe it is the job of the sheep dog to babysit (i.e. feed and clothe) the ignorant masses but more to stop the bad people from infringing on the rights of the people."[100] In order to define the sheepdog, archer550 categorized citizens as either "ignorant and reliant 'sheep,'" or "informed and pro-active [sic] 'sheep dogs'"[101] Rather than being the type of kind and gentle sheep Grossman described, sheep in archer550's construction were coercive – apt to use majority rule to threaten gun owners' access to empowering weapons. The sheepdog was thus cast as a victim of liberal sheep politics.

[99] Civilian Sheepdog Forum. "What is a civilian sheepdog?" http://civiliansheepdog.proboards.com/index.cgi?board=ethics&action=display&thread=4 Posted 2010, Accessed May 9th 2013.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

Eric Raymond extended this bitter depiction in a parable-like, "explanation of how gun owners feel about their guns so simple that even a child can understand it."[102] (Eric's Gun Nut Page 2010). Raymond described a standard wolf, sheep, and sheepdog scenario, but with the sheepdogs (the police) unable to handle the frequent raids of the wolf (The Parable of the Sheep 2010).[103] Portraying teeth as firearms, Raymond describes how armed sheep refused to relinquish their weapons, willing to, "endure their fear and loathing, and even to protect their brethren if the need arose, until the day the flock learned to understand that as long as there were wolves in the night, sheep would need teeth to repel them."[104] Self-professed sheepdogs thus viewed sheep as incapable of dealing with the potentially violent aspects of society. Instead of addressing societal risks, these sheep responded with strikes against the gun owners (who would not conform to their ideology) via regulation and outcry. The sheep could legislate against those most accessible and vulnerable to their legislation – gun owners who espoused a libertarian political philosophy, practiced gun-fighting techniques, and invested in numerous military-analog firearms. The sheepdog was cast as a victim of liberal sheep politics.

Sheep	Sheepdog
- Very common - Denies criminal and social dangers - Incapable of interpersonal violence - In need of protection – dependent - Politically liberal and pro-government - Fearful of weapons and violence - Denigrates gun owners	- Rare - Aware of criminal and social dangers - Capable of interpersonal violence - Protector of community – independent - Conservative/Libertarian - Trained/Responsible in the usage of firearms - Owns firearms

[102] Erik S. Raymond. "Eric's Gun Nut Page." http://www.catb.org/esr/guns/ Posted November 13th, 2010, accessed May 2nd 2013.
[103] Erik S. Raymond. "The Parable of the Sheep." http://www.catb.org/esr/guns/sheep.html Posted October 22nd, 2010, accessed May 2nd 2013.
[104] Ibid.

- Does not own or know how to use firearms - Concerned for their own well-being	- Concerned for community's well-being

Table 1.2 – Sheep and Sheepdog Binary (as depicted by self-proclaimed post-2009 Sheepdogs)

Conclusion

These internet CGOs designated themselves as heroic sheepdogs, ensuring the sanctity of the American way of life by vigorously exercising their 2nd Amendment rights. The antagonist was a public composed of sheep, naive in their feeling of security and paternalistic in their insistence that gun owners submit to legislation and law enforcement. Gun ownership, and pointedly concealed carry, was a cross that those who "refused to be a victim" were willing to bear. In their view laws had little effect on criminals while disproportionately constraining the legal gun owners. The proper regulatory apparatus was not external government regulation, but self-directed training in gun-handling and adherence to the sheepdog ethos.[105]

While few sheepdogs are likely to witness or participate in a gunfight, their actions symbolized an autonomous approach to security. A common aphorism I encountered was: "When seconds count the police are only minutes away." There was a feedback condition at play: 1) training in gun-handling reinforced a self-perception of competence to respond to violence and crisis, 2) advocacy for their right to possess firearms elicited arguments for the civil need and efficacy of firearms in maintaining an ideal American state/society, 3) alienated from pro-gun control citizens, they drew upon the powerful sheepdog narrative (advocating competence in

[105] A common bumper sticker says 'Gun Control' with several bullet holes around a target's bullseye.

firearms handling and status as a fearless protector) while retaining their autonomy from the state's command structure.

The sheepdog community appeared to believe three key presuppositions. First, citizens should lay claim to arms and lethal force at least equal to perceived threats to the individuals and community. Second, firearms were a key tenet of America, and therefore restrictions on firearms were indicative of an ignorant populace or foreshadowed a tyrannical government. These members of the CGO community cast themselves as minutemen of the modern era, guarding against an encroaching state. Third, American society should encourage firearms ownership via deregulation and the celebration of armed citizens into the public sphere.

Along Carlson's neo-liberal to neo-radical spectrum, sheepdogs tended towards the neo-radical; they questioned not only the efficacy of, but even the need for, officers of the law. The civilian sheepdog competed with the monopoly of state agents (like police) on force by becoming a self-proclaimed agent of protection and enforcement. Regulations and regulators fit into this narrative as enablers of evil-doers, while responsible (i.e. non-illegal) gun ownership, in and of itself, acted as a deterrent and safeguard against encroachment, criminal or institutional/regulatory. This deterrent was an instrument of righteous violence, and symbolically a totem of individualism and freedom. Thus it should be no surprise there are few more symbolically charged issues than American gun ownership, in that policy opponents tend to speak past one another: where one ideologue may claim that guns kill people, the other might assert that gun ownership frees people.

After researching civilian sheepdog beliefs I began to wonder about the possibility of gathering empirical data on gun owners and police officers to compare with my online research. As described in the methodology, I interviewed LEOs and CGOs throughout Vermont and Massachusetts. I wanted to understand how Americans with access to guns envisioned the role of guns and gun owners in society. Thus my thesis research stemmed from my exploration of neo-radical civilian sheepdogs.

Chapter 2: Firearms in the Commons

> *I think one of my favorite stories was a state trooper who thought his neighbor walking the dog behind his house was a deer and shot her a couple years back....because of his position as law enforcement, he was never charged or anything. It was just 'Oops, I shot my neighbor.' You and I, if we shot our neighbor from our back porch and went 'I thought it was a deer;' I would think I'd be in a lot of trouble....I'm talking about the ones where they're cleaning the firearm and it's still loaded, I don't know how, and it goes off and it shoots their neighbor who lives in the apartment above them. That is a poor, poor gun owner.*[106] - Anders,[107] a Massachusetts courier

Responding to my question on what defines a bad gun owner, Anders showcased citizen gun owners' (CGO) complex responses filled with ideals, parables, and binaries. All 15 CGO participants uniformly stated that good gun owners were responsible while bad ones were not.

In this chapter, I analyze my interviews to provide a topography of CGO responses to my three interlinked questions on social order: What do participants believe about the individual citizens' claim to firearms and the administration of lethal force? How does this claim interact with potentially competing claims on deadly force by centralized authority? How do the participants believe society should be structured in relation to these claims on firearms and deadly force? Analysis of these viewpoints provides the empirical content to furnish an exploratory topography, and to make later comparative claims. I divided the topography into three spectra: 1) Access and Regulation, 2) Locus of Responsibility, and 3) Gun Ownership and the State.

---

[106] Personal Interview, Audio File #14 11/24/13

[107] The following participants composed the CGO sample: Galen, Fritz, Brian, Lauren, Grant, Sandra, Thomas, Jacob, Dan, Danielle, Abbie, Julie, Will, Sean, Anders. Sex indicative common names were randomly assigned to the participants.

To briefly describe, Access and Regulation was a spectrum that sorted participants according to their views about who should/shouldn't be able to acquire (gun access) which types of guns (gun regulation). Locus of Responsibility was a spectrum sorting participants according to their conception of responsibility for safety and welfare – did the locus lie more towards the individual, society, government, or a muddier definition? Gun Ownership and the State was the spectrum exploring how participants depicted the interaction between gun ownership and state – did their responses indicate a competitive, complementary, or complex portrait? I dedicate a section to the demographics of the CGO sample before delving into sections dedicated to each of these three spectra. I do this in order to introduce the participants' backgrounds, interview trends, gun-related behavior, and demographic concurrency.

Demographics

The CGO sample consisted of 15 participants interviewed in 14 sessions between September 23, 2013 and November 24, 2013.[108] The median interview length was 24:00 minutes, with an average interview length of ~27:06 minutes[109] and extremes of 12:25 and 55:03. The sample consisted of ten men and five women, of a median age of 56 at the time of interview, with a range from 30 (Anders) to 73 (Brian). All participants were white, with Thomas, a Massachusetts range officer, sub-identifying as white with Middle-Eastern heritage.

[108] Dan and Danielle, a Massachusetts married couple, requested to be interviewed together due to time constraints. To try to equalize question exposure in this circumstance, I alternated question order between the two participants. As both varied significantly in their responses to areas of the question set, I believe that this method managed to balance the participants' constraints and my desire to avoid 'spousal influence' on answers.
[109] Weighted by an initial 55 minute interview with participant #9.

Asked to describe their socioeconomic class and education level, participants responses ranged between upper-middle to working class, and high school (completed) to postgraduate education, respectively. The median response to socioeconomic class was middle class, with three responding upper-middle, six middle, two lower middle, and four working class.[110] The median education level was an associate's degree, with one participant completing postgraduate education, five attaining a bachelor's degree, six an associate's degree, one engaging in some college, and two completing high school. Three had prior service in the military (Fritz, Thomas, Will), and at the time of the interview one volunteered as an auxiliary police dispatcher (Anders). As this was a part-time engagement that did not consist of active law enforcement or payment by the state, I did not exclude Anders' information.

All the CGO participants except Thomas had exposure to firearms from their immediate family. Of the 13 who reported past or current marriage, 12 described their spouse as a gun owner and/or as having exposure to firearms via their immediate family (LE or military service in the family counted as exposure). 13 of the 15 chose a spouse/partner with immediate family exposure to or personal background in gun ownership.[111] Every participant in the CGO group reported current singular or joint

[110] The division participants made between 'lower middle' and 'working class' was idiosyncratic, and thus of limited validity. Their SEC self-perception could perhaps be better labeled as 'less than middle class' - participants were quick to label themselves above, equal to, or below a middle class line, but less sure and peer-consistent (similar occupations receiving a lower-middle or working class designation) below the middle class line. Although flawed, I believe this and subsequent non-gun demographic questions had indirect utility in establishing interviewer-interviewee dialog and encouraging the participants to be more open to questions later on in my question set.

[111] Of course, previously unexposed spouses/partners could change their (or their immediate family's) exposure during the relationship. Without engaging in a causation versus correlation argument, I suggest that such an exposure shift would only nuance, not detract, from this striking group cohesiveness data.

firearm ownership, a requisite of their inclusion in the study. All except Sandra specified owning a functional handgun (semi-automatic pistol or revolver), and all except Julie (who owned a pistol) owned two or more firearms.[112] Four participants (Fritz, Brian, Grant, Jacob) described owning all types of firearms, and seven described owning two or more categories of firearms, two specified owning multiple handguns.[113]

Of the 15 participants in the CGO sample, ten reported membership in a gun rights organization and/or sporting club, one reported only membership in a sporting club, three reported no memberships, and one reported membership in a gun control organization.[114] The most popular gun rights organizations were the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the Gun Owners Action League (GOAL – a prominent gun rights organization in Massachusetts), with eight reporting membership in both. The women in the sample constituted the least affiliated portion – 9/10 men reported some membership in a sporting club and/or gun rights organization, while only ⅖ of the women did so. Lauren reported membership in Gun

[112] Please refer to Appendix B for a more complete breakdown of demographics, including what firearms participants said they owned.
[113] I asked about shotguns, rifles, pistols, and revolvers (four categories - those who owned firearms in all four thus owned 'all types') - I did not ask about model, manufacturer, year, capacity, caliber, or mechanism of action (semi-automatic, bolt action, and pump/lever action were the only types described). I did ask the participants to specify rimfire (used solely for target practice/recreation and small game) or centerfire (the cartridge type for the largest variety of firearms; enables far greater velocity and/or mass, thus energy, to be imparted to projectiles). However, responses were inconsistent - many participants did not describe this aspect, and thus I dropped that specifier.
[114] I use the terms 'gun rights' and 'gun control' with trepidation. Pro/Anti-gun presupposes too much: 1) that membership in a gun rights organization and support of its legislative agenda is simply a matter of liking guns, or 2) membership in a gun control organization and support of its legislative agenda is simply a matter of disliking guns. Gun rights is more appropriate because the organizations in question view gun ownership as a distinct and enshrined right, and are dedicated to enacting their vision of this right (not primarily to proselytize liking guns!). These visions vary from maintaining the status quo to challenging existing legislation. They accomplish these goals via the legal, legislative, donation, lobbying, and voting tracks in additional to public activism and appeals. Gun control groups are similar in their methodology; but advocate to reform and/or enact legislation regarding access to and the regulation of firearms.

Sense Vermont – the sole gun control organization reported in the CGO sample. In a similar vein, when asked whether they considered themselves a 'firearms enthusiast,' ¾ of the women replied negatively, while the remaining 12 male and female participants replied affirmatively.

Finally, I asked participants to describe their conceal carry practices.[115] Of the 14 participants who possessed a pistol, all had the legal ability to do conceal carry – all ten of the Massachusetts residents interviewed had permits, and Vermont residents are not required to obtain licensing to conceal carry. Among these 14, two regularly carried (both Massachusetts residents, one woman), three rarely carried but had in the past (Massachusetts residents as well), two carried in the past but not currently (Vermont residents), and seven, the largest group, had not yet conceal carried at the time of the interview. Of the three who reported 'rarely' carrying, none could recall a recent instance of conceal carry, instead referring to scenarios where they might again and their identification of conceal carry as a right. Thomas, the range officer, typified this 'rarely' category when describing his understanding of the role of guns: "Do I choose to carry? Not necessarily, but I still believe I have the right to if I want."[116] Thus Thomas was not talking about his carry habit's actual occurrence, but of this habit's link to his beliefs about guns and society. I do not mean to discount these three participants' responses, but to contextualize them as symbolic continuations of past carry behavior and beliefs rather than a precise and predictable phenomenon.

[115] Legal concealed carry is the practice of carrying a concealed firearm, normally a handgun, on one's person, in public and private establishments in accordance with relevant laws (which differ vastly state to state). I will explore the divide between Massachusetts and Vermont concealed carry laws in greater detail in Chapter 4. Suffice it to say, for now, that conceal carry by Massachusetts residents requires a permit (a considerable investment of time and money), while Vermont residents need only be in legal possession the firearms they wish to conceal carry.
[116] Personal Interview, Audio File #20 9/29/13

In conclusion, the demographic data portrays a sample with levels of variation and cohesiveness well within the bounds expected from the overview of nationwide gun owner demographics presented in Chapter 1. Considering that Massachusetts is 84% white,[117] and that Vermont is more than 95%,[118] it is not surprising that the entire sample identified as white.[119] Gun ownership is more common among white Americans. Congruent with the nationwide demographics researched by the Gallup Poll and the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), the sample is middle aged, white, majority male, middle class, employed, and married.[120] [121] This demographic congruence allayed a worry that my set of participants would be unrepresentative of the total population.

Access and Regulation

This section works to interpret how CGOs think about gun control policy.[122] I try to engage participants clearly about their beliefs surrounding gun control, hoping to elicit both policy positions and insight into how they structured their arguments. I primarily use questions three and five for this purpose, asking: "3. Who should and should not own firearms? Why?" and, "5) Do you believe that access to guns should be regulated? Should guns themselves be regulated?" before requesting that

[117] The US Census Bureau. "Massachusetts QuickFacts From The US Census Bureau," http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/25000.html, Posted January 6th, 2014, Accessed February 2nd, 2014.
[118] The US Census Bureau. "Vermont QuickFacts From The US Census Bureau," http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/50000.html,Posted January 6th, 2014, Accessed February 2nd, 2014.
[119] I have interviewed and observed several black gun owners in Massachusetts, including past instances on the same research sites I used in this thesis. However, none were present and able to interview on my visits during this research.
[120] Gallup 2013.
[121] Smith 2001, page 6.
[122] I use gun 'regulation' and gun 'control' interchangeably

participants elaborate. Anticipating more negative responses to regulation than the facts bore out, I prepared follow-up questions that were not used.[123] The Access and Regulation spectrum is characterized by a bell curve, with two small poles and a central conglomeration of more subtly contrasting opinions.

The Access and Regulation spectrum consolidates into four groups, sets of participant responses that share similar substantive content and argumentation. Proceeding from positive to negative valence (to regulation) these categories were: More, Ambivalence, Suspicion, and Less.[124] The More group advocated for increased application of gun control, seeking to limit access and features of guns outside of their estimate of need. The Ambivalence category included participants who precariously balanced more modest legislative agendas against concerns about the effective and legitimacy of gun control. Members of the Suspicion category had little interest in enacting new legislation and more pressing objections to the legitimacy and effectiveness legislation, limiting their support (though not confidence) to existing federal gun control. The members of the Less group expressed displeasure with prescriptive attempts to control guns, expressing specific challenges to existing gun control. With two participants in each of the More and Less groups, five in Ambivalence, and six in Suspicion, the median response lay between Ambivalence and Suspicion towards gun regulation.

[123] Following question five, if a participant had responded that they did not believe that access to guns or gun types should be regulated, I would have requested they clarify by asking, "Why should types of guns, and access to them, be unregulated?"
[124] Participant Placements -- More: Brian, Lauren Ambivalence: Galen, Jacob, Danielle, Anders, Sandra Suspicion: Fritz, Grant, Thomas, Dan, Julie, Will Less: Abbie, Sean

More

Two participants, Brian and Lauren, expressed dissatisfaction with the status quo of gun regulation and violence and proposed new legislative avenues to address these concerns. Brian, a retired printing manager from Vermont, summarized the focus of this pole by pointing out that, "once you shoot you can't pull back the bullet, and a lot of unfortunate things happen. So, uh, it'd be nice if we didn't have a society where we had so many guns....[where] people find it so easy to use them."[125] Brian, in contrast especially with the Suspicion and Less categories, saw regulation as a viable means to render society safer. He shared similar concerns with the other citizen gun owners, particularly about crime and the perceived threat of urban men – but guns were part of the problem, not the solution, because Brian believed that, "people in urban areas carry guns as it makes them bigger. It adds 20 pounds to their build, it adds six inches to their height, it makes them a bigger guy when they have a gun."[126] In this depiction, the gun is the variable whose introduction bloodies this urban world. Homing in on a specific agenda, Brian focused on capacity and caliber limits on rifles as two personal targets for legislation. Utilizing a 'Who Needs That?' test to criticize the availability of .50 caliber rifles, he fixated on the rifle's power, stating that, "It would go right through an engine of a truck or something, you know? Who needs that? Nobody."[127] Brian sought to use regulation limit the destructive potential power of firearms and the perceived risks of urban crime.

[125] Personal Interview, Audio File #3 7/28/13
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.

Lauren served as a Vermont state representative who, in the wake of the Sandy Hook shooting, publicly advocated for gun control legislation during 2013. As a supporter and creator of legislation, Lauren had several regulatory apparatuses in mind. Sharing Brian's 'Who Needs That?' test, Lauren argued that, "I don't see any reason for civilian to need to have 50 bullets in a gun," but demurred from rendering their possession illegal: "I don't know that I would ban them but I do think that Canada got a lot of this stuff right when they regulated that..."[128] Beyond this address of the types of firearms available, Lauren introduced two other focal points for legislation. Comparing car ownership and its requisite testing, licensing, and registration to the responsibility of firearms ownership,[129] Lauren called for universal background checks and a registry of gun owners.[130] Finally, Lauren expressed a need for greater purview by courts, physicians, and mental health professionals to bar ownership if, "adjudicated a danger to themselves or others.... we do have a very high suicide rate in this state [Vermont] and I think that our loose gun laws is *[sic]* part of the problem."[131] Similar to Brian's view of guns as a variable that escalates violence and potential harm, Lauren thought that, "if you look overall at violence in this country, people who have easy access to guns...try to solve their problems with that gun or with their fists rather than using words....we've just been an abject failure in

[128] Personal Interview, Audio File #5 8/06/2013
[129] Five other CGO interviewees (Grant, Abbie, Julie, Will, Sean) used prominent car metaphors and comparisons. However, their usages were critical of regulatory efforts, generally claiming that individuals should be held responsible for their actions with firearms and with cars, rather relying upon a greater regulatory burden on car (or, rather, gun) owners for the actions of an 'irresponsible few.' Regardless, my research seems to confirm that Americans are somewhat obsessed with cars.
[130] Personal Interview, Audio File #5 8/06/2013
[131] Ibid.

teaching this to our children."[132] Although not a complete solution, Lauren proposed gun control legislation to addressing this perception of encroaching violence.

Together, Brian and Lauren viewed gun control as a desirable means to address social transgressions, whether interpersonal aggression and violence, or mental health and suicidality. They perceived that the social fabric was fraught and fraying because of these forces, and viewed guns as a dissonant force disposed to destabilize this fabric. By regulating aspects of gun ownership and type, this dissonance could be acceptably contained for these two participants.

Ambivalence

Characterized by support for gun control legislation leavened with doubts as to its effectiveness and legitimacy, gun owners in this group expressed ambivalent feelings towards gun control. Typifying this group, Galen, a physician at an addiction treatment program, described contrasting views on renewing gun control efforts:

> "I think it would be desirable if there were a way to more effectively keep people who are prone to violence from having access to firearms. In the next breath, I will say that's a dicey proposition which gets into privacy, civil liberties, confidentiality....It's hard to imagine the mechanism, though, that would make the right decisions at the right times in terms of barring access to firearms."[133]

Reluctant to cede ground to a regulatory framework that could make the 'wrong decision at the wrong time,' Galen articulated conflicting forces that lead to his contradictory views. This condition of oppositional views precluded the five participants in this category from absolute directives - instead they were obfuscated.

---

[132] Ibid.
[133] Personal Interview, Audio File #1 7/23/13

Galen expressed a desire to use gun control to bar violence-prone individuals from ownership – a view he articulated earlier in the interview by claiming it's "easy to endorse [the] exclusion of people. You know, as I said before, felons, and people who are prone to domestic violence, and people who are a danger to themselves or others."[134] The accomplishment of this goal was complicated by Galen's belief that a legislative thrust could endanger civil liberties while still being fallible in judgment. Sandra, an administrative assistant at a Vermont state trooper barracks, expressed similar competing views versus the practicalities of regulation: "there are gun owners that need to make some modifications in the way that they handle their firearms....But how would you do that? How would you police all the people?"[135] Again, a more expansive gun control solution evoked both desire and wariness. Telling the story of a Vermont relative who would (illegally) bring recent gun purchases into New York State to show his friends and family, Sandra vacillated, finally declaring that, "I don't think there's anything wrong with that, but I'm just saying that I think it's too easy in some places to buy firearms."[136] Sandra believed that firearms were too easy to acquire in Vermont, and proposed mandatory safety training and universal background checks as possible solutions. Conflicting views characterized responses among this group.

Another characteristic of the Ambivalence category was frustration regarding how current gun control laws are applied. Jacob, a Massachusetts engineer, introduced his irritation that when suspected gang members, "get to court, a lot of

[134] Ibid.
[135] Personal Interview, Audio File #9 8/14/2013
[136] Ibid.

times charges are dropped just to get some sort of prosecution. So I don't understand why people feel that we need more gun control when the laws we have now aren't being used..."[137] Jacob did not object to current gun control, though he found some of Massachusetts' laws onerous; rather, the impression of being held to standards that criminals ignored roused Jacob. Stories of inequity, particularly those that portray gun owners as subject to stricter scrutiny than police or criminals, held dramatic sway. Asked to describe a 'bad' gun owner, Anders (a Massachusetts courier quoted at the beginning of the chapter) relayed a story of a state trooper who mistook his dog-walking neighbor for a deer and shot her, and was never charged.[138] The shooting, in and of itself, was bad – but Anders' portrayal of a miscarriage of justice made the story egregious and darkly humorous. In this Ambivalence group suspicion of the integrity and regulatory competence is evident.

However, at its core, the Ambivalence category supported current federal gun control policies and most state policies. These included barring felons, perpetrators of domestic abuse, violent misdemeanors, and those adjudicated dangerous from access to guns, as well as regulating the commercial sale of firearms via Federal Firearms License. Of the five members of the Ambivalence group, four specifically mentioned support for mandatory background check during the gun ownership process, and three mentioned support for training requirements.[139] Thus the participants in the Ambivalence category maintained a curious mixture of interest in legislative avenues and aversion to an expansion in gun control regulation that would

[137] Personal Interview, Audio File #13 10/26/2013
[138] Personal Interview, Audio File #24 11/24/2013
[139] Ambivalence group members who mentioned support for background checks: Sandra, Jacob, Danielle, Anders; Mentioned support for training requirements: Sandra, Danielle, Anders

strike them as unchecked. Except for shared beliefs supporting citizen access to firearms and current federal gun control initiatives, members' beliefs were more conditional and tentative than any of the other three groups along the Access and Regulation spectrum.

Suspicion

The Suspicion category, composed of six gun owners, differed more on an increased level of government distrust than on substantive differences in gun control belief. With a similar set of concerns about gun violence, this group focused on perceived inadequacies of gun control and the government in general, demonstrated by incredulity regarding new legislation and doubt about the efficacy of existing legislation. Fritz, a licensed Vermont gunsmith, explained the contrast between his beliefs and the structure of current firearms laws, questioning the efficacy of barring felons from purchasing firearms:

> "Not that the criminals follow the rules, but that's how society on a whole is trying to handle the problem. And I really don't have a problem with that....But usually it's not the criminal getting it in the neck...you and me, who want a firearm, who haven't done nothing wrong, we have to jump through hoops to get it."[140]

Thomas, a Massachusetts range officer, raised a similar point, contrasting firearms availability to illegal and irresponsible gun owners with the laws against such possession: "Legally, you cannot purchase a handgun if you're under 21. That does not mean gangbangers don't have them....Do I feel that a person who's a law-abiding citizen, not convicted of any felony, should be restricted access to a gun? No."[141] Members of the Suspicion group evaluated the legislative balance between

[140] Personal interview, Audio File #2 7/25/13
[141] Personal Interview, Audio File #12 9/29/13

burdens on legal gun owners and government attempts at controlling gun violence as unfairly skewed. Identifying themselves as the responsible group in a lawful/responsible versus unlawful/irresponsible binary, the Suspicion group experiences this 'skewing' as an unwarranted conflation of these two groups – a trend from the sheepdog research.

This is not to say that the gun owners in this group opposed gun control on principle or demanded less – in fact, Will proposed certified training as a basic requirement of good firearms ownership.[142] Rather, these gun owners selected parts of the current gun control requirements to support common sense, while depicting the rest of legislation beyond those points as excessive. Julie, a Massachusetts post office worker, when asked to elaborate on her response that gun regulations should exist, "to a certain degree," clarified a minimum, stating that, "obviously, you're not just going to let anyone go out and buy a machine gun."[143] Similarly, Dan, a Massachusetts college technical staffer, wavered between an absolute view that, "you should have access to a firearm and that should not be impeded or infringed at all," and his caveat that this access should not apply to felons and the mentally ill.[144] Members of this category placed the right of firearms ownership as primary to the concern of regulation, a viewpoint summarized by Thomas: "I believe in the right to keep and bear arms as a right that is given [to] us as American citizens. While I believe in the right... I also don't believe everybody should."[145] Distrust (beyond that of the Ambivalence group) of how gun control would be administered was a primary

[142] Personal Interview, Audio File #22, 11/24/13
[143] Personal Interview, Audio File #21, 11/24/13
[144] Personal Interview, Audio File 14, 10/26/13
[145] Personal Interview, Audio File 12 9/29/13

concern for the Suspicion group. Expressing discomfort towards the idea of taking away firearms for spurious mental health concerns, Will, a Massachusetts insurance salesman, stated that, "some states...they want to take the license away from them. There's got to be a difference between someone who's committed to an insane asylum. Where you draw that line, I don't know."[146] In short, the Suspicion category doubted the effectiveness of gun control legislation, like the Ambivalence category, but also the *intent*. Grant, a Massachusetts college maintenance supervisor, showcased this characteristic while explaining how, "I have to get a gun permit and I have to pay for it every two years. I believe that's wrong, and I know that's just government looking for money to deter people from having weapons....Why can't I, if I'm a law-abiding citizen?"[147] The state must have overstepped its bounds in trying to control Grant's (as a law -abiding citizen) legal access to weaponry.

The Suspicion group, while remaining supportive of many aspects of current gun control, exhibited a distinct apprehension of the intentions of attempts to regulate guns and access to them. Fritz, describing his doubts about these intents, pointed out his core concern that, "The flip side is the honest people can't get a gun to defend themselves."[148] The Suspicion category viewed gun control in excess of their desires as bordering on totalitarian. Fritz saw such endeavors as undemocratic, comparing autocratic nations to American states with relatively high gun control: "...they like to control from the top down in the Southern Hemisphere, not from the bottom up....And don't get me started on Massachusetts."[149] Similar to some members

[146] Personal Interview, Audio File 22, 11/24/2013
[147] Personal Interview, Audio File 7, 8/07/13
[148] Personal Interview, Audio File 2, 7/25/13
[149] Ibid.

of the Ambivalence group, members preferred to discuss enforcement policies of current gun control rather than enact new legislation. This approach places the emphasis on ineffective government enforcement, and deflects demands for new laws, exemplified by Thomas who claimed, "we've already got a plethora of laws, both federal and state [Massachusetts]....We have to enforce the laws we have."[150] Despite little difference in concrete gun control support or opposition from the Ambivalence category, the Suspicion category characterized itself by decrying the legitimacy of state enactment and enforcement of such gun controls.

Less

Abbie and Sean objected to current gun control policies as violations of their rights and indicative of an inverted societal milieu. Abbie, a Massachusetts school teacher's assistant, criticized this milieu as one of repose in the face of state overreach, described how in the past, "The government wasn't getting their fingers all over everything....Being a hippie, an old hippie, the establishment, that was the big enemy. In the '60s and '70s it was the establishment that we revolted against....Everybody's kind of so complacent, just let[ting] it happen."[151] This complacency in regard to personal responsibility disturbed the Less group, because the participants in this group objected to regulations that (in their view) de-emphasized personal responsibility. Sean, a Massachusetts mechanic, used an extended car metaphor, stating that, "It's not societally necessary to regulate the inanimate object. It's necessary to have a better control over insane people and

[150] Personal Interview, Audio File 12 9/29/13
[151] Personal Interview, Audio File 20 11/24/13

people who will do criminal acts."[152] For the Less category, firearms regulation had to pass a stringent test of agency; any laws which would categorize and restrict firearms based on their function, rather than the person wielding them, were deemed suspect.

Abbie's statement that, "guns don't kill people. People using guns kill people....If I wanted to go out and buy an AK-47 or whatever, I should be able to do that if my intention is to use it in a safe manner..."[153] is similar to Sean's incredulity about regulating gun types, including magazine size and automatic weapons.[154] Sean believes that focusing on the gun conveys, "distorted thinking, because it's putting the onus on the device that does the damage and not the actions of the person using it."[155] Abbie expressed the view that non-violent felonies[156] should not necessarily engender a loss of the right to bear arms.[157] The character and actions of the firearm holder are central to the belief structure of the Less group; if people were responsible for their actions then firearms are blameless.

Accompanying this vision of a deregulated gun market, Sean expressed the other side of the coin, that 'good' gun ownership, "requires a good deal of common sense and knowledge. A poor gun owner is the gun owner that literally just possesses the gun."[158] In the Less category, the firearm was a necessary but

---

[152] Personal Interview, Audio File 23, 11/24/13
[153] Personal Interview, Audio File 20 11/24/13
[154] Machine guns or automatic weapons (defined by firing more than once per press of the trigger, hence *automating* the firing process) are heavily regulated in the United States, and none have been legally manufactured for civilian ownership since the passage of the 1986 Firearms Owners Protection Act.
[155] Personal Interview, Audio File 23, 11/24/13
[156] To briefly address this information: All felonies automatically rescind the right to bear arms. At the federal and state level, panels exist (with differing criteria) that review applications to renew it.
[157] Personal Interview, Audio File 20 11/24/13
[158] Personal Interview, Audio File 23, 11/24/13

insufficient component for both ideal gun ownership[159] and negligent or criminal usage; regardless of the firearm, as Abbie commented, "I think somebody who is cavalier,"[160] would be a bad gun owner. It is important to note that, despite the wide gulf in legislative gun control beliefs between the More and Less groups, both emphasized the importance of gun owner's character and behavior. The divergence between More and Less in this case lay in proposed solutions to the bad gun owner. The Less group focused on ownership characteristics to the exclusion of most other regulatory or preemptive controls.

Underlying this desire for fewer gun controls were two beliefs – a fundamental right to self-defense and a conception of state failure. Both Abbie and Sean expressed the self-defense function as primary. Abbie emphasized how conceal carry guaranteed her, "peace of mind when I go to bed at night. I have peace of mind when I got out...it makes me feel safer."[161] Sean addressed this right as precondition of society, as a way to escape a Hobbesian past where, "...the guy with the biggest stick won. That's where the basic right of self-defense comes from....That's a right that should not be legislated, should not be regulated."[162] To legislate or regulate would be to threaten this bulwark of violent equity – the idea that a widespread ability to mete out and retaliate against violence preserves equity. In this framework, the best way to reduce violence is increased access to arms – the opposite of most gun controls.

---

[159] Abbie and Sean both emphasized training, education, firearms safety, a state of sobriety, and other metrics of their vision of good gun ownership
[160] Personal Interview, Audio File 20 11/24/13
[161] Ibid.
[162] Personal Interview, Audio File 23, 11/24/13

Mentioning the satirical 1972 Archie Bunker skit[163] describing arming airplane passengers as the ideal solution to potential hijackings, Sean explained that, "you've got to think about it in those terms. You have a lot less criminal activity in areas that people know that you're likely to encounter a gun if you break into somebody's home."[164] Abbie was not as sure, but similarly wanted broader access to firearms, stating that, "I think guns have gotten a very bad name....I believe that actually schools should have the right to protect themselves and be armed."[165] If guns increase safety and act as a deterrent to violent behavior, as the Less category believe, then the net benefit of their presence would dictate gun control deregulation. Sean, the more vocal member of the Less group, explained that a root cause of this desire for deregulation was a perception of law enforcement as ineffectual: "One of the sayings that we use is, "When seconds count the police are just minutes away."'[166] The 'we' included CGOs who view their ownership as a necessary precaution due perceived inadequacy in the function of the state.

In summary, the Less category advocated for fewer gun control measures due to two beliefs: 1) that gun ownership functions as a net benefit to the safety and security of society, and 2) that self-defense is basic right that is threatened by attempts to legislate firearms types. These views correspond to an increased emphasis on personal responsibility, distrust of state power, and a view of law

[163] greatonyak "Archie Bunker on Gun Control.", http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLjNJI54GMM Posted November 6th, 2006, Accessed 2/10/13.
[164] Personal Interview, Audio File 23, 11/24/13
[165] Personal Interview, Audio File 20 11/24/13
[166] Personal Interview, Audio File 23, 11/24/13

enforcement as ineffective at ensuring personal safety. I will explore some of these question of roles and responsibilities in the next spectrum.

Category	More	Ambivalence	Suspicion	Less
Participants	Brian, Lauren	Galen, Anders, Sandra, Jacob, Danielle	Fritz, Grant, Thomas, Dan, Julie, Will	Abbie, Sean
Gun Controls Supported	Universal background checks, increased more access to mental illness exclusions, national registry, restrictions on magazine capacity and semi-automatic function	Universal background checks, more access to mental health exclusions, greater prosecution of gun crimes	Current regime: some background checks, perhaps greater mental health exclusions, greater prosecution, but general suspicion of efficacy and intention of gun control legislation	Insanity as sole exclusion, greater prosecution of all violent crimes
Gun Rights Supported	Basic right to firearms for citizens, subject to regulatory contexts	Strong right to citizen firearms ownership (excluding automatic weapons), prevailing over many regulatory concerns	Stronger right to citizen firearms ownership, prevailing over most regulatory concerns	Strongest right to citizen firearms, prevailing over nearly any concern - "shall not be infringed" emphasis
Rubrics proposed	Sporting utility – 'Who Needs That?' test. Public welfare strongly considered when evaluating gun rights.	Pro and con contrasting of various gun control policies against a weighted freedom to own firearms	Guns seen as significant benefit, while intentions of regulators and the government itself are opaque if not deleterious	Gun ownership, as a human right, ought to triumph over alleged benefits of gun controls, character of the firearm owner the only important aspect.

Table 2.1 Summary of CGO Sample in the Access and Regulation Spectrum

Locus of Responsibility

This section addresses how participants defined the ideal borders of personal, social, and government responsibility. In the Locus of Responsibility spectrum, I primarily refer to questions four and six through eight of my 12 question set: "4) Could you briefly describe what defines a good gun owner? What defines a bad one?"; "6) Do you advocate a particular change in American gun ownership? If so, what?"; "7) Could you briefly describe what defines a good society? What defines a bad one?"; and "8) Do you advocate a particular change in American society? If so, what?" The results were considerably muddier than a trajectory between individualism and collectivism.[167] Rather, I recognized three discernible groups in the Locus of Responsibility spectrum: Personal Responsibility, Mixed, and Socioeconomic.[168] The Personal Responsibility group included participants who found fault in society and government, and believed that the solution would be to emphasize the upstanding behavior of the individual as the most important component of society. The Mixed group did not clearly specify a preference for either social change or championing the individual; the unifying factor was a balance of responsibility coupled with dismay at personal and political corruption. The Socioeconomic group found inequality in society at their most pressing concern, particularly emphasizing welfare of the disempowered as metric of society and suggesting economic policies to address their concerns.

---

[167] Although the term is oft maligned in the current political discourse (such as by organizations associated with the modern conservative movement, like gun rights publications), I do not mean socialism or collectivism as insults.

[168] Personal Responsibility Emphasis - Sandra, Jacob, Danielle, Julie, Sean; Mixed Emphasis - Galen, Fritz, Grant, Thomas, Dan, Will; Socioeconomic Emphasis - Brian, Lauren, Abbie, Anders

However, there was a common factor between all three groups. Every participant, when prompted to describe "what defines a good gun owner," answered nearly identically. Their common response was that good gun ownership directly equated to responsible ownership. Julie, a post office employee from Massachusetts, elaborated on this simple relation, further specifying that a good gun owner was "someone who knows how to operate it [the gun], manipulate it, and keep it in safe parameters,[169] including all the people surrounding that person."[170] In other words, being a good gun owner was a behavioral definition – if the individual in question was behaving responsibly, they were good. On the other hand, the participants united in identifying bad gun ownership with irresponsibility. Grant, a college maintenance supervisor from Massachusetts, specified that such a person "doesn't respect the weapon and doesn't know the capability of what it can do and harm people."[171] With minor variation, each participant related a similar dichotomy. Some specified that firearms training or locking up guns not currently in use were additional hallmarks of good gun ownership, in keeping with their view as to what constituted responsible ownership practices. Belying the wide range of beliefs participants exhibited on society, these gun owners were unified on the constituent practices of good and bad gun ownership.

---

[169] Several other participants mentioned rules for safe firearms handling, generally according to Jeff Cooper's popular formulation of the four rules of gun safety: 1) All guns are always loaded, 2) Never let the muzzle cover anything you are not willing to destroy, 3) Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target, 4) Be sure of your target and what is beyond it. Gregory Boyce Morrison and Jeff Cooper. The Modern Technique of the Pistol. Paulden, Arizona, USA: Gunsite Press, 1991.
[170] Personal Interview, Audio File 21 11/24/13
[171] Personal Interview, Audio File 7 8/06/2013

Personal Responsibility

The five participants in the Personal Responsibility group saw the struggle of personal achievement and failure as the core measure of a society's success. They believed individuals should be the primary agents of their welfare. A good society would be composed of individuals exhibiting the correct behaviors; thus, society's role would be useful to the extent that it could encourage these behaviors while simultaneously maximizing the freedom of its citizens. Sandra, an administrative worker at a Vermont state trooper barracks, explained that she could "define a good society very simply.... one of the sergeants down the hall is the one who taught me that. It's like if everybody just did the right thing, we would have no problems."[172] Sandra was disillusioned because "we're lacking in our society, of encouraging people to do the right thing.... I think there's a lot of personal agendas that interfere with people being good citizens."[173] Taking this logic to the next step, Jacob, a Massachusetts engineer, answered that a bad society is composed of "people who don't take responsibility for their actions, people who are not willing to work hard and do what's necessary to get ahead and be successful in life, people who want to kind of blame others for their circumstances as opposed to taking personal responsibility."[174] In this feedback relationship, society was a means of instilling the pro-social values and behaviors that lead to an aggregate benefit to society.

Julie, a post office worker, explained that in her eyes, a "good society would be the people working together to create a better future for our children and our Earth."

[172] Personal Interview, Audio File 9 8/14/13
[173] Ibid.
[174] Personal Interview, Audio File 13 10/26/13

[175] What exactly composed this better future is unclear. Danielle, a Massachusetts homemaker, expressed her frustration that "you know, it's not in style to be a heterosexual. It's not in style to be a Christian.... it's not in style to be white. It's like, come on, you know, we are who we are, too. Everybody should be equal, and that's going down the tubes. That's what I would like to change."[176] While no other member of the Personal Responsibility group shared these specific sentiments, all placed far greater value on influencing the direction of society than on hopes to pursue change through political means.[177] The individual was responsible for their own welfare, and this welfare aggregated to the general social good. Thus, for this group, society's role was to instill those traditional values and means of self-determination that would encourage their vision of the "responsibilized" individual.

However, legislation or government was not necessarily the correct path for this vision. Jacob, a Massachusetts engineer, clarified his emphasis on personal responsibility ("ethics, morals, hard-working people") by stating that "I'm definitely not a person who believes in 'Big Government' trying to legislate morality in society."[178] For the Personal Responsibility group, the state was a bureaucratic entity negotiating the space between the citizens and their society; Jacob remarked that "I guess it's out of control that... it's not doing what it's supposed to be doing, which is serving citizens of the country."[179] As such, impressions of government size were negatively related to impressions of its effectiveness and legitimacy. Sean, a

---

[175] Personal Interview, Audio File 21 11/24/13
[176] Personal Interview, Audio File 14, 10/26/13
[177] This is not to say that this group was apolitical. Rather, their proposed avenues emphasized deregulation and government downsizing coupled with a community-centric revitalization towards their specific value configurations
[178] Personal Interview, Audio File 13 10/26/13
[179] Ibid.

mechanic from Massachusetts, elaborated on his claim that the government violates privacy by recalling he "always used to say the only thing you can do that isn't regulated is you could pee....But don't flush the toilet, because you'll need a permit for that."[180] For these participants, government was a necessary, but objectionable, institution.

The state could also interfere with linkage between individual values and social welfare (as Danielle protested). Thus government is useful to the extent that it can control anarchy and support the values espoused by the Personal Responsibility group. In that respect society and government do have responsibility for the safety of constituent citizens. Julie, a post office employee, identified a bad society as one without the rule of law, defined by anarchy and chaos.[181] However, the Personal Responsibility participants did not think that the government or government agents had exclusive purview for enforcing the rule of law.

The rule of law was a common note in the CGO interviews, but two members (Julie and Sean) of the Personal Responsibility group directly stated that citizens with guns had deterrent power against anarchy or chaos. Julie, the post office worker, answered simply that guns were "preventative measures. [SOLA]: Against what? [Julie]: Against the chaos."[182] Sean, a Massachusetts mechanic, explained that in his view responsibility for safety was not limited to law enforcement: "You require the element of policing that maintains order on the people that are on the edge of going one way or the other... there's some deterrence of having police. There's [also] a

[180] Personal Interview, Audio File 23 11/24/13
[181] Personal interview, Audio File 21, 11/24/13
[182] Personal interview, Audio File 21, 11/24/13

deterrence of a criminal going into a neighborhood where he knows that everybody's armed. That deterrence disappears when he goes into a gun-free zone."[183] The guns functioned as a tool of personal defense and as a tool to make society safe. Publicly stating that an area was gun-free to assure safety, even when backed by law enforcement, was considered both foolish and irresponsible.

The Personal Responsibility group advocated an essentialist concept of society – where success is a product of the moral, pecuniary, and familial facets of individuals. The ability of citizens to achieve safety and welfare on their own terms determined the success of society. Thus the Personal Responsibility group wanted to avoid government intrusion into their ideal forms of community, and embraced the notion that "an armed society is a polite society."[184]

Mixed

Demonstrating support for both welfare programs and personal responsibility, the Mixed group, with six members, achieved a relative middle ground in assigning responsibility. Participants in the Mixed group were more willing to consider multiple different points of view on the structure and composition of a good society. All of the participants in the Mixed group advocated for a social safety net, which Dan, a college technical staffer, rendered as a way to enable a good society to be "self sufficient ... you take care of people that cannot take care of themselves."[185] Fritz, a Vermont gunsmith, thought of several factors of a good society, maintaining that

[183] Personal Interview, Audio File 23 11/24/13
[184] Robert Heinlein. Beyond This Horizon. Baen Books: Riverdale, New York, 2002. Although never mentioned during the CGO interviews, this quote is extremely common and familiar to the gun owning community. Heinlein himself was an advocate of citizen gun ownership, a recurring theme throughout his works along with libertarianism, revolution, and social experimentation (perhaps the best encapsulation of all four at work is in his 1966 book *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*).
[185] Personal Interview, Audio File 14 10/26/13

"Low crime rates help. Personal responsibility helps. Having opportunities for upward movement helps. There are a lot of countries that have what I would call a good society. It doesn't mean they all have the same social mores that we have."[186] Fritz's exploration presented multiple approaches to a good society without a clear hierarchy – even of social mores. This contrasted strongly with the Personal Responsibility group's emphasis on changing society to suit their values. However, the groups did have common cause – both placed a priority on individual responsibility.[187]

Yet personal responsibility was no panacea for the participants in the Mixed group; responsibility was part of a larger framework of freedoms to and freedoms from. Participants wanted aspects of both theories of freedom – negative liberties to avoid government intrusion (advocated by Personal Responsibility group) with positive conditions to help them achieve their aims.[188] Social supports for individuals and negative liberties were not considered adequate on their own. Will, a Massachusetts insurance salesman, concisely summarized a good society as "a free society."[189] This freedom was not laissez faire – Will immediately followed that in a free society "I think everybody's got a shot at living where they want. I think everybody should have opportunity for housing and medical care, and a job."[190] Responsibility, like freedom, was then only possible through a combination of the individual work and the societal framework.

---

[186] Personal Interview, Audio File 2 7/28/2013
[187] All five expressed personal responsibility as a key point. Fritz and Thomas talked extensively about their desire to have more people 'get a job' or get off the 'dole,' respectively.
[188] Isaiah Berlin. "Two Concepts of Liberty." (1958) In Isaiah Berlin. Four Essays on Liberty. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.
[189] Personal Interview, Audio File 22 11/24/13
[190] Ibid.

However, balancing these social supports against freedoms is difficult when people disagree about which freedoms and supports matter. Galen, a physician in addiction medicine, grappled with this question, advocating dialogue but lamenting that "we're collectively wrapped up in ideologies and conflicts of interest and agendas that don't necessarily support that kind of mutual respect and symbiosis."[191] The members of the Mixed group were amenable to government programs to negotiate this balance of interests and provide a safety net to guarantee access to individual freedoms. However, four of the participants also expressed considerable distrust and disillusionment with the function and nature of American government. Asked about whether corruption or inequality brought him greater discomfort, Will, an insurance salesman, chose corruption "because I don't know about inequality... I can't be an engineer. I suck at math, so there's no use trying to get me that job."[192]

Accepting socioeconomic constraints as inevitable, Will focused on political malfeasance as "probably the worst, because the government controls everything to the benefit of a few."[193] Galen, a physician, identified "congressional gridlock" as the trend representative of his disillusionment in politics and government.[194] Thomas, a Massachusetts range officer, concurred, expressing his belief that neither Congress nor the state legislature "represent the people."[195] Expressing his relief at living in a rural area, Grant identified urban centers as unscrupulous due to the fact that there's "more people or there's more opportunity to be corrupt. I don't know, but I choose to

[191] Personal Interview, Audio File 1 7/23/13
[192] Personal Interview, Audio File 22 11/24/13
[193] Ibid.
[194] Personal Interview, Audio File 1 7/23/13
[195] Personal Interview, Audio File 12 9/29/13

live here because of less worries."[196] In summary, while the primary responsibility for welfare and safety is still incumbent upon the individual, it is conditionally so. Society and government are balanced to address the inequities of life so as to provide positive freedoms for the pursuit. However, apart from corruption, the focus of the Mixed group is not on socioeconomic inequity as much as assuaging the vagaries of age, health, and sanity.

Socioeconomic

The four civilian gun owners of the Socioeconomic group showed the greatest support for specific government programs to address job opportunities and economic inequity. This support was self-consciously displayed as keeping with the tradition of American society. Anders, a 30-year-old courier from Massachusetts, made clear that "everyone should be not equal like communists, but a little more leveled... in the '50s, the middle class was huge and the spread was less. And you look at even the '50s crime rate, I think, was lower...I don't think people lived in fear as much as they do [now]."[197] By asserting allegiance to an era commonly recognized as the economic golden age for America, particularly for white individuals living in suburban areas,[198] Anders claimed a heritage that could enable him to reach for the middle class himself. Abbie, a teaching assistant 30 years senior to Anders, recalled her graduation from high school in the early 1970s as a time when "there were jobs all over the place"[199] – contrasting this abundance with the depressed economy and

[196] Personal Interview, Audio File 7 8/07/13
[197] Personal Interview, Audio File 24 11/24/13
[198] Lisa McGirr. Suburban Warriors. Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2001. Pages 25-29. McGirr examined post-WWII Orange County as a microcosm of a conservative movement that gained cohesiveness and clout with the arrival of the Cold War military-industrial(-congressional) complex.
[199] Personal Interview, Audio File 20 11/24/13

lack of advantageous employment at the time of interview. Anders dismissed the American Dream and explored the socioeconomic roots of crime, explaining that "if I steal this gun and I go and rob someone, now look at that, I get money. And you know what I mean? You can't achieve the American Dream anymore because that gap is just so wide.... I don't know. I've been busting ass for years and I can't move."[200] Echoing the logic utilized by William Julius Wilson to explore the chronological link between the labor market, economy, culture, job skills, and crime,[201] Anders' connects his inability to secure a middle class lifestyle to the US labor market shift away from manufacturing jobs.

Brian, a retired Vermont printing manager, suggested "that it would be really nice to share a little bit of what we do, of what we have, the wealth that we have, to pay....in this country for infrastructure, on and on."[202] Lauren, a Vermont representative who supported gun control legislation, expressed her dismay about the influence of money and the military-industrial complex on the political system, declaring that "I'd much rather see people be working toward peace and I'd rather see people using garden tools than guns..."[203] Instead, participants advocated allocating resources to create a society that is more "peaceful and that is compassionate... you can measure those things by how well we treat our kids and our elders."[204] Anders proposed importation laws requiring US-sourced parts and final assembly for some consumer goods.[205] Within the Socioeconomic group, aims varied between two

[200] Personal Interview, Audio File 24 11/24/13
[201] William Julius Wilson. "When Work Disappears: New Implications for Race and Urban Poverty in the Global Economy." London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, C/17, November 1998.
[202] Personal Interview, Audio File 3 7/28/13
[203] Personal Interview, Audio File 5 8/06/14
[204] Ibid.
[205] Personal Interview, Audio File 24 11/24/13

extremes of economic wealth policy (Anders) and opposition to defense industry/corporate/political collusion (Lauren). Although Lauren differed from Anders in some viewpoints, both were disturbed by crime levels in their community and sought to address those concerns through the political policy process.

Together, the four participants of the Socioeconomic group found social and government support lacking in comparison to their ideals. Rather than seek a community solution or complex balance of personal versus social responsibility, they wished to effect change via the government to address their social and economic concerns. Viewing themselves as responsible members of society, they saw no need to attach a "personal responsibility as well" asterisk to these plans for change. While disillusioned with the political system, the participants viewed malfeasance as a repairable, rather than permanent, trait of that system.

Category	Personal Responsibility	Mixed	Socioeconomic
Participants	Sandra, Jacob, Danielle, Julie, Sean	Galen, Fritz, Grant, Thomas, Dan, Will	Brian, Lauren, Abbie, Anders
Paramount Concerns of Responsibility	Emphasizing the role of the responsible individual as opposed to government assistance or non-traditional behavior	Allowing and encouraging individuals to make the best of their circumstances and to cooperate for the greater social good	Reconfiguring the class structure of American society to enable higher standard of living, increased middle class, and lower unemployment
Ideal Arrangement of Responsibility	Primarily individual, with the community responsible for incentivizing traditional, productive behavior	Primarily individual, but contingent upon society and government ensuring basic level of equity	Government and society provide greater opportunities for the responsible to partake in
Rubrics Proposed	Binary reduction: Society would be better if everyone did what was right	Society would be better if people were less antagonistic and more socially responsible	Individual responsibility contingent upon available opportunities for self-improvement

Table 2.2 Summary of CGO Sample in the Locus of Responsibility Spectrum

Gun Ownership and the State

The final spectrum of this chapter explores the relationship participants experience between Gun Ownership and the State (specifically, the American state). To address this topic, I primarily refer to questions 8, 9, and 11: "8) Do you advocate a particular change in American society? If so, what? 9) What should the role of guns be in society? What about the role of gun owners? 11) Should the American government have a monopoly on force, whether at the state/federal level or

military/police level?"[206] The Gun Ownership and the State focus, applied to the CGO participant interviews, yielded three categories of relationships: Subordinate, Hierarchical, and Deterrent.[207]

The three participants assigned to the Subordinate group portrayed their gun ownership as functional and devoid of symbolic interaction with an American state, which should have clear precedence and authority over the public commons. The eight participants in the Hierarchical group exhibited a larger range of beliefs about the interaction of their guns and the government; they saw their ownership as a symbolically significant aspect of American state and an independent aid to its function. The four in the Deterrent group identified gun ownership as *the* essential check on tyranny, referencing the constitution and history to support a view that gun ownership is a viable and necessary recourse in the face of a renegade state.

Subordinate

The three members of the subordinate category (Lauren, Brian, Sandra) proposed a distinct relationship between Gun Ownership and the State. Lauren, a gun control advocating Vermont legislator, expressed these distinct realms by stating that when conceal carrying a firearm, "accidental discharge is probably much more likely than shooting someone...I mean, those are just really rare circumstances unless you're in law enforcement....I don't see why civilians need to be carrying weapons

[206] I worded question 11 somewhat awkwardly to give myself an opportunity to tailor my last substantive question. I did so to respond to the flow of the interview (Will the interview participant accept a more specific, multi-pronged question? Or would they respond better if I stopped after the first clause?) and prior responses (did the participant already reveal a related topic/). Regardless, I did not usually read the question verbatim.

[207] Subordinate - Brian, Lauren, Sandra Hierarchical – Galen, Thomas, Jacob, Dan, Danielle, Abbie, Julie, Anders Deterrent - Fritz, Grant, Will, Sean

around when they are conducting civilian business...it's not just a free-for-all".[208] The realms of the citizen gun owner and the state should not compete as the state has control over the commons, and the citizen retained right to bear arms within their homes. Bearing arms outside the home would be a violation of the delineation between citizen and law enforcement agent. In this view, because the citizen is not subject to the training, regulatory apparatus, and duties of law enforcement, their public armament violates the social contract. Brian, a retired printing manager, took the question about a monopoly of force as a given in the international world, and affirmed his support for a US government monopoly on force as a realpolitik decision, "I'd rather be the guy who is the most powerful, I guess, and wield it correctly. Use that power for good means rather than go starting wars, or something."[209] Sandra, a worker at a Vermont state trooper barracks, objected to the idea of a federally overseen local police force, but supported a 'best balance' approach to balance state and federal authority.[210] Although Brian and Lauren may have disagreed on the proper power of the American state on the international stage,[211] all three participants in the Subordinate group agreed with the centralization of force in the hands of the American state.

Brian and Lauren recalled competitive and negative perceptions about the basis of social interaction. Asked directly whether the American government *should* have a monopoly on force, Lauren brought up a Hobbesian social view that, "in an

[208] Personal Interview, Audio File 5 8/06/13
[209] Personal Interview, Audio File 3 7/28/13
[210] Personal Interview, Audio File 9 8/14/2013
[211] Lauren commented numerous times on her distinct displeasure with the quantity of resources dedicated to military appropriations and endeavors.

ideal world we would be able to solve our problems without force. But I don't think we can really change human nature, and human nature is about being on top....[it's] going to make sure that somebody is going to try to have a monopoly on force."[212] In such a circumstance, granting such a monopoly to the state ensures order and continuity unachievable in an anarchic social state. Lauren's assertion that 'we have an appetitive nature' would render such an authority-less situation violent and unpredictable.[213] Rather than seek a contentious relationship with a powerful state monopoly on force, the correct course of action was to work within the system. Brian concurred, avowing that he would, "sooner be the strongest rather than have some other country...be the strongest."[214] Lauren concluded that, "people who think that they are going to take their AK-47 and protect themselves from the federal government...would be drone dust before you'd get off your first shots. I understand the government is too big....but I'm not so delusional to think that if I have an arsenal...[it's] going to protect me or my family."[215] While acknowledging concerns about the capabilities and intentions of an all-powerful state, Lauren explicitly rebuked the viability and sanity of gun ownership as a check or balance. Overall, the smaller subordinate group expresses deference to the established state structure, at least regarding their view of the role of citizen owned firearms in the American state. For them, the state has clear authority over firearms and the public according to Weber's concept of state controlled 'legitimate force.'[216] These members were

[212] Personal Interview, Audio File 5 8/06/13
[213] Ibid.
[214] Personal Interview, Audio File 3 7/28/13
[215] Ibid.
[216] Weber 1946, 78.

non-confrontational, avoiding the more complex and contradictory views of the Hierarchical category.

Hierarchical

For the eight members of the Hierarchical category, guns primarily fulfilled the role of self-defense in a manner complementary to governmental law enforcement. This complementarity did not engender anarchy in the view of this group,[217] as the state maintained a priority in capabilities and legitimacy. However, guns also offered a hypothetical (and primarily symbolic) means of general resistance. Rather than an explicit proposition of armed uprising (mentioned in the deterrent category), in the Hierarchical group the potential for resistance mixed with a view that the American government should not have absolute control, coercive or not, over its citizenry. Galen, a Vermont physician, shaded these contours between criminality and bad governance, explaining that gun ownership, "can be a deterrent to crime and violence. Whether it's a deterrent to, you know, uppity government or a repressive government is at least a theoretical question....I sometimes pose the question, 'Well, would you want to live in a society where only the bad guys...and law enforcement have firearms?'"[218] Rather than view himself as corporate with the government, Galen saw law-abiding citizens as a distinct category vulnerable to criminals and to the machinations (in this case theoretical) of the state. Anders, a Massachusetts courier, concurred, doubting the practicality of resistance but apprehensively noting that Hitler, "tried to confiscate all of the guns from the civilian

[217] Weber, in his 1919 lecture "Politics as Vocation," described a society where force was not held by government institutions as no true state, and in fact inclined to the state's opposite, anarchy.
[218] Personal Interview, Audio file #1 7/23/2013

population. So do I think my possession of a gun is going to keep my government from raiding my house? No, but...I don't think they have that right to keep it from me."[219] In Anders' view, the government was not necessarily a threat nor were guns necessarily an effective hindrance to state malfeasance. Nevertheless, the co-presence of government authority *and* a quorum[220] of citizen owned firearms was a positive sign, contrasting with the potentially fascist portent of excess regulation and confiscation.

Thomas, an ex-military Massachusetts range officer, expounded on this positive co-presence. Referencing the historical roots of gun ownership, he stated that everyone was a member of the militia and therefore 'a citizen soldier,' and that, "the citizen soldier has always been in the forefront of our American culture and our American defense."[221] Speaking in the present and future, Dan (the college technical staffer) explained that, "if there was a call for a militia, the gun owners will be that militia."[222] With this positive association, relevant to both historical and present American society, the Hierarchical group sees gun ownership as a beneficial engagement in multiple arenas. Namely, these arenas included protection of person and property, participation in a civic venture with cultural/historical context, and the buttressing of the American democracy. In this last arena of American democracy, the gun takes on the contradictory functions of providing order and deterring potential government attempts at tyranny. An important distinction is the

[219] Personal Interview, Audio File #4 11/24/13
[220] I use this term to emphasize that the deterrence effect of guns on criminality depicted by this group is seen as complementary to and participatory in the ideal of self-governance. In other words, gun ownership is a means of social responsibility.
[221] Personal Interview, Audio File #12 9/29/13
[222] Personal Interview, Audio File #14 10/26/13

assumption that the state retained authority until such a breach – gun ownership was *not* a single step from grasping the legitimacy of the state away.

However, an absolute monopoly on force was intolerable – as Julie, a Massachusetts postal worker, remarked, "we don't allow monopolies in business."[223] Providing law and order was the primary business of the government – but not its unassailable purview. For Hierarchical category members the government has a dominant but fettered grasp on legitimate force. Referencing what his enthusiasm for firearms meant, Jacob (a Massachusetts engineer) first said, "I support the Second Amendment. I don't buy into a lot of the criticism that's brought upon gun ownership in this country..."[224] Participation with this 'dominant but fettered' grasp on legitimate force is part and parcel of supporting a relatively unfettered access to arms for citizens. Rather than focusing on a situation demanding the conflict between the government and gun owners, the members of the Hierarchical group situated their gun ownership as a reasoned complement to society such that tyranny and rebellion are unlikely to come to pass.

Deterrent

Gun owners in the deterrent category stressed the historical importance of American firearms ownership in combating unjust government forces, and expressed wariness with the current American political framework. Fritz, a Vermont gunsmith, made this historical linkage clear, specifying that, "there should be no monopoly on force, because then we're being slaves. We fought a war over slavery. We fought a

[223] Personal Interview, Audio File #21 11/24/13
[224] Personal Interview, Audio File #13 10/26/13

war over the way we were being treated before we freed the slaves."[225] Pointing out 19th century restrictions preventing free blacks from owning firearms, the 'we' Fritz referred to was the body of legal, and thus white, gun owners. For Fritz, to enact excess regulation and/or support a government monopoly on force would be to initiate a regression.

This fear of a regressive shift (to policies, policing, or gun controls that the deterrent group rejects) motivated a belief that citizens could forcefully resist the American state. Grant, a Massachusetts maintenance supervisor, expressed this fear in the potential situation that, "if they have the power to take your weapons away and you can't defend yourself, it's going to be like the king coming by your house..." [226] Similar to the fear other gun owners expressed of criminal violations of their home and person, the participants of the Deterrent group were apprehensive of government violations of home and person. Sean, a Massachusetts mechanic, declaimed that, "our country was founded by citizen soldiers....They were fighting against a tyrannical government....It could happen again. I don't think I'll be on the front lines of it, but..."[227] Pausing for this ellipse, Sean left the exact circumstances of such a conflict unclear. However, he did make clear that if it wasn't for his age (70), he and other like-minded gun owners would be party to such a conflict.

The basis for stability and just government for these gun owners was an equitable arrangement of power. Their gun ownership served as part of a guarantee of this equitable arrangement – a check on the emergence of unbridled statism. Will,

[225] Personal Interview, Audio File #2 7/28/13
[226] Personal Interview, Audio File #7 8/07/13
[227] Personal Interview, Audio File #23 11/24/13

a Massachusetts insurance salesman, elaborated on this framework: "SOLA: Who should have the stockpiles of weapons, body armor, etc? WILL: Well, the military's going to have theirs, the police are going to have theirs. The politicians kind of have control over them, but if the civilians haven't got control over the politicians, it's going to break down....they're going to just run everything the way they want."[228] Apprehensive about a society and government whose priorities could run counter to their own, these deterrent gun owners expressed unease. The way to assuage their anxiety lay, in part, in a vision. They envisioned their gun ownership as participatory in a tradition of citizen empowerment flowing back to the very founding of America; this founding occurring through, as Fritz put it, "the Minuteman War, basically guys who picked up their trash and immediately went to war, and they were common people."[229] The deterrent group, composed of four men, saw their gun ownership as an act of participation in this legacy of the common American man.[230] For these participants, gun owners and their firearms ensured the sanctity of the state by functioning as a ready check on its performance.

[228] Personal Interview, Audio File #22 11/24/13
[229] Personal Interview, Audio File #7 8/07/13
[230] This group, composed entirely of men, naturally identified themselves with an American *male* tradition. This was the of assertion of selfhood by assuming the responsibility of personal and community defense.

Category	Subordinate	Hierarchical	Deterrent
Participants	Brian, Lauren, Sandra	Galen, Thomas, Jacob, Dan, Danielle, Abbie, Julie, Anders	Fritz, Grant, Will, Sean
Gun Symbolism	Potential invitations for violence and disorder, under controlled but redeemable in the home and for sporting uses	Objects of American significance, with greater potential for utility than harm	Totem of individual's power to forge a life free from coercion and subjugation, beacon of American history
Who Should Wield Guns	The trained, vetted, and responsible – some citizens and state agents	State agents and those lawful people seeking to ensure their safety and freedom (more people)	Everyone interested in free society and the American way of life – particularly 'minutemen.' State agents seen as acceptable, but not laudable
Rubrics Proposed	If firearms account for violent crimes and acts of terror, better to somewhat reduce accessibility – Negative net effect on the State otherwise	If firearms ensure greater personal safety and political balancing, they should be more readily accessible – Positive net effect on the State	If firearms ensure greater personal safety and serve as ward/redoubt against tyranny, they should be more readily accessible – Positive net effect on the State

Table 2.3 Summary of CGO Sample in the Gun Ownership and the State Spectrum

Chapter 3: The Tool of the Trade

> *As far as law enforcement is concerned, I don't know of any police officer that goes out, wakes up in the morning and says, "Geez, I hope I can shoot somebody today." That's not the intention of the handgun or the rifle or the shotgun from a law enforcement perspective.....As far as society itself is concerned, the role of a firearm in society should be one of for protection or for sport, and that's it. It should never, it's not something that should ever be used out of anger.* [231] - Cooper,[232] a Vermont Sheriff's Department Lieutenant

In this chapter, participants walked and often crisscrossed the line between citizen (CGO) and law enforcement officer[233] (LEO) in their responses. Asked, "What should the role of guns be in society? What about the role of gun owners?," Cooper, a Vermont sheriff's department Lt.,[234] delineated their roles for professional law enforcement and society at large. Despite this rhetorical juncture, Cooper's roles diverge little – in both cases, the gun should be *excluded* from people prone to, and situations inducing, violent rage. The LEOs in this sample experienced firearms as tools of their profession, objects of great regulatory import, totems of symbolic and cultural meaning, and the primary weapon in both violent crimes and episodes of self-defense. These viewpoints informed their responses to my question set.

In this chapter I provide a topography of similar scope to that of Chapter 2, in order to appreciate the prevailing responses to my three interlinked social order queries: What do participants believe about the individual citizen's claim to firearms and the administration of lethal force? How does this claim interact with potentially

---

[231] Personal Interview, Audio File #4 7/29/13
[232] The following participants composed the LEO sample: Cooper, Leonard, Toby, Alex, Wilson, Eugene, Isaac, Zach, Morris, Vincent, Jerry. Sex indicative common names were randomly assigned - all the LEO sample were male.
[233] I note that many such individuals, including sheriffs, agents, constables, et cetera, are not in fact 'officers.' However, no other synonym had the commonality or meaning to suffice.
[234] In this sample, some job descriptions overlap between subjects. I do not delineate police department locations to help distinguish these participants, however, due to confidentiality concerns.

competing claims on deadly force by centralized authority? How do the participants believe society should be structured in relation to these claims on firearms and deadly force? This topography allows me to make comparative claims about the range and nature of LEO beliefs. As with the CGO findings in Chapter 2, I divide my topography of LEO responses into three spectra to support my analysis of my three interlinked questions on social order: 1) Access and Regulation, 2) Locus of Responsibility, and 3) Gun Ownership and the State.

To briefly describe, Access and Regulation is a spectrum that sorts participants according to their views about who should/shouldn't be able to acquire (gun access) which types of guns (gun regulation). Locus of Responsibility is a spectrum sorting participants according to their conception of responsibility for safety and welfare – does the locus lie more towards the individual, society, government, or a muddier delineation? Gun Ownership and the State is the spectrum exploring how participants depict the interaction between gun ownership and state – do their responses indicate a competitive, complementary, or complex portrait? The LEO participants coalesced into groups/categories along these spectra according to my analysis of the intensity and nature of their expressed beliefs. Before delving into sections detailing the groups within these three spectra, I undertake a demographic overview of the LEO sample. I do this in order to introduce the participants' backgrounds, interview trends, gun-related behavior, and demographic concurrency.

Demographics[235]

The LEO sample consisted of 11 participants interviewed in 11 sessions between September 29th, 2013 and November 24th, 2013. One participant, Isaac, a Massachusetts deputy chief, declined to answer several of the pre-interview demographic questions.[236] For points incorporating data about the sample in general, but excluding Isaac's data, I append an asterisk (*). The participants included six members of a Massachusetts local police department (Eugene, Isaac, Zach, Morris, Vincent, Jerry), two members of a Vermont local police department (Alex, Wilson), one member of a Vermont sheriff's department (Cooper), one Vermont constable (Leonard), and one Vermont state trooper (Toby).[237] The median interview length was 19:13, with an average length of 19:50 and extremes of 11:51 and 30:40. The sample consisted entirely of white men with a median age of 52* (and a rounded average age of 51*), with extremes of 35 (Cooper) and 59* (Zach). Considering that Massachusetts is six percentage points (~84%)[238] more white than the national average, and that Vermont is more than 95% white,[239] it is not surprising that the entire sample was white. Law enforcement agency statistics also accentuate this trend – the Massachusetts State Police[240] was 89% white, and the Vermont State Police 99%, in

[235] See demographic footnotes in Chapter 2, The Firearm In The Commons, for word choice question limitations as the demographic data types collected were identical.
[236] Isaac was happy to answer my interview questions - I simply was unable to collect about half of my demographic pre-interview data.
[237] All worked full time in law enforcement with arrest capacity and an issued weapon.
[238] The US Census Bureau. "Massachusetts QuickFacts."
[239] The US Census Bureau. "Vermont QuickFacts."
[240] I was unable to find or collate statistics for the sex and ethnicity for all full-time sworn law enforcement personnel in either Vermont or Massachusetts, so I relied on these measures. I did interview a Vermont State Trooper, but no Massachusetts State Police personnel.

2000.[241] In regard to sex, the Massachusetts State Police was 91% male, and the Vermont State Police 93% in 2000.[242] Thus, while it is an unfortunate gap, it is not unusual that my sample did not include any female participants.

When asked to describe their socioeconomic status and education level, the participants responded with a range between working class to upper class, and some college coursework to postgraduate degrees, respectively. The median education level was a bachelor's degree*, with three participants reporting a master's degree, three a bachelor's, one an associate's, and three some college coursework. Two of the LEO sample, Toby (a Vermont State Trooper) and Zach (a Massachusetts Sergeant), reported prior military employment – Toby serving as an enlisted man in the Army, and Zach serving in the Army Military Police. Every participant except Zach, a Massachusetts Sergeant, reported being currently married. Of the ten who reported marriage, five* of the married LEOs described their spouse's family as being exposed to guns (LE or military service in the family counted as exposure). Of the ten* who described their family gun history, nine reported some level of immediate family exposure to guns. Every participant except Cooper, a Vermont Sheriff's Lt., reported owning a pistol.[243] Six of the 11 respondents reported owning all types of weapons, while four reported owning only pistols and revolvers.[244]

Of the 11 participants in the LEO sample, only Leonard, a Vermont constable, and Alex, a Vermont lieutenant, mentioned membership in a gun organization.

---

[241] Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics*. US Department of Justice, 2000, page 243.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Cooper did clarify that he was permitted to access a handgun off duty – however, he did not own a personal pistol. He did own a rifle.
[244] Please refer to Appendix B for a more complete breakdown of demographics, including what arms participants described themselves as owning.

Namely, Leonard and Alex both reported lifetime National Rifle Association (NRA) memberships, and Alex was a member of a shooting range. No participants reported affiliation with any gun control organizations. Four participants described themselves as gun enthusiasts: Leonard, a Vermont constable, Alex, a Vermont Lt., Wilson, a Vermont detective sergeant, and Vincent, a Massachusetts sergeant.

My final question on conceal carry[245] exhibited a high positive response rate. Zach, a Massachusetts sergeant, described the specter of terror and violence as part of the impetus behind this high rate, saying that, "after 9/11 it's become a little bit different in this country, and President Bush enacted a law allowing police officers to carry a firearm anywhere....police officers who are trained and armed that may be in a situation to stop an active shooter, stop one of these criminal acts more quickly than the response of having to wait for after somebody dials 911 after something happens." [246] Eugene, a Massachusetts detective sergeant, related a more personal reason for his occasional conceal carry, recalling a series of break-ins culminating with an attempt, "at night while I was home with my family."[247] Only Cooper, a Vermont sheriff's lieutenant, and Morris, a Massachusetts detective, two of the 11 participants, described no conceal carry habits. Of the remaining nine participants, three conceal carried regularly, four occasionally, and two rarely.[248] This relatively high off duty

[245] Many of the police officers described this as 'off duty' carry. Federal and state regulations are more permissive of conceal carry for law enforcement officers than as for citizen gun owners. Active duty law enforcement personnel (with the power to arrest) and retired law enforcement officers with an extensive service record are permitted to carry throughout America and in many areas (like airports, schools, and federal buildings) normally excluded to citizen permit holders.
[246] Personal Interview, Audio File #17 10/29/13
[247] Personal Interview, Audio File #15 10/29/13
[248] Leonard - occasionally, Toby - rarely, Alex - regularly, Wilson - occasionally, Eugene - occasionally, Isaac – regularly, Zach - regularly, Vincent - rarely, Jerry - occasionally.

retention of firearms spoke to how important this LEO sample felt their armed presence could be for personal and public protection.

Overall, this demographic data was relatively representative of the police of Vermont and Massachusetts. With constraints on time, resources, research methods, connections, and willing participants, it is not unexpected that a sample of 11 participants underrepresents women and racial minorities, especially given the previously discussed demographics of the police forces of Vermont and Massachusetts. The major difficulty with this analysis is that the Massachusetts LEOS all came from the same urban department, which, unlike several other contacted departments, was willing to engage in recorded interviews.[249] Although my impression is that their views and responses were adequately varied, it is also possible that the department had an idiosyncratic set of LEOs, and/or that those I was able to interview were further skewed. To combat this deficiency, I cite a final demographic tidbit: five of the six Massachusetts LEOs had prior law enforcement employment in other departments – only Jerry, an officer in the department, had no prior law enforcement experience. With these separate origins and experiences, I believe that I retain enough representational validity in my demographics to lend credence to my topographic exploration.

Access and Regulation

Defined by two (largely state-divided) groups, this spectrum explores the participants' ideals and reasoning for gun control policy. I tried to engage participants clearly about their beliefs surrounding gun control, hoping to elicit both

[249] Please refer to Methodology in Chapter 1 for a discussion of sample collection trials and method.

policy positions and insights into how their arguments were structured. I primarily utilized questions three and five for this purpose, asking: "3) Who should and should not own firearms? Why?" and "5) Do you believe that access to guns should be regulated? Should guns themselves be regulated?" before requesting that the participants elaborate. Then, relative to the rest of the LEO respondents, I identified sets of participant responses that shared similar substantive content and argumentation. The groups on the Access and Regulation spectrum included two single participant poles bracketing two central conglomerates of participants, similar to a bell curve.

These four groups are presented in order of positive to negative (relative) valence to regulation regarding access criteria to firearms and types of firearms available. In this order, the categories read as follows: No Access, More, Ambivalence, Current Only[250]. Morris, a Massachusetts detective, advocated for a ban on the possession of firearms by American citizens in the no access category, except for members of the military or police forces. The four Massachusetts participants in the more category expressed concern about the type of firearms available and access to them, while maintaining that citizens should be able to possess firearms according to their criteria. The five respondents in the Ambivalence group, four of whom were from Vermont, expressed conflicting views about the efficacy and legitimacy of increasing regulation, but supported existing gun control and the potential for laws. Alex, a Vermont lieutenant, believed that regulation was adequate as is (hence

[250] Participants placements: No Access – Morris; More – Isaac, Zach, Vincent, Jerry; Ambivalence – Cooper, Leonard, Toby, Wilson, Eugene; As Is – Alex

'current only'), and specified his discomfort with greater regulatory controls. I now explore these four groups.

No Access

Composed solely by Morris, a Massachusetts detective, this category entailed the most restrictive ideals of government regulation and control. When asked to depict his views on who should and should not own a firearm, Morris stated that, "I believe firearms should be restricted to military and law enforcement. There's also a case to be made for business owners who are transporting cash or protecting their properties, but I believe it should be pretty much restricted to military and law enforcement."[251] Morris aligned himself with the 'European model' of highly restricted ownership, particularly restricting handguns ownership. Morris then acknowledged the disconnect between his beliefs and the realm of possibility, remarking that, "being an American citizen here and having the Second Amendment giving citizens...the right to bear arms, it's a different scenario. But I still believe gun ownership should be restricted, as restricted as possible."[252] Along the lines of these restrictions, Morris repeatedly mentioned his opposition to the availability of 'automatic weapons' and particularly 'assault weapons',[253] as well as handguns. He

[251] Personal Interview, Audio File #18, 10/31/13
[252] Ibid.
[253] Morris appeared to be speaking about semi-automatic firearms, which fire once per trigger press, rather than legally possessed automatic firearms, which are rare, highly regulated, extremely expensive, and not linked to any crimes by citizen possessors (hence my belief that he referred to semi-automatic firearms, which are the most common type of firearms used in crimes). Assault weapons likely referred to the semi-automatic firearms that appear similar (but are functionally distinct) to military and select police issue assault rifles (which, by definition, include automatic firing capability).

allowed some room for hunting firearms, but only under the specifier that such guns would be regulated and exclusively used for 'hunting or target shooting."[254]

Morris expressed several reasons for these views. Primarily, he thought that the types of weapons deserving prohibition were incongruous with the daily life and realm of the citizen, because such firearms didn't, "have any place in society other than military or law enforcement."[255] In Morris's perspective, the realms of violence and civil society had been grossly entwined, departing from their ideal separation into the purview of the military and police, or, "someone that requires a firearm in the performance of their job responsibilities."[256] Morris's interest in enacting new gun control was not only about the practical effects – he objected to the practice of American gun culture and the impotence of the legal system, saying that, "there's not a lot being done about our gun culture. You can pass all the laws you want, but a lot of gun laws are not enforced and the bottom line is criminals still have access to guns. It's a very loaded question."[257] For Morris's no access category, a restructured American society would be the ideal situation. In such a society, citizens would have no need for nor access to deadly weaponry, while the police and military would retain these trappings. Gun control legislation of the type Morris wished for is infeasible legally, culturally, and politically. Morris's solution to this dissonance between possibility and ideal was the march of time, acknowledging that change, if it ever came, would be, "very slow...it's probably generational because we've always

[254] Personal Interview, Audio File #18 10/31/13
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid.

been a gun culture."[258] Morris's ideal legislation could only be approached via a gradual decline of the centrality of firearms in American culture.

More

The more category advocated for an increase in substantive legislative controls on access to guns and regulations regarding gun types. Composed of Massachusetts participants Isaac (a deputy chief), Zach (a sergeant), Vincent (a sergeant), and Jerry (a patrol officer), this group had four concrete hopes for legislative change. These legislative changes included universal background checks, a national gun registry, increased mental health exclusion criteria, and restrictions or prohibition of semi-automatic firearms and/or magazines larger than 10 rounds. Vincent, a Massachusetts sergeant, responded to my query about 'who should and should not own firearms' by saying that, "the people who should not is [sic] probably broader than the people who should, in my view."[259] Firearms typology and availability was a major concern for the More group. As Zach, another Massachusetts sergeant, put it, "There's no reason for a 15-year-old to have an AK-47 or a pistol in their hands. These gun sales...like a flea market type-thing, you shouldn't be allowed to just walk right in there and be able to purchase a firearm. I believe [in] a record check....to make sure you're not a wanted felon or you've had mental health issues in the past." [260] Regulatory routes such as these would reintroduce this absent reason, making society safer because of decreased access to firearms in general, and specific firearms types rendered inaccessible.

---

[258] Ibid.
[259] Personal Interview, Audio File #19 11/07/13
[260] Personal Interview, Audio File #17 10/29/13

Isaac, a Massachusetts deputy chief, elaborated on this example of the 'AK-47,' explaining that there was a piece of citizens' firearms ownership, "which I can accept, but the ordinary person that says, ' I'd like to have an AK-47 because I like automatic weapons...or I want to have a whole bunch of guns in my house,' I think you need to demonstrate a need in today's society...I think the second amendment shouldn't be as loosely interpreted as maybe some would like."[261] Isaac acknowledged an incipient bargaining between rights and restrictions – for him and the more category, the correct solution to this debate was increased regulations. Isaac, concurring with the other participants, mentioned mental health as a key issue. Saying that a gun owning household with a mentally ill member would, "need to seriously be reviewed as to whether you should be allowed to continue to have a firearm in that home...if you have someone in your home that has mental illness and mental health problems and there's a firearm in that home, for me that's a deal killer."[262] The LEOs in this group believed in a more constrained interpretation of the second amendment right to bear arms. Comprehensive checks and registries of firearms circulation could aid them in their job as police, and more generally serve as delineations to this right. The More group felt arms without sporting purposes (pistols, for instance). and arms associated with military service (like the aforementioned AK-47) fell outside of this constrained right. As Jerry, a Massachusetts patrol officer, related, "You don't see people deer hunting with an AK-47."[263] This focus on legitimate, sporting purpose firearms[264]

[261] Personal Interview, Audio File #16 10/29/13
[262] Ibid.
[263] Personal Interview, Audio File #25 11/29/13
[264] This sporting versus non-sporting binary was strongly reminiscent of the the 1994-2004 Federal Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act (aka the Assault Weapons Ban - AWB).

versus non-sporting, and thus illegitimate firearm types is a key binary in the regulatory ideals the More group made. In general, Isaac and the More group could, "live without guns. But it's unrealistic at this point to believe that that's going to happen in my lifetime. They should...have a strictly, narrowly-defined role."[265] In the reality of competing preferences, more regulation was the optimal solution to this divide.

With these restrictions in mind, the participants made a clear distinction between law enforcement access and citizen access to firearms. During the interviews of LEOs, I asked some of these participants to help identify the division between citizens' access to firearms and law enforcement's access. Vincent, a Massachusetts sergeant, first said that, "you [the citizen] ought to be able to own a firearm, but I don't think you ought to be able to own a banana clip with 30 rounds and semi-automatic capability."[266] However, Vincent then made clear that, "as a police department, a gun with a 30 round magazine or something along those lines is...the capability you need."[267] The restrictions the more category supported were intended, in part, to limit the capability of citizens to inflict harm upon one another. Jerry, a patrol officer, clarified that for a citizen, "I think an assault has more firepower than you need. If everybody had just a handgun....you could protect yourself equally with a handgun against somebody else with a handgun."[268] By shifting acceptable citizen armament towards handguns (and other categories of firearms acceptable to them), the More group hoped to achieve a firearms ownership that was efficacious for

[265] Personal Interview, Audio File #16 10/29/13
[266] Personal Interview, Audio File #19 11/07/2013
[267] Ibid.
[268] Personal Interview, Audio File #25 11/29/13

personal defense, but could not rival their own professional firearms access. Thus the participants in the More group preferred regulations implementing a gun registry, universal background checks, and limitations on firearms features (such as magazine capacity, semi-automatic operation, appearance, et cetera).

Ambivalence

The members of the ambivalence category harbored significant reservations about the application of excessively burdensome or ineffective gun controls, while still supporting the opportunity for future legislative efforts and their current policies.[269] This category was composed of five residents (four of Vermont, one of Massachusetts), namely: Cooper (a Vermont sheriff's department lieutenant), Leonard (a Vermont constable), Toby (a Vermont state trooper), Wilson (a Vermont detective sergeant), and Eugene (a Massachusetts detective sergeant). In terms of gun control effects, these participants generally wanted more effective enforcement of current legislation (i.e. judicial, not legislative, changes), increased exclusionary mental health laws, and support for a universal background check. However, they were dubious about some gun control policy aims, citing suspicion of regulatory overreach - particularly in banning weapons based on features (like military appearance, magazines capacity, etc.) and gun registration.

Prosecution was a key part of the Ambivalence group's strategy to combat violence. Leonard (a Vermont constable) exasperated that, despite a 100% conviction rate, none of his arrests were in jail, asked me, "So, what is the sense of all law

[269] Gun control policies differ significantly between Vermont and Massachusetts (overview in Chapter 4). I delay commenting on how states may influence *why* the participants hold their views until Chapter 4, where I compare LEO and CGO participants and consider state gun control laws as a significant factor.

enforcement out there, doing their jobs, arresting people, bringing them in, for our judicial system to let them go?....All we can do is our best, from the law enforcement point."[270] Wilson introduced proposals to allow professional caregivers greater license[271] to relay intentions of harm to law enforcement and for universal background checks.[272] These three sentiments were shared by all – in fact, Leonard and Cooper (a Vermont sheriff's department lieutenant) expressed some support for federal gun registration.[273] However, these pro-legislation sentiments were qualified, as Cooper specified that, "If one could trust the government, if you will, to keep track of the firearms, then yeah, I think having registered firearms wouldn't be a bad idea. But...there are major concerns with the government overstepping their bounds....You would have to strike a nice mix between the two."[274] This mix did not reject legislation, and in fact supported new means for it, but was counterbalanced by these 'major concerns.'

Toby, a Vermont state trooper, expressed these potentially competing sensibilities, noting his support for gun ownership for myriad reasons, including personal protection, "as long as you do it in the right way....My wife believes that assault-type weapons, AK-47s, AR-15s, M16s... should only be allowed for law enforcement and military, because they were designed to kill people....the problem that I have is where do you stop? Now, in saying this, I think they really need to look

[270] Personal Interview, Audio File #6 8/07/13
[271] HIPAA, the federalized American health information privacy code of ethics and standards, makes disclosures without explicit, documented evidence of imminent harm to self and others a serious violation (prosecutable) of the patient - caregiver compact.
[272] Personal Interview, Audio File #11, 8/27/13
[273] Personal Interview, Audio File #6, 8/07/13
[274] Ibid.

hard at people with mental illness."[275] Toby was concerned both by recent episodes of mass violence (perpetrated by persons suffering from mental illness, but not excluded from firearms purchase), and slippery slope fears of excess regulation. Commenting that handguns are far more often used in homicide than these 'assault-type weapons,' Toby was left unconvinced of the necessity of regulation while still looking for effective avenues for violence control.[276] Wilson (a Vermont detective sergeant) captured how the ambivalence participants viewed the, "challenge of trying to balance the rights of many versus the rights of a few that are going to use them for wrong purposes....What I am opposed to is arbitrary, just saying that guns are bad and nobody should have them....the AR-15 [has been available to citizens] since 1963. That's 50 years. What's changed? We didn't have mass shootings [then]....Guns didn't change. Ammo didn't change. What changed? Society changed." [277] For Wilson, factors outside of firearms features and availability had the greatest effect on violence, and 'mass shootings' specifically.

Thus bureaucratic efforts to contain violence would have to be balanced against the costs of regulation (to the relevant gun owners, primarily), and then weighed against other means of addressing society and violence. In other words, legislation alone would and could not achieve the ideal goals of legislation; there were irreconcilable externalities, and the best route would have incorporated these externalities and led to a more efficient public policy. The most efficient route of

[275] Personal Interview, Audio File #8 8/08/13
[276] I do not wish to engage here in an examination of the magnitude and existence of causal links between firearms and public health. Instead, I treat gun control as a subset of legislative efforts towards violence control for participants *sympathetic* to gun control.
[277] Personal Interview, Audio File #11 8/27/13

negotiation for the competing interests (between gun rights versus gun controls), towards a general concern (violence in society) would be preferable to less efficient alternatives (for Wilson, gun bans). More vigorous prosecution of gun offenses, and an emphasis on society's responsibilities, appeared to be lower cost initiatives to the participants. This type of a cost-benefit metric is characteristic of Ronald Coase, the University of Chicago professor of economics and law. In Coase's groundbreaking 1960 paper *The Problem of Social Costs*,[278] he argued for deregulation of economic enterprises, emphasizing how ill-equipped social theories, courts, and laws were to foresee and efficiently adjudicate competing claims of harm. Coase advocated general social welfare as best being served by a conservative approach to prescriptive legislation, cognizant that, "in choosing between social arrangements within the context of which individual decisions are made, we have to bear in mind that a change in the existing system which will lead to an improvement in some decisions may well lead to a worsening of others."[279] Transaction, administration, and shifting costs could further render novel choices (regulations) inefficient. The ambivalence category of LEO participants adopted this conservative rubric of evaluation towards gun control legislation, and thus was less certain as to the correct course for gun control legislation.

[278] At 50 pages, Coase put forth many complex arguments in this article. I do not evaluate or focus on the Coase Theorem (a later phenomenon anyway), jurisprudence review, or economic arguments. Instead, I summon the general principle of courts and regulatory bodies being beholden total consideration of the effects courses of actions entail - particularly so in such as that advocates maximal market freedoms and personal liberties within a general welfare parameter.
[279] Ibid., page 134.

Current Only

Alex, a Vermont lieutenant, lifetime NRA member, and sole participant in the 'current only' category, espoused continuity as the best policy for gun control. He mentioned support for two currently enforced exclusionary criteria - convicted felons and adjudicated mental illness.[280] Clarifying his opposition to increased regulation, Alex specified that his support was only for those laws, "already in place by the federal government and states."[281] As Alex was the most reticent in describing his gun control views, there was less opportunity for analysis. Alex did not describe a rubric to evaluate current and future regulations (beyond 'current only' specifier). Of the LEO participants, Alex was the least enthused for gun control, recommending no change. Cognizant of his relatively (to other LEOs) pro-gun rights position, he stated at the conclusion of the interview that, "Obviously, I'm a little one-sided for gun ownership...hopefully you've interviewed people that are anti-gun."[282]

[280] Personal Interview, Audio File #10 8/22/13
[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.

Category	No Access	More	Ambivalence	Current Only
Participants	Morris	Isaac, Zach, Vincent, Jerry	Cooper, Leonard, Toby, Wilson, Eugene	Alex
Gun Controls Supported	Change of 2nd amendment to preclude most cases of citizen ownership	Universal background checks, increased more access to mental illness exclusions, national registry, restrictions on magazine capacity and semi-automatic function	Universal background checks, more access to mental health exclusions, greater prosecution of gun crimes	Extant controls only
Gun Rights Supported	Only police, military, professional, perhaps hunting	Narrow right to citizen firearms ownership, subject to regulatory concerns	Strong right to citizen firearms ownership, prevailing over many regulatory concerns	All rights not limited by extant controls
Rubrics proposed	'European' model	'Legitimate' firearms' type and use is sporting purposes	Conservative social costs test to minimize burden on personal choices like firearms ownership	None

Table 3.1 Summary of LEO Sample in the Access and Regulation Spectrum

Locus of Responsibility

For the locus of responsibility spectrum, I asked participants to draw the ideal borders of personal, social, and government responsibility. As a set of participants

professionally responsible for the general security of American society, this spectrum elicited rich information from the LEO sample. In the locus of responsibility spectrum, I primarily refer to questions three and six through eight of my 12 question set: "3) Could you briefly describe what defines a good gun owner? What defines a bad one? 6) Do you advocate a particular change in American gun ownership? If so, what? 7) Could you briefly describe what defines a good society? What defines a bad one? 8) Do you advocate a particular change in American society? If so, what?" In this subset of questions, I look at responses that addressed the core question of this spectrum – where should responsibility lie for safety and welfare? Although all the LEOs put at least some emphasis on obeying the law, there were three distinct categories in this locus of responsibility spectrum: Law and Order emphasis, Moderate emphasis, and Government Adjudication emphasis.[283] The law and order category, consisting of five participants (the largest), emphasized the importance of adherence to community standards by abiding laws, being responsible, and holding traditional values. The American moderation category, consisting of four participants, entertained the ideal as an American mixture of personal responsibility and freedoms balanced against social concerns for cohesion and the common good. The Government Adjudication group, consisting of two participants (the smallest), emphasized that government has unique abilities to engage its citizens, and thus the ideal would be to increase government's social and personal oversight, particularly in laws regarding crime and gun ownership.

[283] Law and Order: Wilson, Toby, Eugene, Alex, Leonard American Moderation: Vincent, Jerry , Zach, Cooper Government Adjudication: Isaac , Morris

Similarly to the CGO sample, the LEO respondents emphasized a responsible or irresponsible behavior binary as defining 'good' or 'bad' gun ownership. Cooper, a Vermont sheriff's department lieutenant, put forth that, "A good firearm owner would be somebody that is level-headed, somebody that is responsible. Somebody that basically thinks before they act would be a good candidate for firearms ownership."[284] This was the essential definition for the LEO participants, though each had minor variations and additional clauses (safe handling, secure storage, etc.). Morris added the binary opposite, that the bad gun owner is, "one that is irresponsible. It is the antithesis of what defines a good owner,"[285] This responsible binary, along with (a sensible, considering their law enforcement profession) support for following the law, unified the LEO participants across the locus of responsibility spectrum.

Law and Order

The LEO participants in the Law and Order group advocated a society composed of diligent and productive citizens, and feared lawlessness, excess government regulation, and disrespect. In their ideology, socially prescriptive legislation was a signal that the community values and efficacy of the justice system were lackluster. Leonard, a Vermont constable, contrasted his upbringing with modern circumstances, recalling that, "When a police officer came up to me when I was a kid, I respected them....Now, if you walk up to most juveniles, they don't have no respect, they have no fear.... It's almost like they've taken away a lot of the

[284] Personal Interview, Audio File #4 7/29/13
[285] Personal Interview, Audio File #18 10/31/13

authority figure in law enforcement and other enforcement areas."[286] Similarly, Eugene (a Massachusetts detective sergeant) harkened back to a, "good society [that] would be like it was back from the beginning of time, when you had tribes of people who all lived together... took care of one another, protected each other."[287] Instead of relying upon government authority, these participants suggested a tradition of respecting authority as an optimal approach to navigating responsibility for safety and welfare in modern society.

In this formulation, being law-abiding indicates productive morality, while relying on government assistance (thus not contributing) indicates moral decay and lawlessness. Toby, a Vermont state trooper, delineated the links in this binary system, saying that, "We have a number of people here that just don't want to take jobs because it's beneath them. But the people who are doing work are paying for those people....A bad society, I think those are the people who try to make their money illegally, who don't pull their fair share within the community that they live in, [like] drug dealers."[288] Illegality, immorality, disrespect, welfare reliance, and a bad society – all these traits are linked together to form a font of negative social impact. Furthermore, such behavior ran contrary to law, forcing the police into enforcement, as Alex explained: "Hence, that's why the police are there, so we can correct those bad behaviors. Would I like to see a change in society? Yeah, I would. I wouldn't want my job to be quite so tough as it is."[289] Everyone's lives – the police, the law-abiding, and even the criminally prone – would thus benefit from greater

[286] Personal Interview, Audio File #6 8/07/13
[287] Personal Interview, Audio File #15 10/29/13
[288] Personal Interview, Audio File #8 8/08/13
[289] Personal Interview, Audio File #10 8/22/13

adherence to the law. Thus Leonard (a Vermont constable) concluded that insufficiently punitive sentencing called into question, "the sense of all law enforcement out there, doing their jobs, arresting people, bringing them in, for our judicial system to let them go....We've gotten to be so liberal, we don't want to punish anybody. Nobody is responsible for their actions, when they are.[290] By punishing lawbreakers inadequately, Leonard argued that the justice system invalidated the integrity of both law enforcement and personal choice.

Alex, a Vermont lieutenant, acknowledged that someone who breaks the law is not necessarily, "a bad person. They may have had a lapse in judgment. But just living within the law makes for a good society."[291] This gap of ambiguity between the particular and the general 'goodness' of laws did not faze the participants in the Law and Order group. Alex followed by stating that, "obviously the reverse is for the bad society."[292] Wilson, a Vermont detective sergeant, identified a society of scofflaws as society careening towards a conclusion that, "Human life has no value...personal property has no value.[293] For these participants, this binary was a clear and useful rubric to make sense of the landscape their professional, personal, and social lives. As enforcers of the law, these participant's assignment of positive social outcomes to lawful behavior and sanctioning of unlawful actions as steps toward negative social outcomes is indeed (as Alex put it) 'obvious.' Thus it is unsurprising that this group was the largest, claiming five participants, four of whom were Vermonters. Other participants were emphatic on the social import of law-abiding or criminal

[290] Personal Interview, Audio File #6 8/07/13
[291] Personal Interview, Audio File #10 8/22/13
[292] Ibid.
[293] Personal Interview, Audio File #11 8/27/13

individuals – however, they did not base their evaluation of society exclusively on this binary. The conservative Law and Order group doubled down on the responsible individual as key to a good society, and identified the formation of such responsible individuals (and the punishment of the irresponsible) as paramount social goals.

American Moderation

The LEO participants in the American moderation category had the most complex interpretation of the ideal locus of responsibility for welfare and safety. Rather than focus exclusively on the negative effects of criminality and irresponsibility for society, these four participants sought to balance personal freedoms against social needs. Namely, environmental protections, problems of congressional gridlock, and communal cohesion were topics for these four participants. While lacking a singular ideal distribution of responsibility, these participants emphasized that the moderation of needs across individuals, society, and the government was the best route towards such an ideal distribution. Zach (a Massachusetts sergeant) celebrated the lack of 'black and white' decisions during such negotiation, stating that America is, "the best nation on the face of this planet because of it. SOLA: Okay. What defines...a bad society there? ZACH: ....where the government imposes its views upon the citizens....[where] everything is black and white. There's no, you have no choice, you have no freedoms, you have no way to think for yourself."[294] Rather than a set position on the spectrum, the moderation category entertained this particular pride in American moderation between competing claims on social ideals.

[294] Personal Interview, Audio File #17 10/29/13

Controlling or collapsing this discourse would remove the opportunity, and responsibility, for civic participation in America. Cooper, a Vermont sheriff's lieutenant, agreed that a good society had a circulating mixture of, "the working class, middle class and upper class, and...a mix of different racial and ethnic backgrounds."[295] Jerry, a Massachusetts patrol officer, said that people's ability to help another obligated action – that, "If you have the means to help other people, you should be doing that.... If you're more fortunate than other people, you should be helping other people out."[296] With these principles of inclusive engagement and means-tested social responsibility, espoused a golden-rule sensibility.

Vincent, another Massachusetts sergeant, exemplified this trend by bracketing himself on the issue of too much or little personal freedom and responsibility, saying that, "My views are moderate. I believe that anybody on either extreme has a serious problem and that you're destined to smash your head against the wall your whole life if you take that extreme position."[297] Zach, his sergeant colleague, bemoaned a gridlocked congress. Annoyed, he asked why, "we can't sit and compromise and work things out?... I don't care if they're republican or democrat. I'll vote for who I feel will do the best for society."[298] The individual is the key first step and component of this revaluation of social responsibility and justice. For the American Moderation group, this revaluation of responsibility for security and welfare, in light of an inclusive social good, would enable an efficacious debate on the realms of personal, social, and government responsibility.

---

[295] Personal Interview, Audio File #4 7/29/13
[296] Personal Interview, Audio File #25 11/29/13
[297] Personal Interview, Audio File #19 11/07/13
[298] Personal Interview, Audio File #17 10/29/13

Government Adjudication

Morris (a Massachusetts detective) and Isaac (a Massachusetts deputy chief) formed the Government Adjudication group. They asserted that the unique powers of the government to create laws, enforce them, and adjudicate disputes renders it particularly capable to change individuals and society for the better. Isaac, a Massachusetts deputy chief, criticized town meetings and public gatherings as suffering too many, "conflicting goals in mind. The government has to be in the middle somewhere whether they like it or not. It's just too serious to leave up to private people to decide. I think the government has to really look at all this gun legislation, make sure it's tight enough, and hold people accountable."[299] Topics of serious dispute, like gun ownership, would be too volatile for private party determination. In this and other circumstances, the government would balance opinions, choose a 'middle somewhere,' and 'hold people accountable.'

Morris, a Massachusetts detective, elaborated on how society would ideally be structured under such circumstances, saying that such a society would be, "built on laws that are enforced, on laws that are followed, on laws that are jurisprudent. It's a society where ideally only law enforcement should be tasked with carrying and using firearms..."[300] Although the Law and Order group shared this heavy emphasis on law abiding conduct and enforcement, their aim was the perfection of the individual, not legislative solutions that de-emphasize the individual. Whereas a government could be held accountable to its responsibilities, the individual was a more slippery case. For Morris, entrusting excess power and responsibility, like gun ownership, to the

[299] Personal Interview, Audio File #16 10/29/13
[300] Personal Interview, Audio File #18 10/31/13

individual was far too risky. Isaac similarly concluded that with firearms, the risk of rogue usage was too serious. For these two members of Government Adjudication, the outsized risk of some social phenomena, like gun ownership, necessitated strict government assumption of responsibility for welfare and security.

Category	Law and Order	American Moderation	Government Adjudication
Participants	Wilson, Toby, Eugene, Alex, Leonard	Vincent, Jerry, Zach, Cooper	Isaac, Morris
Paramount Concerns of Responsibility	Tradition, lawful behavior, productive actions, as opposed to insufficiently punitive courts, welfare usage, unlawful behavior	Maximizing inclusivity, minimizing barriers to discussion and mutual consent on these very same concerns of responsibility	Minimizing risk to public and police, utilizing government to adjudicate conflicting goals
Ideal Arrangement of Responsibility	Onus on individuals to be responsible to the community, and the community to promulgate such individuals	Combination of freedoms and measures designed guarantee participation, individual's job to engage in discussion	Strict separation of spheres of citizens, law enforcement, military, and other government agents to minimize conflicts and violence
Rubrics Proposed	Binary of good/bad behavior totalized to entire societal function	Maximizing common ground upon which to negotiate social justice and responsibility – the '*original position*' AND means-tested responsibility for social welfare	If there is conflict not being broached by standard means of discussion, the government should intervene to create a middle ground

Table 3.2 Summary of LEO Sample in the Locus of Responsibility Spectrum

Gun Ownership and the State

In Gun Ownership and the State, the final spectrum in this chapter, I explore how the LEO participants conceive of the relationship between firearms ownership and the American state. To address this topic, I primarily refer to questions 8, 9, and 11: "8) Do you advocate a particular change in American society? If so, what? 9) What should the role of guns be in society? What about the role of gun owners? 11) Should the American government have a monopoly on force, whether at the state/federal level or military/police level?"[301] In evaluating these responses, I look for patterns in the participants' emphasis of power; particularly, I looked for power associated with access to firearms, or symbolized by firearms. To wit, this Gun Ownership and the State focus, applied to the LEO participant interviews, yielded three groups of relationships: Contrary, Implemental, and Hierarchical.[302]

The three Massachusetts participants in the Contrary category viewed citizen gun ownership as inherently antagonistic to the proper function, safety, and continuity of the state. As such, they were the most supportive of cultural shifts to relegate firearms to professionals (such as themselves) overseen by the state. The implemental category, composed of five participants, saw firearms as tools useful for both state agents and citizens, but in largely separate and practically non-competitive realms, with the state retaining de facto authority. Finally, the three participants in the Hierarchical group believed in a symbolic (and historical) role of citizen firearms as aids, and potential checks, to the American state, referencing the constitution

[301] Please note the footnote explanation in Chapter 2 regarding the wording of question 11.
[302] Contrary: Isaac, Zach, Morris Implemental: Cooper, Toby, Alex, Vincent, Jerry Hierarchical: Leonard, Wilson, Eugene

while remaining agnostic as to the viability of armed resistance to the American state.

Contrary

The contrary category was composed by three Massachusetts LEOs; specifically Morris (a detective), Isaac (a deputy chief), and Zach (one of the two sergeants). These participants stressed that citizen gun ownership competed with the aim of the state to enforce order and reduce violence – Morris asserted that, "a bad society [one] where gun ownership is rampant....It's where a society loses control of handguns."[303] For these participants, the ideal state would retain complete control of legitimate force. Asked about the optimal role of guns in society, Zach asserted that, "The role should lie with the army, the military, to keep us strong, to defend us. The police officers should have the ability to defend against the undesirables, criminals, but I don't think it should lead us by the nose. These gun advocates and gun nuts and Second Amendment rallying, I'm all for having some freedoms but I don't get half of why anybody has to own an Uzi."[304] The Contrary group ranked firearms access, with the military and the police eminent, and citizen 'gun nuts' considered a danger and liability.

Firearms that this group perceived as non-sporting and/or designed for confrontation would exclusively be entrusted to the military and the police. Such forces would be utilized, as Isaac said, for, "policing, and as we know it domestically through limited use of the military, in those instances where we have to use force to

[303] Personal Interview, Audio File #18 10/31/13
[304] Personal Interview, Audio File #17 10/29/13

let law and order prevail and to keep the peace."[305] The ultimate aims of the government were to ensure peace via a firm grasp of intrastate applications of force. Isaac continued that the police, "need to be soldiers for very activities that the police are now facing that they didn't face before....everything from the anti-terrorism to people that have gone berserk."[306] Thus the line between domestic policing and the military in terms of tactics, training, appearance, purview, and weaponry has been blurred; the source of this blurring lies in a perception of certain domestic and international actors as unusually dangerous.

The solution for both people and arms considered dangerous would be, according to Zach, to, "take them off the street."[307] Zach, Morris, and Isaac all supported institutionalization for the mentally ill to accompany their assertion that citizen gun ownership endangered stable state function (and thus should be fully subordinated and more controlled). Elaborating on his perception of the American population's relationship with guns, Isaac related that, "the average person doesn't want to own a gun.... If you're living in a place that you need a gun, and if you need to take a gun out with you every time you go out, you need to reexamine a lot about your life."[308] When asked if he thought it was possible for gun rights and gun control proponents to converse, Isaac's answer was grim - he said that such groups could not get to a "a gold standard of talking to one another."[309] In the absence of such a dialogue and in the context of their professional enforcement sensibilities, the

[305] Personal Interview, Audio File #16 10/29/13
[306] Ibid.
[307] Personal Interview, Audio File #17 10/29/13
[308] Personal Interview, Audio File #16 10/29/13
[309] Ibid.

Contrary group resolved that the threat of firearms ownership was too deleterious for the proper functioning of the state. Isaac concluded by reflecting that, "if I had my way there'd be no guns. I could live without guns. But it's unrealistic at this point to believe that that's going to happen in my lifetime."[310] As true disarmament was an impossible proposition, the Contrary group endorsed the viewpoint that healthy state and social and citizen firearm ownership were inimical properties - thus the state would need to maintain a monopoly on force.

Implemental

The five members of the Implemental group treated guns as tools for sporting and self-defense purposes, devoid of agency and symbolic valence. As these members viewed firearms as fundamentally functional objects, their emphasis was on acceptable and unacceptable usage – not cultural or political significance. As Alex, a Vermont lieutenant, averred, guns, "They can serve a multitude of roles. Home protection for the bad part of society that wants to do things. I don't have a problem with target shooting. It's a fun sport. Just like other people play football, softball, I like to go to the range and shoot targets. As well as the military....obviously not for committing crimes."[311] For this group, guns could be used for a number of positive, neutral, or negative (especially if criminal) endeavors.

To determine the quality of their bearing, the Implemental group relied on the individual's usage of the gun. Vincent, a Massachusetts sergeant, neatly summarized this point, declaring that, "I don't look at guns as having a role. I look at people as

[310] Ibid.
[311] Personal Interview, Audio File #10 8/22/13

having a role...."[312] Members of this group were thus irritated by agency assigned to guns beyond their mechanical function. Toby, a Vermont state trooper, clearly stated his opposition to such a view, declaring that, "Guns did not kill those kids in Connecticut. The kid using that gun did. So you're going to hold an innate [sic] object responsible other than putting the responsibility where it belongs, that person....The argument should be should he have access to that and maybe that is the proper to way to point this conversation."[313] While not opposed to legislation regarding gun ownership, Toby and the rest of the implemental category members called into question the rhetorical accuracy and utility of focusing on guns rather than people.

Regarding guns as a means of state resistance, the members of this category were commensurately doubtful. Jerry, a Massachusetts patrol officer, was unsure about a government that monopolized force, stipulating that, "the way the laws are written now....as a citizen on the street [you've the right] to protect yourself from deadly force from somebody else....The government should not have a monopoly on that."[314] However, this usage of guns for personal protection was not an invitation for state resistance. Vincent was blunt, declaring that while the government should not have absolute monopoly on force, those who sought to take the law into their own hands were, "crackpots....If you're in a militia someplace because you believe that the world is going to devolve into us all fighting with each other and you need to have all your stockpiles....The world's too complex. It's not the Alamo anymore."[315] In this

[312] Personal Interview, Audio File #19 11/07/13
[313] Personal Interview, Audio File #8 8/08/13
[314] Personal Interview, Audio File #25 11/29/13
[315] Personal Interview, Audio File #19 11/07/13

complex world, the proper route was one universal, but tiered, access to force in an attempt to balance self-protection and the need of the state for centralized and respected authority.

The state's eminent access to force was seen as a tool, necessary for the preservation of social function and order. Cooper, a Vermont Sheriff's lieutenant, confirmed that the government should retain authority over force and to impose, "some regulations. No regulation as far as force is concerned, things get way out of hand, but as far as one entity having total control over it as opposed to it being spread out somewhat evenly amongst local, state and federal, I don't think one person should have total control over it."[316] Cooper was a member of the sheriff's department, one the four distinct Vermont law enforcement agencies with potentially contiguous jurisdiction (a constabulary, state trooper barracks, and incorporated police department also in the area) - not counting the potential for federalized agencies. This multiplicity (common throughout America) was reflected in Cooper and the rest of the Implemental group's dedication to a tiered and distributed force structure. The police forces and government in general would retain primary access, due to the primary importance of general order and safety. Vincent concluded that, "I am less concerned, I guess as far as relative power, about the state oppressing the people than I am about people doing things with the power that the state should have."[317] United by an appreciation for practical application, the Implemental group had no interest in imbuing firearms with significance beyond their deadly utility.

[316] Personal Interview, Audio File #4 7/29/13
[317] Personal Interview, Audio File #19 11/07/13

Hierarchical

The three LEO participants in the Hierarchical group differentiated themselves from the implemental category in two ways. First, they placed a greater emphasis on the role of guns in the constitution and as a potential check on state/federal overstep. Second, these participants viewed citizen gun ownership as a net positive, guaranteeing equity and increasing security in society. Otherwise the Hierarchical group was similar to the Implemental group. For Wilson (a Vermont detective sergeant), Leonard (a Vermont constable), and Eugene (a Massachusetts detective sergeant), the rule of law remained paramount. However, in their conception citizen gun ownership benefited the rule of law, rather than seeing the relation between the two as inimical (for the Contrary group) or dependent on usage (as did the Implemental group). Leonard declared that, "in society, there's definitely a place for guns. I'm a firm believer that an armed person is a citizen, an unarmed person is a subject."[318] Far from an impediment, and more than an implement, guns had a role for order in the Hierarchical group.

Access to firearms to defend oneself from harm and injustice resonated with this group. This resonance reflected an interpretation of the American constitution emphasizing corporate responsibility for the nation's safety and welfare – potentially independent of the government's own control. Wilson, a Vermont detective sergeant, introduced this concept, saying that in addition to self-defense, "the role of guns in society is to protect the people from enemies abroad and their own government....an armed society is one that's not vulnerable."[319] Rather than differentiate amongst the

[318] Personal Interview, Audio File #6 8/07/13
[319] Personal Interview, Audio File #11 8/27/13

government agencies according to domestic (police forces) and international (military forces) realms, Wilson and the other members generalized aspects of these roles to all lawful citizens with access to arms. Although the police and the military had primary responsibility for their respective domains, Wilson made the claim that with 'about 300 million'[320] firearms across America, "If you look at it in its very simplistic form, that's a huge army...biggest in the world."[321] At this broad level, gun ownership functioned as a guarantee of international security.

Domestically, the Hierarchical group level believed that guns could (as Eugene said), "level the playing field a little bit, I think....[like] the Colt quote."[322] The 'Colt quote' in question, "God created man, Samuel Colt made them equal,"[323] indicated a belief that firearms could enable the individual to retain power even in the face of tumultuous violence. This leveling had limited applications to the government as well. Leonard, a Vermont constable, explained that he did not find the concepts of 'sovereign citizens' entirely, "wrong, but they're not valid in today's society....You can't make your own license plate...and just start driving, which is what sovereign citizens believe. I've stopped a few of them, and they've been really interesting to talk to."[324] Wilson also expressed some discomfort with the power of the state, wondering whether, since its founding, "over those 200 years our federal government has clearly grown by leaps and bounds. Is it a beast now? Is it capable of pushing, you know,

---

[320] Although there are approximately 300 private million firearms in America, they are not evenly distributed. In other words, many if not most firearm owners possess more than one. For more information, please refer to the demographics section of Chapter 1.
[321] Personal Interview, Audio File #11 8/27/13
[322] Personal Interview, Audio File #15 10/29/13
[323] Common saying amongst firearm owners and enthusiasts of the American West of the 19th century. This saying is likely apocryphal, with no mention until the early 20th century, no clearly cited sources, and numerous variations.
[324] Personal Interview, Audio File #6 8/07/13

putting that control on citizens? I don't know."[325] In the face of these questions, Eugene summarized the Hierarchical group's view that, "'I have kind of have mixed feelings....it seems like there have been more situations where the person I guess maybe had that sheepdog type of mentality, used a firearm or something like that for good, then for bad....I think everyone should have power in society....[But] there are different levels of power."[326] Both the Hierarchical group and the Implemental group had complex ideals. The Hierarchical group was more comfortable with an armed citizenry alongside the state than the implemental group.

Linked to their views on positions on the Access and Regulation spectrum, the members of the Hierarchical group were unconvinced that extending gun control legislation was linked to crime reduction or otherwise efficacious. Eugene, commenting on the disparity between the literature of guns rights and gun control organizations, remarked that, "you get contradictory information, obviously, but I don't see that gun law and the reduction of gun crime go hand-in-hand."[327] With these generally positive views of citizen gun ownership, and doubt as to the utility of extending gun controls, the Hierarchical group thought of such ownership as complementary to and constituent of the properly functioning state. Furthermore, reluctant to have an unopposed state body, the members of the group imbued firearms ownership with a symbolic (not practical) potential to resist state tyranny.

[325] Personal Interview, Audio File #11 8/27/13
[326] Personal Interview, Audio File #15 10/29/13
[327] Ibid.

Category	Contrary	Implemental	Hierarchical
Participants	Isaac, Zach, Morris	Cooper, Toby, Alex, Vincent, Jerry	Leonard, Wilson, Eugene
Gun Symbolism	Indicative of lawlessness, inherently dangerous, and too common	None – their valence largely reflects how people use them	Objects of American significance, with greater potential for utility than harm
Who Should Wield Guns	State agents, with few exceptions for sporting usages (fewer people)	State agents and those lawful people seeking to ensure their safety (up to the individual)	State agents and those lawful people seeking to ensure their safety and freedom (more people)
Rubrics Proposed	If firearms account for violent crimes and acts of terror, better to somewhat reduce accessibility – Negative net effect on the State	If firearms, crime, and the State are too complex, it is better to treat guns as mechanical and address violence more generally – Situational effect on the State	If firearms ensure greater personal safety and political balancing, they should be more readily accessible – Positive net effect on the State

Table 3.3 Summary of LEO Sample in the Gun Ownership and the State Spectrum

Chapter 4: Whose Problem is it, and Where?

> *When I went to school in Vermont....on a Saturday afternoon, many an hour was spent at the Williams Sound Dump shooting rats with the town people. They'd be there shooting them, and we'd be there shooting. Today, we'd have three problems. PETA would be after us for shooting the rats, EPA would be after us for putting lead in the ground, and somebody else would be after something. And that's part of the problem.*[328]
> – Thomas, a Massachusetts range officer

Harkening back to his college years, Thomas was disappointed by his perception of a societal shift away from gun culture towards other interests. For most of the sample, like Thomas, guns evoked valenced impressions and ideas linked to social judgments. I interviewed participants in Massachusetts and Vermont, keen to explore convergence and divergence in the responses of citizen gun owners (CGO) and law enforcement officers (LEO). Of the 26 participants, ten were from Vermont (five LEOs, five CGOs) and 16 were from Massachusetts (six LEOs, ten CGOs).[329] Divided by place, history, and state gun legislation, it is not surprising that neither the CGO sample nor the LEO sample were particularly homogeneous in their responses.

This chapter discusses differences between Massachusetts and Vermont gun ownership and legislative history. I conclude that Vermont has a rural libertarian streak in its liberal politics, legislation, and gun ownership, compared to Massachusetts' more centralized, urban emphasis. This likely influenced LEO and CGO sample divergence across state lines. Compared to LEOs, Citizen gun owners more often considered firearms as bulwarks against state tyranny, and objected more to gun controls. In effect, the samples competed with one another to secure

[328] Personal Interview, Audio File #12 9/29/13
[329] Two of the Vermont sample were female, while three of the Massachusetts sample were female.

legitimacy in eyes of the state and society. For law enforcement officers, this precluded a departure from their status as enforcers, particularly not towards perceptions of anarchy. For the gun owners, depending on their goals, this often meant an attempt to cement firearms as an inviolable American right.

Status of the States

Massachusetts and Vermont are very similar in a number of respects. According to FBI crime reporting, Massachusetts and Vermont enjoy low rates of homicide (Vermont has similarly low rates of violent crime in general).[330] They are neighboring New England states, known for their socially progressive and liberal politics. Both were early adopters of civil unions, and then gay marriage (Massachusetts the first through the court system, Vermont the first through the legislature). In recent elections, both voted by considerable margins for the Democratic party candidate. Indeed, in the 2012 elections, President Barack Obama received his widest margin of victory (67% to 31%) in Vermont, which has voted for Democratic presidents consistently since 1992.[331] However, this trend of liberal politics is not totalizing - Vermont voted Republican in every election except 1964 prior to Bill Clinton's run for office, and Republican Governor Jim Douglas won four elections between 2002 and 2008.[332] While Massachusetts also elected a Republican governor,(Mitt Romney) in 2002 and 2004, its politics now align with the Democratic

[330] Specifically, Vermont ranked 50th (out of 51) in homicide rates and 50th in general violent crime rates in 2012. Massachusetts ranked 45th in homicide rates and 21st in general violent crime rates in 2012. Department of Justice, US. "Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics: Estimated Crime in 2012 - Violent Crime." http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/Search/Crime/State/RunCrimeOneYearofData.cfm Accessed February 25th, 2014.
[331] 270toWin. "Vermont Presidential Electronic Voting History." http://www.270towin.com/states/Vermont
[332] Ibid.

party platform.[333] Finally, the states differ in population size (Massachusetts is ten times more populous) and population density (Massachusetts ranks 3rd, Vermont 30th).[334] Vermont is the most rural of the New England states, while Massachusetts is the most urban.

Vermont existed as the Republic of Vermont, a commonwealth with a 1777 constitution, prior to joining the United States in 1791 as the 14th state. Encapsulating aspects of its past and present liberal but government wary ethos, the Vermont Republic's constitution banned slavery (the first state to do so) while guaranteeing, "a right to bear arms for the defense of themselves and the State....that the military should be kept under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power."[335] Vermont specifically identified a personal right to firearms prior to the constitution, let alone the bill of rights. As such, Vermont currently has among the fewest state firearm laws in the country. Beyond federal laws, Vermont only prohibits carrying a loaded rifle in a vehicle (commonly explained as a poaching deterrent) and the possession of silencers/sound suppressors (also explained as a poaching deterrent).[336] Anyone who legally possesses their firearm, including residents of other states, can conceal carry that firearm – there is no permit or certification process for conceal

[333] 270toWin. "Massachusetts Presidential Electronic Voting History." http://www.270towin.com/states/Massachusetts Accessed February 20th, 2014.
[334] United States Census Bureau. "Table 14. State Population—Rank, Percent Change, and Population Density: 1980 to 2010." https://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s0014.pdf, Posted in 2012, Accessed February 24th 2014.
[335] Vermont Republic Constitution. "A Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants of the State of Vermont: Article XV." http://vermont-archives.org/govhistory/constitut/con77.html Written in 1777, Accessed February 20th 2014.
[336] Vermont Statutes Online. "Title 13: Crimes and Criminal Procedure Chapter 85: WEAPONS13 V.S.A. § 4010. Gun silencers." http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/fullsection.cfm?Title=13&Chapter=085&Section=04010 Accessed February 23rd, 2014

carry. This is why Vermont is held in such high regard by gun rights supporters, who colloquially refer to this as 'constitutional carry.' Household firearms ownership is above the national average, at 42% in 2001.[337]

Massachusetts did not delineate a personal right to firearms. Instead, arms were justified, "for the common defense…[and]military power shall always be held in an exact subordination to the civil authority, and be governed by it."[338] Massachusetts currently has some of the strictest firearm laws in the country. Unlike Vermont, there is no provision to possess a firearm without certification, training, and registry with the local police forces. There are several different levels of permits that require different training levels, allow different classes of firearms, and stipulate different conditions of ownership. Magazines are restricted to 10 rounds, safe storage laws apply, sales records are permanent, handguns must be preapproved state certifications before entering the market, and gun features are tightly regulated.[339] All of the Massachusetts CGOs participants had 'class A' permits – the most permissive, allowing the possession of any legal firearm and the carry of a loaded pistol (concealed or unconcealed).[340] Most types of permits, including the class A, are 'may-issue' - their issuance is at the discretion of the police chief. Of the

---

[337] North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. "BRFSS Survey Results 2001 for Nationwide Firearms." http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/brfss/2001/us/firearm3.html Updated September 20th, 2002, Accessed January 21st, 2014.
[338] Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "A Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." https://malegislature.gov/Laws/Constitution#cp10s00.htm Written in 1780, Accessed February 25th 2014.
[339] Massachusetts Legislature. "General Laws Chapter 140 Section 131 Licenses to Carry Firearms; Class A and B; Conditions and Restrictions." https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXX/Chapter140/Section131 Accessed February 25th, 2014.
[340] Ibid.

Massachusetts CGO sample, many complained about the cost and time associated with obtaining the requisite training and applying for class A permits. This permitting obligation may have accentuated the power differential between the superior, the state of Massachusetts, and the subordinates, gun owning residents, in the polity. Such a dichotomy may have led to a greater degree of opposition, potentially radicalizing the Massachusetts CGO sample. As Blau remarked, "Although power that is not legitimated by the approval of subordinates can be used to organize them....it is out of such shared discontent that opposition ideologies and movements develop."[341] Thus it is not surprising that only one permit holder, Danielle (a Massachusetts homemaker), supported the permitting process, saying that, "I think it's pretty regulated nice in Massachusetts....everybody should be like Massachusetts."[342] Household firearm ownership is relatively low, at 12.6% (less than ⅓ of Vermont's, and just over ⅓ of the national average of 31.7%).[343]

Spectra Compared

Access and Regulation

Law enforcement officers in Massachusetts, enforcing and administering a far greater degree of gun control across a more urban landscape, tended to hold state control of firearms in greater regard. Most supported extending Massachusetts feature disqualifying criteria (like magazine capacity) to the federal level, in addition to a universal gun registry. Only Eugene (a detective sergeant) was in the

[341] Peter Michael Blau. *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2009, 22.
[342] Personal Interview, Audio File 14, 10/26/13
[343] North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. "BRFSS Survey Results 2001 for Nationwide Firearms." http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/brfss/2001/us/firearm3.html Updated September 20th, 2002, Accessed January 21st, 2014.

Ambivalence group, with equivocal gun control feelings. The rest of the Massachusetts LEO participants were in the (self-explanatory) more category, or (in Morris's case) expressed a desire to rid America of all private firearms. Vermont LEOs were more likely to view guns in a range between neutral tools and positive implements, and proposed fewer gun control measures. These gun control measures were relatively moderate and often shared with the CGO sample proposals, including increased mental health exclusions, universal background checks, and increased prosecution of firearm felonies (all shared by the Massachusetts LEOs). Except for Alex, the Vermont LEO sample supported most of these new forms of gun control.

The CGOs held a range of views, but these participants diverged from the LEO sampling by supporting a right to bear arms universally, and generally supporting fewer legislative changes. Several opposed any new legislation, and two Massachusetts gun owners (Abbie, a teaching assistant and Sean, a mechanic) demanded significantly less. As the Vermont gun owners had little regulation beyond federal standards, they were not as likely to react to such legislation with opprobrium – of the five on Fritz, a Vermont a gunsmith, was in the suspicion category. Brian (a retired manager) and Lauren (a state representative) in fact urged increased legislation in the more category. In reaction to their perception of burdensome gun laws a majority of the Massachusetts CGOs held negative beliefs about firearms legislation and sought to abate it.

Citizen gun owners (CGO) potentially had rights to gain in this regard, while the LEOs had no (or few) particular incentives to re-imagine the American state with fewer gun controls. Thus the Massachusetts police were generally content with their

regulations, while the Massachusetts gun owners were more likely to be members of gun rights organizations and have an anti-regulatory sentiment. The distance between the Vermont LEOs and CGOs was, in comparison, miniscule. The law enforcement officers in Vermont were members of local departments, in a state with low levels of violent crime. Thus, as Carlson said, "shaped by department-specific variables such as the violent crime rate...as well as histories of civilian-police relations....police officers themselves may hold vastly different views on gun policies – not unlike the vastly different views of Americans more generally."[344] The difference between Vermont and Massachusetts police is just as great, if not greater, than difference between CGOs of each state.

Locus of Responsibility

All of the LEOs emphasized law-abiding behavior as central to the proper function of society, but Vermont officers showed greater focus on this front (four of the five law and order members). Toby, a Vermont state trooper, spearheaded this law and order emphasis. He emphasized that lethal violence, while a last recourse, could be a justifiable and laudable response:

> "a few months back, a guy broke in and attacked his former girlfriend, stabbed her a number of times. The new current boyfriend grabbed the firearm and shot and killed the attacker....I'm sorry, but God bless him that he had a firearm there and that he knew how to use it because he more likely saved her life and his."[345]

Here findings support with another tenet of Carlson's theories – one of gendered vulnerability. Carlson, describing outreach efforts by the NRA, gun manufacturers, and gun owners to incorporate women, examines how the, "social

[344] Carlson "Policing the Second Amendment," 2013, 19.
[345] Personal Interview, Audio File #8 8/08/13

construction of crime reproduces masculine privilege."[346] In Toby's narrative, the woman was a passive entity, dependent on the intercession of a 'good guy with a gun' (as Nutnfancy described it)[347] for her life. However, I extend this framework to law enforcement officers – this masculinizing frame of reference did not require gun ownership, and Toby, who related this story, was a Vermont state trooper.

This response mirrored the (CGO composed) Personal Responsibility group's usage of Jonathan Simon's crime control 'revolution' thesis. Absent trust in the effectiveness or trustworthiness of state authority, they believed lethal force could be utilized, not as an exception to, but as a *dispensation* of justice.[348] These members of the CGO sample agreed and extended aspects of this argument into anti-federalist views (described in the next section, Gun Ownership and the State). At the other end of the spectrum, Isaac (a Massachusetts deputy chief) and Morris (a Massachusetts sergeant) advocated public order initiated by government legislation and projects. In the middle, four members (of the 11) of the law enforcement sample sought to titrate responsibility by fostering dialog towards those topics.

Although several CGOs advocated a sense of personal responsibility similar to the LEO sample's law-abidingness focus, the majority (ten of the 15 participants) pursued some sort of holistic balance between the responsibilities of the individual, society, and the state. Four gun owners (two from each state) identified socioeconomic woes as their paramount concern, advocating government and social

---

[346] Jennifer Carlson. [unpublished manuscript, later published by Feminist Criminology in 2014]. "The Great Equalizer? Crime, Vulnerability, and Gender in Pro-Gun Discourse." University of Toronto 2013, 1.
[347] Wayne LaPierre, NRA Vice President, notoriously said after the Sandy Hook shooting that the, "The only thing that can stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."
[348] Simon 2004, 356.

responsibility to address this perceived failure in general welfare. The six in the Mixed group asserted that responsibility lay throughout society, but the individual was the primary component and carrier of that responsibility. In contrast with the law and order and Personal Responsibility groups, these Mixed groups did not totalize a vision of righteous violence – even if they supported specific acts of violence. The CGOs were more varied in their goals and ideals than the LEOs, perhaps relating to their greater range and experience of socioeconomic class, employment, and larger sample size.

Gun Ownership and the State

Finally, the LEO and CGO participants had divisions between their visions of Gun Ownership and the State. No LEOs seriously considered armed resistance to the American government. Vincent, a Massachusetts sergeant, said he was, "less concerned, I guess as far as relative power, about the state oppressing the people than I am about people doing things with the power that the state should have."[349] Carlson's Sovereign Subject was not applicable to the LEOs. The majority of the LEO sample, placed in the implemental category, saw guns as tools, with valence subject to their use. Increasing the incorporation of guns into American society, by whatever method, introduced a new venue of potential risk for these officers.

The Vermont LEO sample was more amenable to an armed citizenry, citing ideas about security and welfare increasing with armed members of the public ('an armed society is a polite society'). Leonard, the constable, reminded me that he had, "five thousand bosses, because they all elect me," when I asked him whose laws he

[349] Personal Interview, Audio File #19 11/07/13

enforced.[350] Leonard contrasted himself with urban law enforcement agencies and their greater support of gun control views, saying, "Sheriffs are elected by the people, police chiefs are appointed by select boards and committees."[351] From this perspective, Leonard and some of the other Vermont LEOs were no more than citizens taking up a public service; their law enforcement status did not conflict with their self-portrayal as essentially citizens. Thus Leonard, and two of the other Vermont officers (Alex and Toby), did in fact assume aspects of the Sovereign Subject. They supported legal recognition of fully 'private' citizen's demands for firearms for the purpose of defense, seeing little conflict between that aim and state function. Furthermore, they saw themselves as participatory in the 'citizens' category, and thus were more apt to support increasing rights as applied to citizens.

Meanwhile, the Massachusetts officers were less enthused. Half of them were members of the contrary category, which viewed citizen gun ownership as a destabilizing influence (no Vermont LEOs were in that category). The CGO sample diverged from this Massachusetts portion of the LEO sample – a majority of the citizen gun owners, irrespective of state, thought that gun ownership benefited the state. A substantial minority (four of the 15 participants) of males CGOs believed strongly in the right and possibility of armed resistance to the American state, and thus were in the deterrent category. Guns were totems of personal empowerment and rich investments in an American tradition of limited statehood. The majority, eight members, had positive views on guns but did not consider them a likely or useful ward against the American state. Rather, their potential utility for self-defense

[350] Personal Interview, Audio File #6 8/07/13
[351] Ibid.

and political balancing outweighed their evaluation of gun ownership's potential risks – a shift of gradation based upon individual differences, but distinct from other groups.

Chapter 5: How Sovereign the Citizen?

> *Goneril: Hear me, my lord;/ What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,/ To follow in a house where twice so many/ Have a command to tend you?*
> *Regan: What need one?*
> *King Lear: O, reason not the need!* [352] – King Lear, Act 2 Scene 4

One of the vexing difficulties in pursuing qualitative research on highly charged topics such as the meanings of American gun ownership is in the treatment of variation. Some participants expressed ideological ambitions of citizens assuming state power through gun ownership, but most others did not. As conveyed by the King Lear quote above, deeply held beliefs, when challenged by questions, do not always yield answers amenable to the interviewer's approach. The most ideological gun owning participants linked gun rights to other deeply held convictions that branched broadly. This indicates the potential of future studies using guns as a *lens* to apprehend structures of American values. There is a rich body of sociological work on totems that could be used to analyze the structures of American values through the prism of guns. I was somewhat naïve to expect, from the complex work of chapters two and three and the brief comparisons of chapter four, to derive simple answers to my starting questions.

I tried to incorporate patterns of these references in my descriptions during chapters two and three. When asked to explain their views, the participants gave responses rich with allusions to history, law, crime, social ideals, empowerment, and vulnerability. However, such responses necessitated that I carefully negotiate between the specific properties of the individual and the general properties of a

[352] Shakespeare. "King Lear." 2:4:257-262.

group.[353] Even within the span of a single interview, many participants expressed contradictory notions about my three interlinked questions: What do participants believe about the citizen's claim to firearms and the administration of lethal force? How does this claim interact with potentially competing claims on deadly force by centralized authority? How do the participants believe society should be structured, particularly in relation to these claims on firearms and deadly force? I have few nomothetic responses that apply to the entirety of my sample, but I do have a set that applies to the two groups, 'ideological gun' owners and law enforcement officers, described in my hypothesis.

In the mean of their viewpoints, according with my hypothesis, citizen gun owners and law enforcement officers held contrasting views about these three questions. CGOs put far fewer limits on the citizens' right to firearms, and saw firearms as well suited for the defense of their person and home. Most of the LEOs placed more weight on controls that could help them track guns, like registries, and (with the exception of some Vermont officers) more readily distinguish citizen arms from police and military arms. Participants who treated firearms as tools of their profession (like the LEOs) or primarily sporting purposes, were more moderate. Among these more moderate persons, the divisions between LEOs and CGOs were far less stark, and continued along a gradient, except for a Massachusetts officer who expressed an urge to ban all firearms. These general trends, while unsurprising, were confirmed by my interpretation of the data.

[353] Oliver C. Robinson. "The Idiographic / Nomothetic Dichotomy: Tracing Historical Origins of Contemporary Confusions." History & Philosophy of Psychology(Vol 13 No 2), 2011, 33.

Like the sheepdogs described in Chapter 1, the more ideological gun rights proponents portrayed their ownership as a means of participation in an extra-state tradition. This tradition, distinctly American in nature, 1) idealized that self-defense is a natural law to be *recognized*, not regulated, by the government; 2) claimed that responsible armed individuals have and should continue to constitute the body, moral center, and defense of American society; and 3) saw gun ownership, as the modern manifestation of this essential aspect of the American citizenry, as a boon to the individual, society, and the state. As such, these proponents asserted that the laws and norms of society should incentivize the promulgation of armed Americans. They were mutually entrained with Carlson's Sovereign Subject, but did not imagine themselves as merely the newest aspect of a neo-liberal diffusion of state powers.

In this way, they constituted an amorphous militia of ideology rather than explicit organization of rebellion – a social movement *within* the broader category of citizen gun owners. I refer to this vocal subgroup of American gun owners as the *Armed Citizenry* movement. Rather than primarily proselytizing, this movement saw itself as holding a bulwark. They were on the defensive, partly from the context of mass shootings and failed attempts at new federal gun controls, but also because they feared obsolescence. American gun culture is unique, and the members of this movement were apprehensive about the future. Like the zero-sum game between victims and criminals Simon described in *Governing Through Crime*, this social movement would win or lose at every cultural shift, gun crisis, court decision, or legislative battle.[354]

[354] Jonathan Simon. *Governing Through Crime*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, 276.

This gun rights movement interacted with the state in a complex fashion. Rather than a movement primarily characterized by civil disobedience to reveal an inequality, I saw the armed citizenry movement members advocate their views through narratives of history and binaries of American and Un-American. Their histories were populated by the Founding Fathers, Minutemen, Samuel Colt, Robert Heinlein, and victims of crime. They placed themselves inside this narrative, joining to defend against perceived threats of totalitarianism, crime, irresponsibility, and irrelevance. Their history was not Weber's history of a modern state coming alive as it took the reins of legitimate force. Their history was that of a fundamental right, natural or god-given, to self-defense, as nations recognized or refused it and prospered or regressed as a result. This was far from a state-centric view that legitimate force was a mantle to be tended and lent, as Weber theorized. The armed citizens movement instead saw legitimate force as the realm of the individual's security to achieve and maintain welfare; as such a domain for the government to respect as a human right or *precedent* to human rights. Rather, this was closer to Kopel's depiction of how Americans describe themselves as composing the body of the law – in this conception, violence was the just response to an assault, as it restores order to these bearers of the law.[355]

These armed citizen supporters did not intend to increase the responsibilities of the private individual at the expense of state authority – they saw their movement as a return to an idealized prerequisite of social values. Rick Santorum, the runner up 2012 Republican presidential nominee, clarified this position with the common

[355] David B. Kopel. "The Natural Right of Self-Defense: Heller's Lesson for the World." Syracuse Law Review (Vol 59). 2008, 1016.

declaration that, "the Second Amendment is there to protect the First Amendment!" [356] Carlson's Sovereign Subject template applies again– this 'responsibilizes' citizens for the duties, like ensuring security and protecting personal freedoms of speech, privacy, (according to the Supreme Court) gun ownership, and, "particularly the execution of lethal and legitimate violence, that the state has typically monopolized." [357] I cannot evaluate whether Carlson's assertion, that Sovereign Subject's claims are new reactions to modern society, is accurate – I do not have longitudinal data. I also cannot claim that this social movement is bounded – in fact most respondents, police and citizen alike, expressed a small subset of the Sovereign Subject claims.

However, this neo-radical moment is not the full story. Only a small portion of the sample group – at most ⅛ of citizen gun owners, and perhaps one Vermont law enforcement officer – fit neatly into this frame. Many CGO participants were enthusiastic gun owners who also wanted the state to fight socioeconomic inequality on their behalf. Guns function to 'responsibilize' personal security, but gun owners are not necessarily interested in libertarian policies. While the most ideologically ardent supporters of gun ownership did see firearms as a guarantor of social relevance and a ward against victimization, the majority of participants do not fit neatly into Carlson's neo-liberal privatization framework. Members of the sample express both support for government intervention to augment their welfare and support for gun ownership – a view shared by many LEO participants. This mixed result suggests that the ideology of American gun ownership is multidimensional,

[356] Rick Santorum, public statement at a 2012 political rally.
[357] Carlson "States, subjects and sovereign power: Lessons from global gun cultures" 2013, 2.

does not cleanly align along an axis of neo-liberal privatization, and is partly shared by the law enforcement officers who enforce gun regulations.

Participant ideals did not fit neatly into a 'more neo-liberal / neo-radical or less neo-liberal' framework. Rather than reject the rich data, I decided to include it. After all, my intention was to establish a descriptive and theoretical foothold in a field where few theories – largely Carlson's contributions– and little data had been published. Although I did not find a cohesive new theory to account for the range of participant responses, this research contributes rich data to the sociological study of American gun ownership data. This is a prerequisite for new theory, more informed future studies, more useful modeling, and more efficacious gun ownership policy in America.

I hope that this thesis lays the groundwork for future research, particularly on what drives legal gun acquisition and how different conceptions of gun symbolism fare among both police officers and gun owner communities. It's my hope that this research can form the basis of a systems understanding of American gun ownership - one which explores causality and reasons, rather than just survey results. As Hobbes, (in the first inset quotation of Chapter 1) expressed, to understand social order we must understand the citizen and, "what opinion he has of his fellow subjects, when he rides armed; of his fellow citizens, when he locks his doors; and of his children, and servants, when he locks his chests."[358] I have done my best, at this moment of time, to contribute to this enduring mission of social understanding and analysis.

[358] Hobbes 1651, 78.

Appendix A – Oral Guide and Interview Form

Oral Guide

My name is Justin Sola, a student-researcher from Harvard College, and I am asking you to take part in my research study.

I would like to interview you to learn more about how persons with firearms access view the role of guns in society. The interview will last about 20-30 minutes, and after going over some demographic information, I would like to record the interview. This will aid the accuracy of my transcription and better allow me to pay attention to you, rather than take notes. I will keep the data I collect confidential, and will not share your personal information with anyone outside the research team.

You can skip questions that you do not want to answer or stop the interview at any time. Being in this study is voluntary. Please tell me if you do not want to participate at any time, even after the interview is concluded. If you have any questions, please contact me at my email, listed on my business card.

Are you ready to begin? *If yes, begin collecting demographic information. 'Political Activity' refers to degree that the subject incorporates gun issues into their interaction with the political world, including decisions on voting behavior and party affiliation. Upon conclusion:*

Are you ready to begin the recorded interview? *If yes, begin interview process by starting the audio recorder. Subsequently, name the participant (and ID code) and interviewer, and note the time, date, location, and event (if applicable). Upon conclusion:*

Thank you for talking with me! Feel free to contact me with questions regarding my research. If you have anything further to add or can recommend somebody else for me to speak with, I welcome your input. *Give card and/or contact information.*

Interview Questions (Recorded)

1. Do you own a (if speaking to LE or military personnel, phrase as 'personal gun') gun?
    A. (if yes) How did you arrive at gun ownership?
    B. (if no) What do you use guns most often for? (skip question 2)
2. What do you use your gun/s most often for? Are you a firearms enthusiast?
3. Who should and should not own firearms? Why?
4. Could you briefly describe what defines a good gun owner? What defines a bad one?
5. Do you believe that access to guns should be regulated? Should guns themselves be regulated?
    A. (if yes/unsure) Could you elaborate on your views on regulation and access?
    B. (if no) Why should types of guns, and access to them, be unregulated?
6. Do you advocate a particular change in American gun ownership? If so, what?
7. Could you briefly describe what defines a good society? What defines a bad one?
8. Do you advocate a particular change in American society? If so, what?
9. What should the role of guns be in society? What about the role of gun owners?
10. Are you familiar with the term 'civilian sheepdog?'
    A. (if yes) What do you think of the concept?
    B. (if no/unsure) Are you familiar with the 'citizen-soldier' or the 'minuteman' phrases?
        I. (if yes) What do you think of these concepts? (if no, continue to next question)
11. Should the American government have a monopoly on force, whether at the state/federal level or military/police level?
12. I am trying to study how people with access to firearms – both police and civilians – think about the role of guns in society and governance. Are there any questions I should have asked? Any information you would like to offer or ask of me?

References

270toWin. "Massachusetts Presidential Electronic Voting History." http://www.270towin.com/states/Massachusetts Accessed February 20th, 2014.

270toWin. "Vermont Presidential Electronic Voting History." http://www.270towin.com/states/Vermont Accessed February 20th, 2014.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. and Smith, Philip. "The discourse of American civil society: A new proposal for cultural studies." Theory and Society 22: 151-207, 1993.

AR15 Forum. "What is a 'Civilian Sheepdog?'" http://www.ar15.com/forums/t_1_5/837837_What_is_a_andamp_quot_Civilian_Sheepdog_andamp_quot_.html Posted 2009, Accessed May 1st, 2013.

Bellesiles, Michael A. *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture.* New York: 2000

Berlin, Isaiah. *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Blackstone, Sir William. *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books (Volume 1)*. (1753) Edited by George Sharswood. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1893.

Blau, Peter M. *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2009.

Bogart21. "The Sheepdog Concept and the Modern American Constitutional Militia." http://www.blogster.com/bogart21/the-sheepdog-concept-and-the-modern-american-constitutional-militia, Posted Aug 9 2010, Accessed May 8th 2013.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Carlson, Jennifer. "'I DON'T DIAL 911': American Gun Politics and the Problem of Policing." British Journal of Criminology (52), 1113–1132, 2012.

Carlson, Jennifer [unpublished manuscript]. "Policing the Second Amendment: Unpacking Police Attitudes toward Gun Policies." University of Toronto, provided on October 10th, 2013 via email correspondence.

Carlson, Jennifer. "States, subjects and sovereign power: Lessons from global gun cultures." Theoretical Criminology, November 25, 2013, doi:10.1177/1362480613508424

Carlson, Jennifer [unpublished manuscript, later published by Feminist Criminology in 2014]. "The Great Equalizer? Crime, Vulnerability, and Gender in Pro-Gun

Discourse." University of Toronto, provided on October 10th, 2013 via email correspondence.

Civilian Sheepdog Forum. "What is a civilian sheepdog?" http://civiliansheepdog.proboards.com/index.cgi?board=ethics&action=display&thread=4 Posted 2010, Accessed May 9th 2013.

Collins, Randall. *Interaction Ritual Chains. Princeton Studies in Cultural Sociology.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "A Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." https://malegislature.gov/Laws/Constitution#cp10s00.htm Written in 1780, Accessed February 25th 2014.

Defensive Carry Forum. "The Sheepdog's Prayer." http://www.defensivecarry.com/forum/concealed-carry-issues-discussions/119341-sheepdogs-prayer.html Posted 2011, Accessed May 4th 2013.

Department of Justice, US. "Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics: Estimated Crime in 2012 – Violent Crime." http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/Search/Crime/State/RunCrimeOneYearofData.cfm Accessed February 25th, 2014.

DeWalt, K. M., DeWalt, B. R., & Wayland, C. B. "Participant observation." In *Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology,* edited by H. R. Bernard. 1998.

Dias, Tom. "Gun Industry Marketing of Lethality." American Bar Association: The Brief (Vol 29 No 1), 20-27, 1999.

Gallup Historical Trends. "Gallup: Guns." www.gallup.com/poll/1645/Guns.aspx?version=print Accessed November 9th, 2013

Garland, David. "The Limits of the Sovereign State: Strategies of Crime Control in Contemporary Society." British Journal of Criminology (Vol 36 No 4), 445-471, 1996.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures.* New York: Basic Books, 1973.

greatonyak. "Archie Bunker on Gun Control." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLjNJI54GMM Posted November 6th, 2006, Accessed 2/10/13.

Grossman, D., and Christensen, L. *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace.* WSG Research Publications, 2004.

Grossman, D., and Christensen, L., "On Sheep, Wolves, and Sheepdogs," in Warriors: On Living with Courage, Discipline and Honor, L. Christensen (ed), Paladin Press, 2004.

Grossman, David. *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. New York: Back Bay Books, 1995.

Harcourt, Bernard E. "Measured Interpretation: Introducing The Method of Correspondence Analysis to Legal Studies." University of Illinois Law Review; volume 2002 no. 4, pages 979-1018. Posted online 2003.

Harcourt, Bernard E. *Language of the Gun. Chicago.* The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Prepared and edited for the McMaster University Archive by Rod Hay. London, 1651.

Hofstadter, Richard. "America as a gun culture." American Heritage Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1970.

Kohn, Abigail A. *Shooters: Myths and Realities of America's Gun Cultures.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Kopel, David. "The Ideology Of Gun Ownership and Gun Control in the United States." Quarterly Journal of Ideology, 1995.

Kopel, David. "The Natural Right of Self-Defense: Heller's Lesson for the World." Syracuse Law Review (Vol 59). 2008, 999-1016.

Krauser, Shane. "Sheepdogs - Protectors of Liberty (American Academy for Constitutional Education)." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFiCiMi17gk Posted September 22nd 2011, accessed May 5th, 2013

Krouse, William J. 'How Many Guns Are in the United States? - Number.' Gun Control Legislation, pp. 8-9. Washington DC: United States Congressional Research Service. November 14th, 2012.

Legault, Richard L. *Trends in American Gun Ownership.* New York: LFB Publishing LLC, 2008.

McGirr, Lisa. *Suburban Warriors*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2001.

Massachusetts Legislature. "General Laws Chapter 140 Section 131 Licenses to Carry Firearms; Class A and B; Conditions and Restrictions."

https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXX/Chapter140/Section131 Accessed February 25th, 2014.

Morrison, Gregory Boyce and Cooper, Jeff. *The Modern Technique of the Pistol.* Paulden, Arizona, USA: Gunsite Press, 1991.

Mr. Fipp. "The Civilian Sheepdog Theory." http://theobscurelifeofmrfipp.blogspot.com/2012/06/civilian-sheepdog-theory.html Posted Jun 24 2012, accessed May 6th, 2013.

National Research Council. *Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review.* Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2005.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. "Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence." Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2013.

North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. "BRFSS Survey Results 2001 for Nationwide Firearms." http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/brfss/2001/us/firearm3.html Updated September 20th, 2002, Accessed January 21st, 2014.

Nutnfancy. "The Concealed Carry Protocol." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei8OK4WdoW0 Posted Jan 7 2010, Accessed April 26th, 2013.

Nutnfancy. "Nutnfancy Channel." http://www.youtube.com/user/nutnfancy Accessed March 24th, 2013.

Nutnfancy. "Life Philosophy, Preparedness & Freedom Issues Sub Channel." http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL589A2871D81C1B9A. Accessed March 24th, 2013

Nutnfancy. "The Minuteman Prerogative." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZ4_V2sBsw8 Posted May 11th, 2010, accessed May 7th, 2013.

Nutnfancy. "The Sheepdog Concept." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OW8BZ7pRt28 Posted November 4th, 2009, Accessed March 25th, 2013.

Nutnfancy, Glenn Beck. "OFFICIAL VERSION Nutnfancy on Glenn Beck TV." http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=y0kMOTkCcsg#t=1208s Posted February 9th, 2012, Accessed May 5th 2013.

O'Malley, Patrick. "Risk, Crime and Prudentialism Revisited." University of Sydney Law School Legal Studies Research Paper series No. 09/122 October, 2009.

OpenCarry forum. "The Sheepdog Concept." http://forum.opencarry.org/forums/showthread.php?64721-quot-The-Sheepdog-Concept-quot Posted 2009, Accessed May 2nd 2013.

Pennsylvania Legislature. *Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776: A Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants of the Commonwealth, or State of Pennsylvania – Article XIII.* http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/pa08.asp

Polletta, Francesca. It was like a fever: Storytelling in protest and politics. University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Raymond, Eric S. "Eric's Gun Nut Page." http://www.catb.org/esr/guns/ Posted November 13th, 2010, accessed May 2nd 2013.

Raymond, Eric S. "The Parable of the Sheep." http://www.catb.org/esr/guns/sheep.html Posted October 22nd, 2010, accessed May 2nd 2013.

Robinson, Oliver C. "The Idiographic / Nomothetic Dichotomy: Tracing Historical Origins of Contemporary Confusions." History & Philosophy of Psychology(Vol 13 No 2), 2011, 32-39.

Simon, Jonathan. *Governing Through Crime*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Simon, Jonathan. "Gun Rights and the Constitutional Significance of Violent Crime." William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal, http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmborj/vol12/iss2/4 (Vol 12, issue 2), 2004.

"Sheepdog Concept." http://sheepdogconcept.com/ Accessed May 7th 2013.

Smith, Tom W. "2001 National Gun Policy Survey of the National Opinion Research Center: Research Findings." December 2001.

Stroud, Angela. "GOOD GUYS WITH GUNS: Hegemonic Masculinity and Concealed Handguns." Gender & Society, Vol. 26 No. 2, April 2012, 216-238.

Survivalist Forum. "A new take on the sheepdog concept." http://www.survivalistboards.com/showthread.php?t=186319 Posted 2011 Accessed May 4th, 2013.

Swartz, David. "Pierre Bourdieu: The Cultural Transmission of Social Inequality." Harvard Educational Review Vol. 47, No.4 November 1977.

Tarr, James. Laws for Firearms: Best States for Gun Owners in 2013. (Guns and Ammo Magazine Online)

http://www.gunsandammo.com/2013/03/14/ga-ranks-the-best-states-for-gun-owners-in-2013/ Posted March 14th, 2013, Accessed November 5th, 2013.

United States Census Bureau. "Table 14. State Population—Rank, Percent Change, and Population Density: 1980 to 2010." https://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s0014.pdf, Posted in 2012, Accessed February 24th 2014.

Urban Dictionary (by ArktikWarfare). "Nutnfancy." http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Nutnfancy Posted April 26th, 2010, Accessed March 27th, 2013.

Vermont Republic Constitution. "A Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants of the State of Vermont: Article XV." http://vermont-archives.org/govhistory/constitut/con77.html Written in 1777, Accessed February 20th 2014.

Vermont Statutes Online. "Title 13: Crimes and Criminal Procedure Chapter 85: WEAPONS13 V.S.A. § 4010. Gun silencers." http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/fullsection.cfm?Title=13&Chapter=085&Section=04010 Accessed February 23rd, 2014.

Wagner-Pacifici, Robin and Schwartz, Barry. "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past." American Journal of Sociology, 1991.

Weber, Max. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946.

Wilson, William Julius. "When Work Disappears: New Implications for Race and Urban Poverty in the Global Economy." London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, C/17, November 1998.