GUN OWNERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES A Response to Diminishing Social Capital and Distrust

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Introduction

There is not a substantial body of empirical research on the direct question for how socioeconomic decline relates to gun ownership. Nascent literature has prioritized the debate around whether firearms are deemed necessary for self_defense and crime reduction. However, scholars argue that even with the best available evidence, it is statistically difficult to identify, with solely survey data, how defensive gun usage can lead to successful victim resistance. These studies have garnered important discourse around the impact of gun availability on rates of violence, but the impact that communities and social networks and trust have on people's propensity toward gun attitudes is both woefully missing and urgently necessary. Arguably, a more promising approach regarding the firearm debate would be to identify which predictors contribute to people's desires around heightened protection.

RESEARCH QUESTION

- Can feelings of social precariousness and lack of trust predict people's attitudes towards guns, and did these sentiments potentially influence Trump's victory?
- I will study how many of poor American cities / rural areas are aggravated by crime and corruption, and how people's anxieties and lack of community are potential motivations for growing allegiance to gun culture. Additionally, my research will examine whether the publicly declared support against violent crime and poverty that Trump made during his campaign, incentivized individuals fearful for their safety to contribute to his vote.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Social capital predicts gun ownership Hypothesis 2: Gun ownership predicts Donald Trump's support

Hypothesis 3: The interaction combination: social capital and gun ownership uniquely predicts Trump support

Data and Explanatory Variables

We disentangle various aspects of how social capital can predict gun ownership, and the impact this may have had on the 2016 election. The data used in this study was obtained from the 2019 General Social Survey. As of 2019, the GSS targets a sample size of approximately 20,000 respondents aged 15 and over at the time of recruitment. They are drawn from a combination of self_completed online questionnaires and telephone interviews through a multi_stage stratified cluster sample. The hypotheses pertain to the following variables from GSS2019: trust (x1), owngun (x2), and pres16 (y). Eight independent variables total were utilized in the overall analysis. Each model uses the same independent variables and methods.

MODELING STRATEGY

- The first part of our analysis consists of the simple relationship between our three primary independent and dependent variables.
- To help formalize the connection between distrust and gun ownership, we conduct a multivariate regression by regressing distrust (x1) on owning a gun (x2).
- Lastly, we conduct a multivariate regression with the interaction term (trust and gun ownership) to determine further significance.

Bivariate Results

Bivariate regression equation and path diagram (with standardized Betas)

Owngun2	=	.3554688 + (.0297529) (11.95)	015766 ((.0369 (-0.43)
Vototavan		2970070	1 200727

Votetrump	=	.2879079	+	.290727
-		(.0205851)		(.0
		(13.99)		

(distrustful) 9646)

> N= 727 R^2= 0.0003

271 (owngun2) .0328459) (8.85)

> N= 858 R^2= 0.0838

Multivariate Regression Results

> talincomel raceWHITE totaleducation1

5 -11-12							where of a	h.c.			
Source		SS	df	MS			umber of o	DS	=		332
Madal	11 21	41001	•	1 25712	0.01		(9, 322)		=		.10
Model		41881	9	1.257132			rob > F		=	0.0	
Residual	00.3/	25589	322	.2061259	129		-squared	ad	=	0.1	
Total	77.6	86747	221	.234703	62		dj R-squar oot MSE	ea	=	0.1	
Total	//.0	380747	331	.234/03	.03	R	000 1152		=	.45	401
0%	/ngun2	Coef.	St	d. Err.		t	P> t		[95%	Conf.	Interval]
distru	stful	.1419728	. 0	568601	2.	50	0.013		. 0301	1086	.2538371
vote	etrump	0244719		086916	-0.	28	0.778	-	. 1954	4668	.146523
totalsocialcap	ital1	0165655		.06336	-0.	26	0.794	-	. 1412	2174	.1080863
republic	anism	.2490271	. 1	085993	2.	29	0.022		.0353	3733	.4626809
rura	larea	.2510136	. 0	959256	2.	62	0.009		.0622	2935	.4397337
	MALE	.1733351	. 0	512702	з.	38	0.001		.0724	4682	.274202
totalin	come1	.5088884	.1	731638	2.	94	0.004		. 1682	2132	.8495636
race	WHITE	.0608643	. 0	669261	0.	91	0.364	-	. 0708	8033	.1925319
totaleduca	tion1	0976664		212151	-0.	46	0.646	-	.5150	435	.3197108
	_cons	4096057		213291	-1.	92	0.056	-	. 8292	2255	.0100141
Source Model	50.20	SS 868919	df 9	MS		I	Number of F(9, 322) Prob > F	obs	=	6	332 5.98 0000
Residual		223831	322	.084546			R-squared		=		6484
							Adj R-squa	red			6386
Total	77.43	307229	331	. 233929	676		Root MSE		=		9077
vote	etrump	Coef.	St	d. Err.		t	P> t		[95	% Conf	. Interval]
01	vngun2	0114737	. 0	357283	-0	. 3	2 0.748		08	17641	.0588167
republic	anism	.9228433	. 0	480062	19	. 23	2 0.000		. 82	83979	1.017289
rura	alarea	.1368874	. 0	614657	2	. 2	3 0.027		.01	59622	.2578125
	MALE	.0781494	. 0	331388	2	. 3	6 0.019		.01	29535	.1433453
totalin	come1	.2202299		111656	1	. 9	7 0.049		.00	05625	.4398973
race	WHITE	.1595531	. 0	420213	3	. 8	0.000		.07	68821	.2422242
totaleduca	tion1	432089	. 1	373032	-3	.1	5 0.002		70	22136	1619643
distru	stful	.0210748	. 0	368429	0	. 5	7 0.568		05	14084	.0935579
totalsocialcap	ital2	.005478	. 0	067134	0	. 83	2 0.415		00	77297	.0186856
	_cons	1615093	. 1	555547	-1	. 04	4 0.300		46	75412	.1445225

Source		SS	df	MS			er of (obs	=		32
Madal		41001	•	1 057100			322)		=		10
Model		41881	9	1.257132		Prob			=	0.00	
Residual	66.3/	25589	322	.2061259	29		Jared		=	0.14	
Total	77.0	96747	221	2247021	63		R-squai	rea	=	0.12	
Total	//.6	86747	331	.2347031	.03	Root	MSE		=	.454	61
0%	ngun2	Coef.	St	d. Err.	1	t I	P> t	[95%	Conf.	Interval]
distru	stful	. 1419728	. 0	568601	2.5	50 (0.013		0301	086	.2538371
vote	trump	0244719		086916	-0.2	28 (0.778		1954	668	.146523
totalsocialcap	ital1	0165655		.06336	-0.2	26 (0.794		1412	174	.1080863
republic	anism	.2490271	.1	085993	2.2	29 (0.022		0353	733	.4626809
rura	larea	.2510136	. 0	959256	2.0	62 (0.009		0622	935	.4397337
	MALE	.1733351	. 0	512702	3.3	38 (0.001		0724	682	.274202
totalin	come1	.5088884	.1	731638	2.9	94 (0.004		1682	132	.8495636
race	WHITE	.0608643	. 0	669261	0.9	91 (3.364		0708	033	.1925319
totaleduca	tion1	0976664		212151	-0.4	46 (0.646		5150	435	.3197108
	_cons	4096057		213291	-1.9	92 (0.056		8292	255	.0100141
Source		SS	df	MS		F(9	ber of , 322)	obs	= =		332 5.98
Model		868919	9	5.57854) > F		=		0000
Residual	27.3	223831	322	.084546	059		quared		=		5484
						-	R-squ	ared	=		5386
Total	77.4	307229	331	.233929	676	Root	t MSE		=	. 29	9077
		1									
vote	etrump	Coef.	St	td. Err.		t	P> t		[95%	s Conf.	. Interval]
01	ngun2	0114737	. 0	357283	-0.	. 32	0.748	-	. 081	7641	.0588167
republic	anism	.9228433	. 0	480062	19.	. 22	0.000		.828	3979	1.017289
rura	larea	.1368874	. 0	0614657	2.	. 23	0.027		.015	9622	.2578125
	MALE	.0781494	. 0	331388	2.	. 36	0.019		.012	9535	.1433453
totalin	come1	.2202299		111656	1.	. 97	0.049		.000	5625	.4398973
race	WHITE	.1595531	. 0	420213	3.	. 80	0.000		.076	8821	.2422242
totaleduca	tion1	432089	.1	1373032	-3.	. 15	0.002	-	.702	2136	1619643
distru		.0210748	. 0	368429	0.	. 57	0.568	-	.051	4084	.0935579
totalsocialcap	ital2	.005478	. 0	067134	0.	. 82	0.415	-	.007	7297	.0186856
	_cons	1615093	. 1	1555547	-1.	. 04	0.300	-	.467	5412	.1445225

Source		SS	df	MS		Number of			332
Madal	11 21	41001	•	1 357133	01	F(9, 322)	=		.10
Model		41881	9	1.257132		Prob > F	=		
Residual	66.3/	25589	322	.2061259	29	R-squared	=		
Tabal				2247023	C 2	Adj R-squa			
Total	77.6	86747	331	.2347031	63	Root MSE	=	. 454	401
ow	ngun2	Coef.	St	d. Err.	t	: P>[t]	[95	& Conf.	Interval]
							100		
distru	stful	.1419728	. 0	568601	2.5	0.013	.03	01086	.2538371
vote	trump	0244719		086916	-0.2	28 0.778	19	54668	.146523
totalsocialcap	ital1	0165655		.06336	-0.2	6 0.794	14	12174	.1080863
republic	anism	.2490271	.1	085993	2.2	9 0.022	.03	53733	.4626809
rura	larea	.2510136	. 0	959256	2.6	62 0.009	.06	22935	.4397337
	MALE	.1733351	. 0	512702	3.3	88 0.001	.07	24682	.274202
totalin	come1	.5088884	.1	731638	2.9	0.004	.16	82132	.8495636
race	WHITE	.0608643	. 0	669261	0.9	0.364	07	08033	.1925319
totaleduca	tion1	0976664		212151	-0.4	6 0.646	51	50435	.3197108
	_cons	4096057		213291	-1.9	0.056	82	92255	.0100141
Source		SS	df	MS		Number of F(9, 322)		= 6	332 5.98
Model	50.20	868919	9	5.57854	355	Prob > F			0000
Residual		223831	322	.084546		R-squared			6484
Residuar	-/	225052		.004540		Adj R-squ			6386
Total	77.4	307229	331	.233929	676	Root MSE			9077
locat	//.4	507223	551	. 233323	070	NOUT HOL			5077
vote	trump	Coef.	St	d. Err.		t P> t	[9	5% Conf	. Interval]
0%	ngun2	0114737	. 0	357283	-0.	32 0.748	0	817641	.0588167
republic	anism	.9228433	. 0	480062	19.	22 0.000	.8	283979	1.017289
	larea	.1368874	. 0	614657	2.	23 0.027	. 0	159622	.2578125
	MALE	.0781494	. 0	331388	2.	36 0.019	.0	129535	.1433453
totalin	come1	.2202299		111656	1.	97 0.049	. 0	005625	.4398973
	WHITE	.1595531	. 0	420213		80 0.000		768821	.2422242
totaleduca		432089		373032	-3.			022136	1619643
distru		.0210748		368429		57 0.568		514084	.0935579
totalsocialcap		.005478	. 0	067134		82 0.415		077297	.0186856
	_cons	1615093		555547	-1.			675412	.1445225

Source		SS	df	М	S		umber of o	bs	=		32
Model	11 21	41881	9	1.2571	3201		(9, 322) rob > F		=	6.3 0.00	
										0.14	
Residual	00.3/	25589	322	.20612	2929		-squared	ad	-		
Total	77.0	96747	221	22470	2162		dj R-squar	eu	=	0.12	
Total	//.0	586747	331	.23470	3103	R	oot MSE		=	.454	01
01	vngun2	Coef.	St	d. Err.		t	P> t	[9	95% (Conf. 3	Interval]
distru	ustful	.1419728	. 0	568601	2	. 50	0.013	. 6	3010	86	.2538371
vote	etrump	0244719		086916	-0	. 28	0.778	1	19546	568	.146523
totalsocialca	pital1	0165655		.06336	-0	. 26	0.794	1	4123	174	.1080863
republic	canism	.2490271	.1	085993	2	. 29	0.022	. (3537	/33	.4626809
rura	alarea	.2510136	. 0	959256	2	. 62	0.009	. (6229	35	.4397337
	MALE	.1733351	. 0	512702	3	. 38	0.001	. (7246	582	.274202
totalir	ncome1	.5088884	.1	731638	2	. 94	0.004	. 1	16821	132	.8495636
race	WHITE	.0608643	. 0	669261	0	.91	0.364	6	7080	33	.1925319
totaleduca	ation1	0976664		212151	-0	.46	0.646	5	51504	135	.3197108
	_cons	4096057		213291	-1	. 92	0.056	8	32922	255	.0100141
Source		SS	df	,	15		lumber of (9, 322)	obs	=		332 .98
Model	50.2	068919	9	5.578	54355	F	Prob > F		=	0.0	000
Residual	27.3	223831	322	.08454	46059	F	R-squared		=	0.6	484
						1	Adj R-squa	ared	=	0.6	386
Total	77.4	307229	331	. 23392	29676	F	Root MSE		=	. 29	077
	-										
vote	etrump	Coef.	St	d. Err		t	P> t		[95%	Conf.	Interval]
0	vngun2	0114737	. 0	357283	-	0.32	0.748	-	. 081	7641	.0588167
republic	canism	.9228433	. 0	480062	1	9.22	0.000		. 828	3979	1.017289
rura	alarea	.1368874	. 0	614657	:	2.23	8 0.027		.015	9622	.2578125
	MALE	.0781494	. 0	331388	:	2.36	6.019		.012	9535	.1433453
totali	ncome1	.2202299		111656	:	1.97	0.049		. 000	5625	.4398973
race	WHITE	.1595531	. 0	420213	:	3.80	0.000		. 076	8821	.2422242
totaleduca	ation1	432089	. 1	1373032	-3	3.15	0.002	-	.702	2136	1619643
distru	ustful	.0210748	. 0	368429		0.57	0.568	-	.051	4084	.0935579
totalsocialca	pital2	.005478	. 6	067134		9.82		-	. 007	7297	.0186856
	_cons	1615093		1555547		1.04				5412	.1445225

Conclusions

Ultimately my analysis has demonstrated that distrust is a strong predictor of gun ownership in the United States. As a result of social and economic precariousness, men have reacted to these fears with the use of guns that help remedy these fears and represent safety and consistency. Perhaps, the optimistic takeaway is that identifying distrust as a dominant predictor for gun ownership, provides gun control activists the opportunity to reorient their strategies to address concerns around social capital and community cohesion. Here, our results imply that one of the most productive ways to reduce the propensity for gun ownership, is to focus on the prevalence of distrust in the United States and within communities crippled with economic disparity.

. regress owngun2 distrustful votetrump totalsocialcapital1 republicanism ruralarea MALE to