

Sociologists View on Gun Violence as a Contemporary Social Issue

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Gun violence is a contemporary social issue that has become a large threat to the individuals right to life. It is a daily issue that is affecting the lives of innocent people around the world. With the lack of restrictions with firearms, tragedies are occurring at an alarming rate. That being said, I have found that there are also accidental deaths from firearms. It has become an epidemic which has made up most of the breaking news headlines in the media. Oriana Vuong, a reporter, ran a story on September 29th 2019 through Global News. This is in regard to two back to back overnight shootings in the downtown Toronto area. In this specific case, four individuals were injured, and one woman was in critical condition (Oriana, 2019). From a tragedy occurring during one night, that is far too many innocent civilians injured. Not only does gun violence pose a threat to public safety but also the effects of these deadly weapons cause a major range of health issues like psychological stress.

In relation to this controversial topic, sociologists, John E. Puddifoot and David Yamane conducted different research in regards to the extremity of gun violence. In the article, “Gun Control and Symbolism Among U.K. and U.S. Women”, John E. Puddifoot explored attitudes in females towards the possession of guns. He examined gun control rights involving ownership and the contribution of guns to crimes. This sociologist argues that the reason individuals deem necessary to carry firearms is for a sense of control and power (Puddifoot, 2000). This idea for personal possession has been attributed to people who feel insecure. It has been commonly known that women are more sensitive and insecure than males, however, in this reality it is the male gender who carries the majority of firearms due to a level of insecurity. The research conducted for this experiment was “recruiting a total of 108 female students from U.K. universities and 91 female students from one university in the U.S.” (Puddifoot, 2000). These

participants were aged 18 to 25 and the sociologist used a questionnaire format on a short Personal Details Form. He discovered that only a handful amount of females have carried weapons and none have carried handguns. Puddifoot calculated the Attitude to Guns Scale for crime subscale, protection subscale and rights subscale. With this quantitative data, all the numbers calculated have demonstrated that gender, culture and gun laws are very complex. Puddifoot (2000) argued that guns and other hand weapons are symbolic and that their use should be legitimized, however, this cannot happen until individuals stop using them for “personal safety” on the streets.

In another article, “The sociology of U.S. Gun Control”, the sociologists, David Yamane discussed mainly what gun culture should look like and how we can potentially get there. Yamane (2017) has learned that “gun ownership is apparently a topic more appropriate to the sociology of leisure than to the criminology or epidemiology of violence” which is a reason why gun laws have not been reinforced further. The reason they have not been reinforced further is due to gun control seeming like a non-criminal offence in particular situations. Yamane (2017) compared casual leisure which involves “mundane activities that require little specialized training” and serious leisure which involves “complex and specialized and requires a greater level of commitment and training” (Yamane, 2017), and with these two theories, sociologists attempt to view the large part of gun culture with good reason. This research is qualitative as it measures more of the appearance that gun laws produce and Yamanes idea of values towards gun control. According to Yamane (2017), gun culture is considered as a form of recreation referred to as a collective passionate avocation. Therefore, viewing gun culture in this society is difficult with good reason when the laws are not under control.

In regard to these articles, the main idea I can agree with is that gun violence needs major control. In my opinion, these articles are similar by concluding that the gun laws are not robust enough. These articles have taught me that gun violence is rapidly increasing and there is a lack of action on this contemporary social issue. I as a young woman relate to the article “Gun Control and Symbolism Among U.K. and U.S. Women” by Puddifoot. His idea of woman feeling more insecure than men either by walking down the street alone or late at night, men do not worry as much about their safety. With this knowledge, I ask, why do men feel the need to carry weapons so often? After reading these articles I can agree that when males or even females carry weapons, the sense of power takes over their fear and these weapons are used in inappropriate situations. Finally, I will argue that to purchase any firearms or guns, the purchaser should have to go through thorough stages to obtain a license for any weapon. This contemporary social issue is rising and actions need to be taken into account. As well as individuals need to be held responsible even in accidental cases.

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Woman critically injured, 4 others injured after 2 overnight shootings in Toronto

BY ORENA VOONIS - GLOBAL NEWS
Posted September 29, 2019 9:52 am
Updated September 29, 2019 2:35 pm



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Gun Culture and Symbolism Among U.K. and U.S. Women

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ABSTRACT. The authors explored attitudes of young women in the United Kingdom ($n = 108$) and the United States ($n = 91$) toward (a) the possession and use of guns through the Attitude to Guns Scale (N. R. Branscombe, J. A. Weir, & P. Crosby, 1992) and (b) guns' perceived functional and symbolic significance through the Symbolic Nature of Guns Scale (C. A. Cooke & J. E. Puddifoot, 1997). There were significant differences in beliefs concerning the right to own a gun and the protective effect of guns but not in the perceived contribution of guns to crime. Although neither group strongly equated guns symbolically with power or control, the U.S. women were more likely to perceive guns as expressions of freedom or independence, and the U.K. women were more likely to view guns as expressions of danger and violence. The findings were contextualized by comparison with samples of male control participants of similar ages.

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Abstract
 Despite the fact that a robust culture centered on the legal ownership and use of guns by law-abiding gun owners exists in the United States, there is no sociology of U.S. gun culture. Rather, the social scientific study of guns is dominated by criminological and epidemiological studies of gun violence. As a corrective to this oversight, I outline what a sociology of U.S. gun culture should look like. In the first section, I give a brief history of U.S. gun culture from the founding era through the 1960s. Guns began as tools of necessity in the colonies and on the frontier, but evolved into equipment for sport hunting and shooting, as well as desired commodities for collecting. The second section examines these recreational pursuits which formed the core of U.S. gun culture for most of the 20th century. Although recreation remains an important segment, the central emphasis of U.S. gun culture has gradually shifted to armed self-defense over the course of the past half-century. The third section examines the rise of this culture of armed citizenship, what I call "Gun Culture 2.0," the current iteration of the country's historic gun culture. I conclude by suggesting important avenues for future research.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The world today is awash in a sea of small arms in the hands of civilians, with the United States leading the way by a considerable margin. Although there is no official registry of firearms, the Small Arms Survey estimated that there are 270 million civilian owned firearms (and counting) in the United States, including handguns, rifles, and shotguns (Graduate Institute of International Studies, 2007). Ten decades ago, Wright (1995, p. 44) observed that there is "nearly one gun for every man, woman, and child in the country." This remains true today, as the size of the population and the civilian gun stock have grown together.

Despite the fact that "gun ownership is normative, not deviant, behavior across vast swaths of the social landscape" (Wright, 1995, p. 44), there is no sociology of guns, per se. Most research examines guns in connection with crime and violence, either from a criminological (Harcourt, 2004) or public health perspective (Keremway,

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