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Gun Ownership Rates and Opinions on Gun Control among Immigrants and Individuals Born in
the United States.

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Submitted in Partial Completion of the
Requirements for Departmental Honors in Criminal Justice

Bridgewater State University

May 11, 2021

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Abstract

This study will focus on gun ownership and opinions on gun control among immigrants and those born in the United States. Previous studies have shown that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than US-born persons. The reasons for this are not well understood. One possible explanation is lower rates of gun ownership and attitudes supportive of gun control in this social group. However, previous studies have not looked at this issue. By utilizing publicly available data from the General Social Survey (GSS) – public opinion survey representative of all non-institutionalized adults in the United States - this study will fill this important gap in academic literature. Ordinary least square regression will be used to determine the relationship between immigrant generations and their likelihood of owning guns and their opinions on gun control. Results show that compared to first generation immigrants, second and third generation immigrants are more likely to own a gun and oppose gun permits.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to gather evidence needed to fill the gap in research on gun ownership rates and opinions on gun control among immigrants and individuals born in the United States. Currently, there is not enough research regarding immigration and gun ownership, including statistics describing attitudes towards gun control among foreign born. Gun ownership rates and opinions on gun control among immigrants are important because it may further explain why immigrants are linked with low levels of crime. Due to a lack of relevant literature serving as a barrier to this specific question, research is taken from other topics that can provide the literature themes necessary to successfully conduct this study

Previous pertinent research examined the relationship between immigration and crime at the individual and macro level as well as some of immigrant attitudes towards the American

criminal justice system. While there has been a considerable amount of research on these key topics, there remains a gap which this study will fill. In this thesis, I will first review key studies to provide a background on the relationships between a) immigration and crime, b) gun control and crime, and c) immigration and guns, which will each serve as a subsection in my review of literature. Next, I will use General Social Survey data to observe gun ownership rates and opinions on gun control among immigrants and those who are U.S. born, which will assist in describing immigration's relationship with low levels of crime. I will then discuss the key findings, and then conclude by reviewing the limitations of this study, future policy implications, and recommendations for further research.

Literature Review

Immigration and Crime

The relationship between immigration and crime has been studied for a long period of time and will serve as one of the foundations that this study will build upon. Ramos & Wenger (2018) aimed to identify the relationship between immigration and crime by analyzing it across multiple levels of analysis simultaneously. This study focused on considering the relationship between immigration and crime among tract and city-levels. Using crime data from 55 cities and the American Community Survey for the years of 2005-2009, Ramos & Wenger (2018) utilize a hierarchical Poisson regression to determine whether there is a correlation between immigration and crime. This study found that across geographic scales, the relationship between immigration and crime varies. At some tracts, there is a positive relationship between immigration and crime and for other tracts, there is a negative relationship, but overall results were not significant enough to challenge prior research providing that there is a negative relationship between immigration and crime at tract-levels. This study is significant as it provides further insight to the

relationship between immigration and crime. This relationship needs to continue to be studied across multiple levels of analysis and with multiple units of analysis. These findings are significant to literature as they cannot challenge the negative relationship between immigration and crime, and they show that continually, this relationship needs to be studied using different levels of analysis.

Ferraro (2016) aims to focus on new destinations which are “places that have experienced significant recent growth in immigration over the last two decades” and the effect of immigration on crime in these new destinations. The study uses data from 1,252 Census places, and of that number, 194 are new immigrant destinations. Data is used from the Uniform Crime Report, the 2000 decennial Census, and the American Community Survey. Greater declines in crime are seen in these new destinations when compared to the rest of the places in the sample. Ferraro (2016) again shows the negative relationship between immigration and crime, but especially in areas that have recently seen an influx of immigration.

MacDonald, Hipp, & Gill (2013) focuses mainly in Los Angeles and how immigrant concentration relates to the reduction in neighborhood crime rates in that city. This study uses annual LAPD reported counts of index offenses, and Census tract-level data for demographic and household characteristics pulled from the U.S. Bureau of Census. The results of this study challenge many of the previous ecological studies’ findings regarding the association between immigration and crime. MacDonald and Hipp’s study challenged this traditional ecological finding, and their results represent a connection between immigrant settlement and a reduction in the crime rates in those areas. Disha (2019) aimed to identify how “paths of segmented assimilation modify the effect of immigration on crime” (p. 1129) in their study. The author examines the “interactions between immigration size and assimilation patterns” (p. 1129) to

determine if this causes variation in levels of homicide and property offenses on a neighborhood scale. It is determined that the immigration's size effects on crime is moderated by immigrant assimilation. The amount of immigrants' effect on crime is controlled by how well they assimilate in that community.

Gun Control and Crime

With a background on immigration and crime provided in the previous section, it is now imperative to review prior literature on gun control and crime. Determining the effects that gun control has on crime will be a critical factor in the conceptual framework of the current study. Kleck, Kovandzic, & Bellows (2016) investigates whether gun control reduces violent crime. "The purpose of the present study is to provide a methodologically sound evaluation of the impact of gun control laws on violent crime rates" (Kleck et al., 2016, p. 489). Using 1990 CX data from every U.S. city with a population of over 25,000 or more, data from the UCR, and FBI Supplementary Homicide Reports, Kleck et al. (2016) finds that there is strong evidence that higher levels of gun ownership do not cause more crime.

Stell (2014) contends the argument that lowering the percentage of gun related homicides is the key to the reduction of America's homicide rate. The author argues that imposing forms of strict gun control designed towards handgun scarcity will present itself as "needless and useless". Stell (2014) argues that gun control has no true effect on violent crime, and it will only serve as a barrier to those who want to use firearms as a form of self-defense.

Kleck (2019) reports the results of two studies that researched "the impact of gun control measures on violent criminal behavior among persons age 18 to 20" (p. 689). The first out of the two studies focused on the rates of violent crime among the specified age group and how this was affected by state bans on that age group to carry a gun. The second study focuses on the

impact that an unstudied portion of the federal Gun Control act of 1968 has, where it bans 18- to 20-year-olds from purchasing a handgun. The two studies both found that neither forms of gun control had a significant effect on murder, robbery, and aggravated assault rates among the 18- to 20-year-old age group. Similar to Stell's (2014) conclusion, forms of gun control did not have a significant effect on violent crime rates.

Immigration and Guns

Now, recognizing that previous studies suggest that gun control itself does not necessarily decrease crime rates, the relationship between immigration and guns is crucial to understand. Nielsen, Martinez, & Rosenfeld (2005) aim to extend the research on race, ethnicity, and violence by "examining ethnic differences in firearm use, injury, and lethality in assaultive violence (homicide and aggravated assault) in the multiethnic city of Miami" (p. 83). Research has mainly focused on the differences between whites and blacks and this study shifts the focus to Latino violence and compares that to the results of other racial and ethnic groups. Results from this study show that Latino, black, and white offenders are all just as likely to use a gun in a violent incident in the city of Miami. Nielsen & Martínez (2011) aim to go beyond what criminological literature typically researches, as it assesses "individual-level relationships between immigration/race/ethnicity and violence" (p. 342). Nielsen & Martínez (2011) examines "whether immigration status predicts likelihood of arrest for robbery relative to aggravated assault, violence types that differ in seriousness, motive, and other ways" (p. 342). Overall, results found in this study reveal that immigrants are less likely to be arrested for robbery than those who were born in the U.S.

Gibbs, Lee, Moloney, & Olson (2018) aim to fill the gap in research by investigating violence against police at a smaller aggregation than at the city-level. From the year 2000, this study utilizes census tracts, and the Uniform Crime Report to find that calls for service and concentrated disadvantage were the indicators that were significantly related to violence against the police. Immigrant concentration was heavily associated with low injurious assault crime rates.

Hypotheses

The review of previous studies has shown that immigration is associated with low crime rates, and gun control has not been proven to lower crime rates. While each of these are well understood, there is limited data and information that provides reason for *why* immigration is correlated with lower crime rates. A potential explanation for these low crime rates could be the rates of gun ownership among immigrants, and the opinions on gun control among immigrants which is what will be examined in this study. This study will review the gun ownership rates and opinions on gun control among immigrants and U.S.-born individuals to provide further evidence as to why there is a connection between immigration and low rates of crime. Hypotheses include: The ownership of a firearm will increase with each immigrant generation (1st generation-3rd generation), and the support for gun control will decrease with each immigrant generation (1st generation-3rd generation).

Methods

Data

The data used in this study comes from the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a national cross-sectional survey of persons age 18 and older living in U.S. households. It is representative of all non-institutionalized persons 18 years of age or older living in the United States. The survey has been conducted bi-annually since 1972. In the current study, I utilized data from the survey administered in 2014. I selected this year because it is the most recent year of data where all the key measures needed for this study were available.

Measures

Dependent Variables. The first dependent variable GSS measure included in this study is firearm ownership. The question given to respondents for this variable was “Do you happen to have in your home any guns or revolvers?” Options for answers to this question included “Yes”, which means the respondent has a firearm in their home (coded 1) and “No”, which means the respondent does not have a firearm in their home (coded 0).

The second dependent variable GSS measure included in this study is the opinion on gun permits. The question given to respondents for this variable was “Would you favor or oppose a law which would require a person to obtain a police permit before he or she could buy a gun?” Options for answers to this question included “Favor”, which means the respondent is supportive of requirements to obtain gun permits before firearm purchases (coded 1), and “Oppose”, which means the respondent is not supportive of requirements to obtain gun permits before firearm purchases (coded 0). For this study and due to lack of previous literature on this topic, this variable will be used as an opinion on gun control more generally.

Independent Variable. The independent variable GSS measure included in this study is the immigrant generation. This variable was developed through the combination of the GSS

variables “BORN” and “PARBORN.” The GSS variable “BORN” asks, “Were you born in this country?” Options for answers to this question are “Yes”, which means the respondent was born in the U.S. (coded 1) and “No”, which means the respondent was not born in the U.S. (coded 2). The GSS variable “PARBORN” asks, “Were both your parents born in this country?”. Options for answers to this question are “Both in U.S.”, which means both parents were born in the U.S. (coded 0); “Mother only”, which means only the respondent’s mother was born in the U.S. (coded 1); “Father only”, which means only the respondent’s father was born in the U.S. (coded 2); “Mother; father don’t know”, which means the respondent only knows that their mother was born in the U.S. and they don’t know the status of their father’s birthplace (coded 3); “Not mother; father don’t know”, which means the respondent only knows that their mother was not born in the U.S. and they don’t know the status of their father’s birthplace (coded 4); “Father; mother don’t know”, which means the respondent only knows that their father was born in the U.S. and they don’t know the status of their mother’s birthplace (coded 5); “Not father; mother don’t know”, which means the respondent only knows that their father was not born in the U.S. and they don’t know the status of their mother’s birthplace (coded 6); “Don’t know for both”, which means the respondent doesn’t know the status of either of their parent’s birthplace (coded 7); and “Neither in U.S.”, which means neither parents were born in the U.S. (coded 8).

The new variable created from “BORN” and “PARBORN” and used in this study is the variable “IMMGEN2”. Categories for this question included “Gen1 Born Outside U.S.”, which means the respondent is a first generation immigrant born outside the U.S. (coded 1), “Gen2 US-Born w/ Foreign Parent”, which means the respondent was born in the U.S. but has parents who were born outside the U.S. (coded 2), and “Gen3 All US Born”, which means the respondent was born in the U.S. and one or more of the respondent’s parents were born in the U.S. (coded 3).

Previous literature has not agreed on how to categorize immigrant generations. This coding decision was made because having two foreign born parents is likely to have more of an impact on subjects and their likelihood of owning a gun and their opinions on gun control policies. This variable was used in this study to determine if the respondent was an immigrant, if their parents were immigrants, or if both the respondent and the parents were born in the U.S.

Control Variables. The first control variable GSS measure included in this study is the age of the respondent. The variable did not need to be recoded into a dummy variable as it is an interval/ratio variable. This was included because age can have an influence on levels of gun ownership, and opinions on gun control and immigrants also tend to be younger than the American general population.

The second control variable GSS measure included is the number of children the respondent has. This variable is being treated as an interval/ratio variable so recoding was not necessary. The number of children a person has may influence a person's likelihood of owning a firearm most likely due to safety concerns. The number of children a person has may also influence their opinions on gun control. Immigrants may have more children in their households.

The third control variable included is the respondent's socioeconomic index from the year 2010. This variable also did not require recoding as it is an interval/ratio variable. A person's socioeconomic index may influence their likelihood of owning a firearm, and their opinions on gun control.

The fourth control variable GSS measure included is the respondent's level of education. This is a nominal/ordinal variable listed in the categories of the following: Less than High School, High School, Junior College, Bachelor, and Graduate. This variable was then recoded into dummy variables for each category so that it would be included in the regression. Levels of

education can change one's opinion on firearms and this may have an effect on the likelihood of some to own a gun.

The fifth control variable GSS measure included is the respondent's political views. This variable is split into seven categories, including extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate, slightly conservative, conservative, and extremely conservative. This variable was also transformed into multiple dummy variables for each category to run the regression. Political views have always been a basis of one's opinion on owning firearms and gun control.

The sixth control variable GSS measure included is the respondent's race. There are three categories within this variable which are white, black, and other. This control variable was also split into multiple dummy variables to run the regression. Race may influence whether someone owns a firearm and what their opinions on gun control are and most recent immigrants tend to self-identify as non-white.

The seventh and last control variable GSS measure included is the respondent's sex. There are two categories in this variable of male and female. Dummy variables were made for each of these categories. Male and females typically have different views regarding guns so this may affect a respondent's opinions on gun control and whether they own a firearm.

Analysis

The relationships between the dependent, independent and control variables were estimated using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression. Since the outcome variables were coded as zero and one, the estimation results in a linear probability model showing how one unit increase in independent variables affects the probability of the dependent variable, net of the effects of other variables. For each outcome, I first included the independent variable –

immigrant generation – only (Model 1). The control variables were then added in the second model to ensure that the relationship between immigrant generation and the outcome variable observed in Model 1 is not spurious and to examine how much of the effect of immigrant generation on the outcome is explained by the control variable.

Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (General Social Survey 2014)

Variables	Percent/Mean (SD)
<i>Dependent Variables</i>	
Gun Ownership	
Yes	31.9%
No	68.1%
Gun Permits	
Favor	72.3%
Oppose	27.7%
<i>Independent Variable</i>	
Immigrant Generation	
First	12.8%
Second	4.4%
Third	82.8%
<i>Control Variables</i>	
Age	49.0127 (17.41187)
Number of Children	1.82 (1.623)
SEI	45.809 (22.5054)
Education	
Less H.S.	13.0%
Highschool	50.0%
Junior College	7.3%
Bachelor	18.6%
Graduate	11.1%
Political Views	
Extremely Liberal	3.8%
Liberal	12.4%
Slightly Liberal	10.7%
Moderate	40.4%
Slightly Conservative	13.6%
Conservative	14.6%
Extremely Conservative	4.4%
Race	
White	74.5%
Black	15.2%

Other	10.3%
Sex	
Male	45.0%
Female	55.0%

Note: n=2,538

Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics. The results suggest that 31.9% of GSS 2014 respondents owned a firearm. Regarding gun permits, 72.3% are in favor of this type of gun control policy. In the GSS, first generation immigrants (born outside of the United States) made up 12.8% of the respondents, 4.4% are second generation immigrants (U.S. – born with two foreign parents), and 82.8% are third or later generation immigrants. The average age for a respondent was 49 years old with a standard deviation of 17 and the average amount of children that a respondent has is 2 with a standard deviation of 2. As for the socioeconomic index among the respondents, the average was 46 with a standard deviation of 23. Focusing on education among participants, 13% have completed less than high school, 50% have completed high school, 7.3% have completed junior college, 18.6% have completed a bachelor's degree, and 11.1% have completed some form of graduate school. Regarding political views, 3.8% labeled themselves as extremely liberal, 12.4% said they were liberal, 10.7% said that they were slightly liberal, 40.4% said they were moderate, 13.6 said they were slightly conservative, 14.6% said they were conservative, and 4.4% said they were extremely conservative. Other than the moderate category, the political views are quite evenly distributed among this population. As for race, 74.5% of respondents are White, 15.2% are Black, and 10.3% includes all the other races. The sex of the respondents is 45% male and 55% female.

Table 2. Linear Probability Model Predicting Gun Ownership (General Social Survey 2014).

	Model 1	Model 2
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Immigrant Generation (vs. 1 st gen)		
Second	0.093 (0.061)	0.074 (0.066)
Third	0.235 (0.033)**	0.175 (0.038)**
Age		0.001 (0.001)
Number of Children		0.024 (0.008)**
SEI		0.002 (0.001)**
Education (vs. less h.s.)		
Highschool		0.130 (0.039)**
Junior college degree		0.149 (0.057)**
Bachelors degree		0.036 (.050)
Graduate degree		0.049 (.057)
Political Views (vs. Extremely Liberal)		
Liberal		0.077 (0.066)
Slightly Liberal		0.098 (0.068)
Moderate		0.164 (0.062)**
Slightly Conservative		0.176 (0.066)**
Conservative		0.247 (0.066)**
Extremely Conservative		0.299 (.081)**
Race (vs. White)		
Black		-0.187 (0.033)**
Other		-0.112 (0.044)*
Sex (vs. Male)		
Female		-0.104 (0.023)**
Constant	0.123 (0.030)**	-0.126 (0.087)
R-square	0.032	0.115
Sample Size (n)	1,655	1,519

Note: Regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

* p<0.05 **p<0.01

Table 2 shows the results of ordinary least square (OLS) regression predicting the probability of owning a gun. Specifically, since the dependent variable “OWNGUN” is coded 1= YES 0= NO, the regression coefficients represent the probability that the respondents agree with owning a gun, associated with one unit increase in the independent variable. Model 1 includes a measure of immigrant generation with FIRST GEN serving the reference (i.e., comparison) category. The results suggest that the probability of agreeing with “OWNGUN” is higher in the second (b=0.093, p>.05) and third immigrant (b=0.235, p<.01) generation than in the first generation. This relationship is only statistically significant for the third immigrant generation category, which suggests that immigrant generation can have an effect on gun ownership in the adult population of the United States. More specifically, respondent’s born in the US, with US

born parents, but with at least one immigrant grandparent, are more likely to own a gun than those of newer immigrant generations (those born abroad or U.S. – born with foreign born parents).

Model 2 in Table 2 introduced several important control variables. Like Model 1, the results suggest that the likelihood of owning a firearm is higher among second ($b=0.074$, $p>.05$) and third ($b=0.175$, $p<.01$) immigrant generations. Only the third immigrant generation's relationship is significant, so only among the third generation can it be said that compared to first generation immigrants, they are more likely to own guns. The difference between the first and second generation is in the expected direction but is not statistically significant.

The effects of some of the control variables on gun ownership were also notable and help better understand what other factors affect the likelihood of owning a firearm. The results show that while taking age ($b=0.001$, $p>.05$) into consideration, there is still a positive relationship between immigrant generation and the probability of owning a gun, but this relationship is not statistically significant and could be observed due to chance. The variable that controls for the number of children the respondent has, shows that the more children ($b=0.024$, $p<.01$) you have, the more likely you are to own a firearm. This relationship has high significance, so in the US the higher the number of children you have, the greater the likelihood is that you own a gun. Even though there is only a very small positive relationship, the socioeconomic index ($b=0.002$, $p<.01$) control shows that the higher the income someone has, the higher the probability is that they will answer yes to owning a gun.

When focusing on education, and holding less than high school as the reference, respondents with a high school degree ($b=0.130$, $p<.01$) and with a junior college degree ($b=0.149$, $p<.01$) have a higher probability of owning a gun than respondents with less than a

high school degree. Both a high school degree and a junior college degree have a high degree of significance, so we can say that those with this level of education are more likely to own a gun over someone with less than a high school degree. Those with a bachelor's degree ($b=0.036$, $p>.05$) and a graduate degree ($b=0.049$, $p>.05$), although showing to have a positive effect on the likelihood of owning a firearm compared to less than high school education level, are not statistically significant and therefore could be explained by chance.

As for political views, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate, slightly conservative, conservative, and extremely conservative respondents all showed to have a positive effect on the probability of owning a firearm when compared to the reference extremely liberal. Although, the liberal ($b=0.077$, $p>.05$), and slightly liberal ($b=0.098$, $p>.05$) candidates results are not significant, meaning this positive relationship could be observed due to chance. As for respondents who answered moderate ($b=0.164$, $p<.01$), slightly conservative ($b=0.176$, $p<.01$), conservative ($b=0.247$, $p<.01$), and extremely conservative ($b=0.299$, $p<.01$), they are shown to have a highly significant positive effect on the probability that the GSS subject owns a gun when compared to those who identify themselves as being extremely liberal.

When considering race, the reference that will be used to compare the rest of the categories is white people. The results show that respondents who reported their race to be black ($b=-0.187$, $p<.01$) and people of races other than white and black ($b=-0.112$, $p<.05$) make the probability that they own a gun lower compared to white. Both categories when compared to those who are white have statistical significance and this influence of lowering the likelihood of owning a gun is not due to chance.

Lastly, looking at the control of sex, the reference will be male. The probability that a person owns a gun lowers when they are a female ($b=-0.104$, $p<.01$). This means that women are less likely to own firearms than men.

Table 3. Linear Probability Model Predicting Support for Gun Permits (General Social Survey 2014).

	Model 1	Model 2
Immigrant Generation (vs. 1 st gen)		
Second	-0.029 (0.060)	0.011 (0.064)
Third	-0.151 (0.032)**	-0.122(0.037)**
Age		0.002 (0.001)**
Number of Children		-0.014 (0.008)
SEI		-0.001 (0.001)
Education (vs. less h.s.)		
Highschool		0.017 (0.038)
Junior college degree		0.001 (0.055)
Bachelors degree		0.101 (0.047)*
Graduate degree		0.134 (0.055)*
Political Views (vs. Extremely Liberal)		
Liberal		0.075 (0.064)
Slightly Liberal		0.083 (0.067)
Moderate		0.004 (0.061)
Slightly Conservative		-0.077 (0.065)
Conservative		-0.096 (0.064)
Extremely Conservative		-0.110 (0.078)
Race (vs. White)		
Black		0.155 (0.031)**
Other		0.084 (0.042)*
Sex (vs. Male)		
Female		0.098 (0.022)**
Constant	0.849 (0.030)**	0.655 (0.084)**
R-square	0.015	0.080
Sample Size (n)	1,691	1,555

Note: Regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

Table 3 shows the results of ordinary least square (OLS) regression predicting the probability of favoring or opposing gun permits. Specifically, since “GUNLAW” is coded 1=FAVOR 0=OPPOSE, the regression coefficients represent the probability that the respondents agree with GUNLAW associated with one unit increase in the independent variable. Model 1 includes a measure of immigrant generation with FIRSTGEN serving the reference (OR

comparison) category. The results suggest that the probability of agreeing with GUNLAW is lower in the second ($b=-0.029$, $p>.05$) and third immigrant ($b=-0.151$, $p<.01$) generation than in the first generation. The relationship regarding the third immigrant generation is statistically significant, which suggests immigrant generation has an effect on attitudes toward gun control in the adult population of the United States. More specifically, the second and third immigrant generation oppose gun permit (form of gun control) when compared to first generation immigrants.

Model 2 in Table 3 introduced several important control variables. The results suggest that the likelihood of favoring gun permits is higher among second ($b=0.011$, $p>.05$) immigrant generation and lower in the third ($b=0.175$, $p<.01$) immigrant generation. Only the third immigrant generation's relationship is significant, so only among the third generation can it be said that compared to first generation immigrants, they are more likely to oppose gun permits. The results show that while taking age ($b=0.002$, $p<.01$) into consideration, there is a positive relationship between immigrant generation and the probability of favoring gun permits, and this relationship is significant which means that with increasing age, immigrant generations are more likely to favor gun permits. The variable that controls for the number of children ($b=-0.014$, $p>.05$) the respondent has, shows that the more children you have, the more likely you are to oppose gun permits. This is insignificant and could be due to chance. As for the socioeconomic index ($b=-0.001$, $p>.05$) control, it shows that the higher the SEI someone has, the higher the probability is that they will oppose gun permits.

When focusing on education, and holding less than high school as the reference, respondents with a high school degree ($b=0.017$, $p>.05$) and with a junior college degree ($b=0.001$, $p>.05$) have a higher probability of favoring gun permits than respondents with less

than a high school degree. Both a high school degree and a junior college degree are insignificant, so this relationship could be due to chance. Those with a bachelor's degree ($b=0.101$, $p<.05$) and a graduate degree ($b=0.134$, $p<.05$) show to have a higher probability to favor gun permits when compared to those with less than high school education. This is significant and therefore can be attributed to possible causation.

As for political views, liberal, slightly liberal, and moderate respondents all showed to have a positive effect on an immigrant's probability of supporting gun permits when compared to the reference extremely liberal. Although, the liberal ($b=0.075$, $p>.05$), slightly liberal ($b=0.083$, $p>.05$) and moderate ($b=0.004$, $p>.05$) candidates results are insignificant, and this positive relationship could be due to chance. As for respondents who answered slightly conservative ($b=-0.077$, $p>.05$), conservative ($b=-0.096$, $p>.05$), and extremely conservative ($b=-0.110$, $p>.05$), they are shown to be more likely to oppose gun permits when compared to those who identify themselves as being extremely liberal. All three of these relationships are also not statistically significant and could be due to chance.

When considering race, the reference that will be used to compare the rest of the categories is white people. The results show that people who identify as black ($b=0.155$, $p<.01$) and people of races other than white and black ($b=0.084$, $p<.05$) make the probability that a respondent will favor gun permits higher. Both categories, when compared to those who are white, have statistical significance and this influence of favoring gun permits among immigrant generations is not due to chance.

Lastly, looking at the control of sex, the reference will be male. The probability that an immigrant owns a gun lowers when they are a female ($b=0.655$, $p<.01$). This means that women are more likely to support gun permits over men.

Discussion

While previous studies have linked immigration with lower crime rates, reasons for why immigrants relate to lower crime rates are not well understood. This study makes a significant contribution to scholarship on immigration and crime because results show that immigrant generation does influence whether a person owns a firearm and if they support gun control policies. An immigrant's likelihood to own a gun and their opinion on gun permits can be used to justify their relationship with low crime rates. More specifically, model 1 and model 2 in Table 2 shows that immigrant generation is associated with both outcome variables, with and without control variables in the model. Specifically, second and third generation immigrants are more likely to own a gun than first generation immigrants. Only the result for third generation immigrants is statistically significant, and it reveals that the longer an immigrant is in the United States, the more likely they are to own a firearm. This could be due to the assimilation patterns in immigrants and as immigrants assimilate in the U.S., they become more likely to own a firearm. It also reveals that those who are first generation immigrants (born outside the U.S.) are less likely to own a firearm. Other intriguing results from Table 2 show that the more children a respondent had, the more likely they were to own a gun. Results also show that blacks and those of "other" races are less likely to own firearms when compared to whites. Women are also less likely to own a firearm when compared to men.

Results from model 1 and model 2 of Table 3 show that when uncontrolled and controlled, among the adult population in the United States, third generation immigrants are more likely to oppose gun permits. The results for third generation immigrants are significant, therefore revealing that immigrant generation does, in fact, have influence on opinions on gun permits (forms of gun control). Those who are first generation immigrants are more likely to

favor gun permits, therefore showing that those who were born outside of the U.S. support forms of gun control more than second or third generation immigrants. Other significant results from Table 3 show that those with bachelor and graduate degrees are more likely to favor gun permits (forms of gun control) when compared to those who have less than a high school education. This could mean that the more education a person has, the more likely they are to support forms of gun control. Regarding race, when compared to whites, those who are black and of “other” races have a higher probability of supporting gun permits.

These results can assist in public knowledge regarding gun ownership and opinions on gun control policies among immigrant populations. Also, these results support immigration in the United States as the results provide further evidence to the link between recent immigration and low crime rates. This can influence our national security concerns regarding immigration and the possibility of bringing more crime into our country.

While this study provides a possible explanation, there are limitations that need to be considered. GSS data was only used from one year (2014) which leaves out the possibility that opinions could differ across different years of respondents. Also, GSS data had very few variables that could be considered to measure immigrant’s opinions on gun control.

Future studies should investigate ways to further link the levels of gun ownership and opinion on gun control to the low levels of crime among the immigrant population in the United States. This could be done by incorporating crime statistics among immigrant populations along with gun ownership levels and opinions on gun control. Also, future studies should explore alternate ways that could explain why immigrants are linked to lower levels of crime.

Conclusion

Based on results, this study provides a further explanation as to why immigration is connected to low crime rates. The longer an immigrant family resides in the U.S. the more likely they are to own a gun and the more likely they are to oppose gun permits. This means that those who are first generation immigrants are less likely to own a gun and are more likely to support forms of gun control such as gun permits. This can contribute to the explanation that recent immigrants are connected to lower crime rates as they support forms of gun control and are less likely to own a gun when compared to those who have been in the U.S. for longer periods of time. This study should serve as a foundation to a new branch of investigating the explanations for the relationship between immigration and crime in the United States.

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