

**The Black Church and Guns: Assessing the Links Between Religion and Race in the United States**

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THESIS

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This study examines differences in the likelihood of gun ownership among Blacks and Whites across various religious affiliations. It focuses on historically Black Christian traditions that often go unaccounted for in the existing literature on gun ownership among Christians. Data from the 1972—2018 General Social Surveys is analyzed using logistic regression models. Findings suggest that unlike the patterns of gun ownership associated with White denominations (evangelicals owning the largest share of guns), Black Christian gun ownership is heavily represented by mainline denominations. To date, scholars have maintained that evangelicalism emphasizes gun ownership while overlooking the role that gun ownership plays for Black mainline traditions. These results point to a notable difference in the links between race, religion, and gun ownership.

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## **Introduction**

Christianity and guns both hold venerated positions in American society. From its values, tenets, and how it organizes life, Christianity is built into the very fabric of the United States. Guns, too, have been integral in how the United States became the United States. As with many political and social topics, people can view the relationship between religion and guns in a multitude of ways, and where they intersect can link them to issues of race, class, politics, among various other topics. In this particular case, the subject being explored is gun ownership among African American Christian traditions compared to White American Christian traditions. This research is unique because it includes multiple African American Christian traditions instead of assuming that, as researchers have in the past, African Americans are primarily Protestant and that there isn't much variation in how they practice the religion compared to White Protestants. My goal is to put this research into conversation with other researchers studying the intersection between gun ownership and Christianity.

The most direct contribution of this current project to the sociology of religion is the fact that it examines the relationship between gun ownership and Christianity. As previously stated, both of these subjects are mainstays in American society and culture, and both have unique ways in which they interact and influence each other. While there are many different ways to look at guns and Christianity, I believe looking at it from the perspective of denominational affiliation will provide valuable insight into the reasons that some groups decide to buy guns and others do not. As guns continue to dominate the news headlines, the literature must continue to study and probe how they impact the world around us. And as American Christianity continues to change (or stay the same in some cases), it is crucial that we understand its relationship to our country and what that means for us as citizens.

Nevertheless, the most significant contribution of this project to the overall discussion of guns and Christianity is that it focuses heavily on African American Christians and their guns. Generally, studies that focus on Christians and guns in America tend to focus on White, politically conservative men while not accounting for the substantial amount of variation seen in both who owns guns and why. To be clear, yes, White men own most of the guns in the U.S., but they do not own all of them, and therefore, there needs to be further discussion about the relationship we as a country have with firearms. Also, while similar and based on White Christian traditions in some instances, African American Christianity is not monolithic in nature and deserves to be dissected, understood, and observed just as much as any religious institution. By contrasting Blacks and Whites across similar religious affiliations, this study accounts for the diversity in how American Christians organize around their faith.

In addition to examining a racial component of gun ownership, this study looks at the type of guns people buy. For example, someone could own a handgun and not a shotgun or rifle for various reasons, and vice versa. Several cultural factors may influence the kind of gun a person owns. These differences could likely differ by race, religion, or some combination of the two. And while some studies in the past may have had control variables for gun ownership, the inclusion of other Black Christian denominations sets this current project apart.

Ultimately, I hope this project can spark an ongoing dialogue about Christianity and gun ownership in America. If history is to be an example, neither of these topics is going anywhere for quite some time, so having a clear understanding of how they relate to each other may provide a unique glimpse into American society and its future.

This study compares Blacks and Whites across similar religious affiliations. Also, this study examines religious affiliations, specifically among Blacks. These contributions permit

assessing key assumptions about the links between religious affiliation and gun ownership in America.

### **Literature Review**

Unfortunately, few studies examine the relationship between gun ownership and religious affiliation. However, for my current project, I am aware of two studies that are directly related to the links between these topics: David Yamane's "Awash in a Sea of Faith and Firearms: Rediscovering the Connection Between Religion and Gun Ownership in America," and Steven Merino's "God and Guns: Examining Religious Influences on Gun Attitudes in the United States." Regarding the former, Yamane measures rates of gun ownership based on denominational affiliation. A historically known positive correlation exists between conservative Protestantism and gun ownership, which Yamane considers in this study. However, prior to his analysis, most studies only used religion as a control variable and neglected its ability to influence one's attitudes and the likelihood of owning a firearm. Conversely, Yamane used RELTRAD to determine rates of ownership among various Christian denominations. RELTRAD is a classification scheme that places "respondents into seven categories grounded in the historical development of American religious traditions" (Steensland et al., 2000). Results of the study indicate that "relative to evangelical Protestants, members of every religious tradition except mainline Protestants have lower odds of personal handgun ownership" (Yamane, 2016: 631). Although both RELTRAD and Yamane's study include Black Christians, they are lumped together under the banner of "Black Protestantism," not allowing for other traditionally Black denominations to be adequately represented.

In addition to religious affiliations, Yamane's study shows that other religious-related factors influence gun ownership. For example, he hypothesizes the following: H1: Evangelical Protestant affiliation will be positively associated with personal handgun ownership. H2: Organizational religious involvement will be negatively associated with personal handgun ownership. H3: The effect of evangelical Protestantism on personal handgun ownership will be mediated by several sociopolitical orientations. The results supported each hypothesis, with at least limited support from the data.

Stephen Merino's study focuses on how Christian denominations view gun control and the laws surrounding it. He also uses RELTRAD and finds differences in gun attitudes across different denominations. More specifically, Merino shows that along with high rates of gun ownership, evangelical Protestants are more likely to favor looser gun control laws. This desire for more relaxed gun laws points back to the idea of individuality and being responsible for one's own safety and security. The results of Merino's study also show that mainline Protestants and evangelicals are more likely to own guns than Black Protestants and non-affiliates. Mainliners are also more likely to be in favor of stricter gun laws in comparison to evangelicals. Black Protestants (again, excluding specific historically Black denominations) are less likely to own guns and more in favor of more stringent gun laws. One possible explanation for these results is the proximity of Blacks to gun violence in the United States.

Since few studies examine links between Christianity and gun ownership, researchers theorize that people might buy guns for a range of reasons. These explanations include desires of *collective security*, fear of crime/terrorism, association with gun culture, and racialized ideas about surrounding neighborhoods and their inhabitants. Regarding the former, the notion of *collective security* as it relates to gun ownership refers to "citizens perceptions of government's



ability to ensure their safety," and more specifically, the idea that law enforcement does an inadequate job at protecting people and preventing crime (Kelsay et al., 2018). It is hypothesized that informal social control might play a part in both perceptions of police and gun ownership (Kelsay et al., 2018). For instance, if people's beliefs influence them to put their faith and trust in God, what does that mean for their attitudes on gun ownership? In other words, why do they need a gun if they put their faith and trust in God? Or, does their faith and trust influence them to buy guns for protection? In the case of minorities who often live in high-crime areas, guns may provide a sense of safety from crime (Kelsay et al., 2018). Some minorities, particularly Black Americans, may turn to religion (Christianity in this case) to heighten their sense of safety.

Racism and the fear of criminal activity have a long history of being linked together (Kleck, 2009; Young, 1985). For communities where few minorities live, prejudiced ideas may give way to "aggressive attitudes toward criminals, which increases the likelihood of gun ownership" (Young, 1985:473). Nationally, White Americans are far more likely to own guns than minority groups (Pew Research Center, 2017), and studies have shown that Whites live in predominately White communities (Archer, 2018)). These same communities are home to those who subscribe to conservative faiths and politics. Interestingly enough, "religion has been found to foster generalized trust, which should engender lower levels of distrust or misanthropy, including that which is directed towards a general fear of crime" (Matthews et al., 2011:485). However, it is widely known that the White evangelical collective identity is associated with high rates of gun ownership under the guise of "protection." Thus, what makes them different from other groups? And, is the same true for Black evangelicals? Religious beliefs are "positively related to punitive... responses to crime" (Matthews et al., 2011: 487), so would the lived experience of Black Americans make them more fearful of crime and, in turn, more likely

to purchase a firearm? Or, would their religious beliefs mediate their fear and desire to protect themselves with a gun? Although they follow similar tenets, there are often differences in how Blacks and Whites apply their beliefs to the world around them (Shelton and Cobb, 2017). These differences point to cultural identities steeped in history and American traditions.

### Hypotheses

This project assumes five ideas regarding the connection between guns and religion.

Some hypotheses recognize that Christianity in general is closely connected with gun ownership. However other hypotheses rest on established ideas concerning historic links between various mainline and evangelical traditions within Christianity, and their respective political and social attitudes.

Religious comparisons using RELTRAD:

H<sub>1</sub>: Adherants of historically Black Protestant traditions are less likely than adherants of historically White evangelical Protestant traditions to own a firearm.

H<sub>2</sub>: Adherants of historically Black Protestant traditions are less likely than historically White mainline Protestant traditions to own a firearm.

H<sub>3</sub>: Adherants of historically Black Protestant traditions are more likely than religious non-affiliates to own a firearm.

Religious comparisons among African Americans using Black Reltrad:

H<sub>4</sub>: Black mainline Protestants and Catholics are less likely to own a firearm than Black evangelical Protestants.

H<sub>5</sub>: Black evangelical Protestants are more likely to own a firearm than Black religious non-affiliates.

## **Research Methodology**

The data used in my analysis comes from the 1972-2018 General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS relies on a multistage full probability sampling design to analyze trends in American society. Refer to Smith et al. (2018) for a more descriptive explanation of the GSS's sampling methodology. The data used for this project has been pooled in order to produce more accurate statistical estimates for African Americans in multivariable logistic regression analyses.

### **Dependent Variables**

The dependent variables for this project focus on several questions about gun ownership. Study participants were asked: "Do you happen to have in your home (IF HOUSE: or garage) any guns or revolvers?" Respondents could answer "yes" or "no." Study participants who answered in the affirmative were then asked a follow-up question about the type of gun they owned, whether it was a "pistol," "shotgun," or "rifle." Table 1 provides details for all dependent variables, including survey questions, answer possibilities, and overall percent distributions by race for gun ownership. In order to assess the differences in means between Blacks and Whites on each of the gun ownership variables, I used independent samples t-tests to determine whether or not the differences were significant.

### **Independent Variables**

The primary independent variables for this project focus on respondent's religious affiliation. I use two distinct coding schemes for conducting separate analyses of gun ownership by race and religion. As with existing studies, I use the RELTRAD syntax to capture religious

affiliation among Blacks and Whites in general (Steensland et al., 2000). However, I use Black Reltrad to examine similarities and differences among adherents of historically African American Protestant religious denominations (Shelton and Cobb, 2017). Black Reltrad also accounts for African Americans across a wide range of religious distinctions, including non-affiliates.

This study also accounts for important control variables that impact gun ownership. Table 2 presents codes and percent distributions by race for all independent variables. These include income, education, age, gender, region of residence, whether the respondent was born in the USA, marital status, as well as the size and type of community in which the respondent resides. Church attendance has been shown to strongly influence faith-based beliefs and practices among Christians. Therefore, it is included as a predictor variable for gun ownership.

### **Findings**

Findings presented in Table 1 reveal that most GSS respondents do not own any type of firearm. For instance, 72% of Blacks and 52% of Whites report not owning a firearm. The percentages sit respectably at 28% for Blacks and 48% for Whites for those who report owning a firearm. These descriptive results allude to the fact that although America is known to be very attached to its firearms, most citizens do not own a gun. It is also interesting to note that the percentages for White gun owners compared to Black gun owners is noticeably higher, keeping in line with the widely known fact that Whites are more likely to own firearms than Blacks.

The second set of findings in Table 1 displays the type of gun owned by the respondents, whether it is a pistol, shotgun, or rifle. As with the previous question, most respondents answered "no." These "no's" translate to 17% of Black respondents owning a pistol compared to White respondents 26%, 9% of Blacks owning a rifle compared to 31% for Whites, and 13% of Blacks

owning a rifle shotgun while 31% of Whites do. For African Americans, the data points to pistols being the most common type of gun owned, followed by shotguns, and lastly, rifles. For White Americans, the most common type of gun owned appears to be a rifle, closely followed by the shotgun, and finally, the pistol.

Table 2 displays codes and percent distributions for all independent variables used in this analysis by race. The first section of this table displays a breakdown of RELTRAD; it shows that the distribution of White respondents' religious affiliations is more spread out than that of African Americans, who are overwhelmingly represented in the category of Black Protestants (63%). It is this over-representation that led me to include the second portion of Table 2, Black Reltrad. This section paints a clearer picture of the diversity present in African American Christian traditions by including Holiness/Pentecostals, Black members of historically White evangelical denominations, non-denominational Protestants, Baptists, Methodists, Black members of historically White mainline denominations, Catholics, members of other faith groups, and the religiously non-affiliated. The distribution appears to be more spread with the inclusion of more categories, although more than half are still represented under one category, Baptists.

Table 2 also examines socioeconomic status indicators, including income and education. Income is broken down into five categories, with the highest number of African Americans represented within the lowest category (34%). In contrast, most White respondents are represented in the second-highest category at 26%. Education is also separated into five categories: respondents who have less than a high school diploma, those with a high school diploma, those who went to junior college, those with their bachelor's, and those with an advanced/graduate degree. Most Black and White GSS respondents have at least completed a

high school degree; for example, 52% of African Americans and 53% of Whites have done so. For the remaining categories, White respondents have more education than Blacks in all cases except junior college. The socioeconomic differences on display here show the effects of structural racism in the United States. Whites are shown to be represented more frequently in the higher classifications in both categories, attesting to contemporary racial disparities present in this country.

The last portion of Table 2 accounts for all of the sociodemographic variables being used in the current analysis. These variables include age, gender, region, whether the respondent was born in the United States, marital status, community type, and how often the respondent attends worship services. For both races, the age group of most respondents was that of those between the ages of 19-29, the age group with the least respondents was 60-72, and the remaining groups were nearly evenly distributed compared to each other. The gender variable shows that for both races, women outnumber men. The region variable examines whether the respondent lives in the southern United States or not, ultimately revealing that more than half (55%) of African American respondents live in the south as compared to 33% of the White respondents. The variable used to determine whether or not the respondent was born in the United States is nearly identical for both groups, with 93% of Black respondents and 95% of White respondents being citizens by birth. With more than 90% of both Blacks and Whites included in the analysis being born in the United States, other findings show an apparent disparity in quality of life for Black Americans.

Four different statistical effects for marital status are examined here: married, widowed/separated, divorced, and never married. When compared by race, most of both groups are married, with the fewest respondents being divorced for Blacks and those widowed for

Whites. The substantial difference in the married category, 42% for Blacks as opposed to 64% for Whites, is likely another symptom of the systemically supported lack of resources and opportunity present in Black populations. The community size variable proved to be interesting. Results point to the most significant proportion of African American respondents being in the largest cities; these large cities are often characterized by struggling economic sectors and lower quality education opportunities, pointing back to findings in my socioeconomic analysis. In contrast, White participants are shown to live mostly in large suburbs. The final variable, which is central to this project, is the church attendance variable. This variable ranges from those who never attend church to those who attend weekly through six different categories. For Black respondents, weekly church attendance is the most common at 31%, with almost weekly being the least common. For White respondents, the most common choice was attending church a few times a year, and similarly to Black respondents, the most uncommon choice was attending church almost weekly. One of the more pronounced findings in this section comes from the fact that never going to church is almost twice as common for Whites than Blacks.

Table 3 presents logistic regressions assessing gun ownership among Blacks and Whites across various religious affiliations. Findings for four different dependent variables are displayed. The first set of results examine the likelihood that a respondent owns a gun. These results utilize RELTRAD as the method for assessing religious classification. Model 1 shows that all religious categories are significantly less likely to own a gun when compared to evangelicals. For example, mainline Protestants are less likely to own a gun than evangelicals by about 19%, with an odds ratio of 0.81. Model 2 includes important control variables categorized as either sociodemographic or socioeconomic. Model 2 shows that the magnitude of the odds ratios for religion increase when the control variables are added. For example, the odds ratio for

mainline Protestants increases to 0.86. This suggests that religion becomes weaker when control variables are included. Nevertheless, they remain statistically significant in that evangelicals are most likely to own a firearm. The remaining results in this table examine the likelihood of whether the respondent owns a particular type of gun. These results parallel the previously discussed results for gun ownership in general. Across the remaining outcomes, evangelicals are more likely to own a pistol, rifle, and shotgun than mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, Catholics, Jews, followers of other faiths, and the religiously non-affiliated.

Table 4 examines logistic regressions assessing gun ownership among African American religious affiliations. These findings focus on data for Blacks only utilizing Black Reltrad. The “Black evangelical” and “Black mainline” categories in Table 4 capture African American members of historically White Christian traditions. These distinctions are especially important considering the rich faith-based diversity within the Black Church. Moreover, Holiness/Pentecostals serve as the reference category for models utilizing Black Reltrad. Members of this denominational family are by far the most religiously conservative in Black America (Shelton and Cobb 2017). Lastly, in this study, the term “mainliners” refers to Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, and Black members of historically White mainline Christian traditions. Results for four dependent variables are shown. Model 1 shows that as compared to Holiness/Pentecostals, Baptists (O.R.= 1.39,  $p<.01$ ) and Methodists (O.R.=1.62,  $p<.01$ ) are significantly more likely to own a gun. In contrast, Catholics (O.R.=0.73,  $P<0.10$ ), other faiths (O.R.=0.58,  $P<0.05$ ), and non-affiliates (O.R.=0.74,  $p<0.10$ ) are significantly less likely to own a gun as Holiness/Pentecostals. These findings suggest that religious affiliation strongly influences whether or not African Americans own a firearm. In particular, they indicate that mainliners—rather than members of the most religiously conservative denominational family among African



Americans—are more likely to own a firearm. As with the prior analyses, Model 2 includes important control variables that continue to alter the findings; for example, the statistical magnitude for Methodists (O.R.=1.44,  $p<0.10$ ) becomes much weaker once the control variables are added to the analysis. Additionally, the odds ratios for other faiths and non-affiliates are no longer statistically significant. Lastly, the odds ratio for Catholics completely changes statistical direction. In Model 1, they were significantly less likely to own a gun than Holiness/Pentecostals. However, they are significantly more likely to do so in Model 2. Taken together, these findings suggest that control variables strongly influence the effects of religion on African American gun ownership.

The next set of results examines the likelihood of whether African American respondents own a pistol. Model 1 shows that Baptists (O.R.=1.78,  $p<0.001$ ), Methodists (O.R.=2.11,  $p<0.001$ ), and Black members of historically White mainline denominations (O.R.=1.69,  $p<0.05$ ) are more likely to own a handgun when compared to Holiness/Pentecostals. In Model 2, the odds ratios for Baptists and Methodists remain statistically significant. However, the odds ratio for Black members of historically White mainline traditions loses its significance. Also, the results of Model 2 show that Catholics and non-affiliates become statistically significant. These findings further indicate that controlling for socioeconomic status and sociodemographic significantly impacts the effect of religious classifications in relation to gun ownership among African Americans.

The next set of results examine whether African Americans respondents own a rifle. Model one shows that Catholics (O.R.=0.55,  $p<0.05$ ), other faiths (O.R.=0.43,  $p<0.05$ ), and non-affiliates (O.R.=0.50,  $p<0.05$ ) are less likely than Holiness/Pentecostals to own a rifle. Once the control variables are included, they wipe away all statistically significant variables. The final set

of results examine whether or not African American respondents own a shotgun. Model 1 shows that when compared to Holiness/Pentecostals, non-denominational Protestants (O.R.=0.54,  $p<0.05$ ), Black Evangelicals (O.R.=0.47,  $p<0.10$ ), Catholics (O.R.=0.55,  $p<0.01$ ), other faiths (O.R.=0.46,  $p<0.01$ ), and non-affiliates (O.R.=0.51,  $p<0.01$ ) are all less likely to own a shotgun. Model 2 shows that when the control variables are added, all statistically significant findings are wiped away except for respondents with other faiths (O.R.=0.46,  $p<0.01$ )

Some additional results must be discussed. First, non-published models utilizing the RELTRAD syntax with “Black Protestants” as the reference category show that these study participants are significantly less likely than both evangelicals and mainliners to own a gun, whether a pistol, rifle, or shotgun. Second, these non-published results show that when control variables are included, there is no significant difference between Black Protestants and non-affiliates in either the initial gun ownership variable or the category for owning a pistol. However, Black Protestants are less likely than non-affiliates to own a rifle or shotgun. In sum, these results reveal that when as compared to study participants with no religious preference, Black Protestants are not as likely to own a firearm.

Several control variables stand out in Table 4, including income, age, sex, born in the United States, marital status, and community type. These variables are significant in at least three of the gun categories and point to interesting findings for African Americans. For example, income is a consistently statistically significant signifier for gun ownership among African Americans; as their income increases, so does their chance of them owning a firearm. Also, Black women are less likely to own a gun across the board than Black men. In a country where White men own more guns than White women, these findings show that as far as gender is concerned, men—regardless of race—are more likely to own guns. Additionally, the strongest

variable in magnitude in Table 4 assesses the respondents' national origin. Results for this particular variable show that being born in the United States dramatically increases the likelihood that a Black person will own a gun of some kind. Marital status likewise plays a unique role in gun ownership for African Americans, with the married respondents more likely to own a firearm than those who are widowed/separated, divorced, and never married. The type and size of community one live in seem to impact gun ownership among African Americans too. Blacks who live in larger cities are more likely to own guns in general, as well as shotguns and rifles in particular.

### **Conclusion**

The relationship between religion and gun ownership is undoubtedly a complicated one, and when race is an added factor, it becomes all the more complex. I set out to find out how gun ownership and Black Christian traditions interact with each other and found a unique and varying relationship. This current project shows that there are pronounced differences in how Black Christians view guns as compared to White Christians. It also shows differences among African Americans across various religious affiliations.

Data from the GSS provides strong support for two of the five hypotheses. Regarding H1, Table 3 shows that Black Protestants are less likely than evangelicals to own firearms. H2 is supported by the previously discussed non-published findings revealing that Black Protestants own fewer guns (of every type) compared to mainliners. H3 was unsupported because Black Protestants (as shown in Table 4) are less likely to own both shotguns and rifles than the religiously non-affiliated. Surprisingly, H4 was unsupported by the data shown in Table 4. It was revealed that Black mainliners are more likely to own firearms than Black evangelicals, especially in the initial and pistol gun ownership categories. H5 was likewise unsupported

because Table 4 reveals that non-affiliates are slightly more likely to own pistols when compared to Black evangelicals.

My assumptions about evangelical denominations owning the most guns for both Blacks and Whites were completely wrong. It appears that race and religion move in two different directions concerning gun ownership. For Black evangelicals (Holiness/Pentecostals in particular), religion seems to mediate the desire to own firearms. To repeat, the results of this study indicate that Holiness/Pentecostals are less likely than Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics to own guns in general and pistols in particular. Thus, Black evangelical attitudes about guns seem to convey the "generalized trust" discussed by Matthews et al. (2011). In other words, it seems that Holiness/Pentecostals put their faith and trust in God in a way that reduces their perceived need for a weapon.

The most surprising result of this study is that Black mainline traditions are more likely to own guns than the most religiously conservative tradition within the Black Church. There is no scholarly precedence for this finding. For decades, it has been widely assumed—and consistently statistically demonstrated-- that religiously conservative Christians are more likely to own guns than mainliners (Merino, 2016). However, a key limitation of these studies is that they primarily focus on Whites. Findings presented here clearly indicate that Black mainliners are more likely to own weapons than Black evangelicals.

Why would this be so? Something in the experiences of Black mainliners makes them more likely to own a firearm and, in particular, a pistol. I would theorize that as Black mainliners become more mainstream and willing to evolve alongside society that the influence of America's gun culture will become further intertwined with these faiths. It is possible that the continued gun violence present in America has impacted these groups and made them seek more "worldly"

solutions and preventative measures. With these findings in mind, future researchers could attempt to understand what it is about these three traditions that make them stand out from other Black Christian groups and or what stops the other groups from going out and getting a gun.

As with any study, there are always improvements and new insights to be made upon completion. Because there are apparent differences in how Black and White Christians view guns, further study should include more racial and ethnic groups, as well as non-Christian faiths (e.g., Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism). Given that this study was a quantitative study conducting a qualitative analysis might prove to be helpful in finding out why individuals of certain beliefs purchase firearms. Christianity is a world religion, and I assume that different cultures would provide unique opportunities to understand how it influences certain behaviors and beliefs. By taking the study outside of the United States, where gun culture is closely tied to our national identity, a new study could show how Christians view guns when they aren't so readily available. It may also prove beneficial to compare how Christians view guns and how Muslims view guns; with both faiths being Abrahamic in origin, there may be some similarities in how these groups view firearms. Guns and religion are daily realities across the globe, and understanding how they move in conjunction with each other can provide valuable information on how we interact with both of them.

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TABLE 1 Survey Questions, Answer Possibilities, and Overall Percent Distributions by Race for Gun Ownership.

|  | Blacks | Whites | T-Value  |
|--|--------|--------|----------|
| Q: "Do you happen to have in your home (IF HOUSE: or garage) any guns or revolvers?"                               |        |        |          |
| A. Response  |        |        |          |
| Yes  | 27.9   | 48     | 29.24*** |
| No   | 72.1   | 52     |          |
| IF YES: is it a pistol, shotgun, rifle, or what?"  |        |        |          |
| B. Pistol  |        |        |          |
| Yes  | 17.4   | 25.5   | 14.02*** |
| No   | 74.5   | 82.6   |          |
| C. Shotgun   |        |        |          |
| Yes  | 12.7   | 30.7   | 33.88*** |
| No   | 87.3   | 69.3   |          |
| D. Rifle   |        |        |          |
| Yes  | 9.2    | 30.9   | 45.07*** |
| No   | 90.8   | 69.1   |          |
| NOTES: ***p<.001; t-values assess differences between blacks and whites on the variable overall; (2-tailed tests). |        |        |          |



TABLE 2 Codes and Percent Distributions by Race for all Independent Variables.

| Independent Variables                | Blacks | Whites | T-Value    |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|------------|
| <u>Religious Affiliations</u>        |        |        |            |
| <u>RELTRAD</u>                       |        |        |            |
| Evangelical Protestants <sup>a</sup> | 11.2   | 28.4   | 42.16***   |
| Mainline Protestants                 | 4.9    | 24.1   | 61.89***   |
| Black Protestants (aggregated)       | 62.6   | 0.4    | -116.11*** |
| Catholics                            | 7.4    | 27.3   | 55.80***   |
| Jews                                 | 0.2    | 2.5    | 25.10***   |
| Other Faiths                         | 4.3    | 4.9    | 2.40*      |
| Non-Affiliates                       | 9.0    | 12.3   | 9.27***    |
| <u>Black Reltrad</u>                 |        |        |            |
| Holiness/Pentecostals <sup>b</sup>   | 3.0    | N/A    |            |
| Black Evangelicals                   | 1.8    | N/A    |            |
| Non-Denominational Protestants       | 5.3    | N/A    |            |
| Baptists                             | 51.8   | N/A    |            |
| Methodists                           | 9.1    | N/A    |            |
| Black Mainliners                     | 3.0    | N/A    |            |
| Catholics                            | 7.3    | N/A    |            |
| Other Faiths                         | 4.5    | N/A    |            |
| Non-Affiliates                       | 8.9    | N/A    |            |
| <u>SES Indicators</u>                |        |        |            |
| <u>Income<sup>d</sup></u>            |        |        |            |
| Lowest Category                      | 34     | 15.6   | 43.53***   |
| Second Lowest Category               | 28     | 22.6   |            |
| Middle Category                      | 6.8    | 8      |            |
| Second Highest Category              | 17.8   | 25.7   |            |
| Highest Category                     | 13.2   | 28     |            |
| <u>Education<sup>d</sup></u>         |        |        |            |
| Less than High School                | 29.8   | 18.5   | 30.28***   |
| High School Degree                   | 52.3   | 53.0   |            |
| Some/Junior College                  | 6.0    | 5.5    |            |
| Bachelor Degree                      | 8.2    | 15.5   |            |
| Graduate/Advanced Degree             | 3.6    | 7.5    |            |
| <u>Sociodemographics</u>             |        |        |            |
| <u>Age<sup>d</sup></u>               |        |        |            |
| 60-72                                | 13.2   | 16.7   | -9.12***   |
| 50-59                                | 17.5   | 17.8   |            |
| 40-49                                | 19.9   | 20.7   |            |
| 30-39                                | 22.6   | 21.4   |            |
| 19-29                                | 26.8   | 23.3   |            |
| Gender (male=1, female=2)            | 41.2   | 46.3   | -8.88***   |
| Region (South=1, non-South=0)        | 54.6   | 32.5   | -37.85***  |
| Born in USA (yes=2, no=1)            | 92.7   | 94.8   | 6.30***    |
| <u>Marital Status</u>                |        |        |            |
| Married <sup>c</sup>                 | 41.8   | 64.3   | -32.62***  |
| Widowed/Separated                    | 15.1   | 8.3    |            |
| Divorced                             | 10.9   | 9.2    |            |
| Never Married                        | 32.1   | 18.2   |            |
| Community Type <sup>d</sup>          |        |        | 47.62***   |

|                                |      |      |           |
|--------------------------------|------|------|-----------|
| City GT 250000                 | 36.7 | 12.6 |           |
| City, 50-250000                | 17.2 | 11.9 |           |
| Suburb, Large City             | 15.3 | 21.1 |           |
| Suburb, Medium City            | 5.7  | 11.4 |           |
| Unincorporated, Large City     | 4.6  | 7.3  |           |
| Unincorporated, Medium City    | 2.9  | 8.6  |           |
| City, 10-49999                 | 5.0  | 6.5  |           |
| Town GT 2500                   | 3.8  | 5.6  |           |
| Smaller Areas                  | 2.9  | 4.9  |           |
| Open Country                   | 5.9  | 10.3 |           |
| Church Attendance <sup>d</sup> |      |      | -23.84*** |
| Never                          | 10.2 | 18.2 |           |
| Few Times a Year               | 14.3 | 64.3 |           |
| Several Times a Year           | 12.6 | 12.5 |           |
| Monthly                        | 24.4 | 14.4 |           |
| Almost Weekly                  | 7.1  | 5.2  |           |
| Weekly                         | 31.4 | 27.4 |           |

NOTES: \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001; means appear in parentheses; <sup>a</sup> reference category for RELTRAD models; <sup>b</sup> reference category for Black Reltrad models; <sup>c</sup> reference category for marital status; <sup>d</sup> analyzed as a continuous variable in the multivariate models; (2-tailed tests).

**TABLE 3** Logistic Regressions Assessing Gun Ownership Among Blacks and Whites Across Various Religious Affiliations

| Independent Variables         | Gun Ownership |      |            |      | Own Pistol |      |            |      | Own Rifle  |      |            |      | Own Shotgun |      |            |      |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|-------------|------|------------|------|
|                               | Model 1       |      | Model 2    |      | Model 1    |      | Model 2    |      | Model 1    |      | Model 2    |      | Model 1     |      | Model 2    |      |
|                               | O.R.          | S.E. | O.R.       | S.E. | O.R.       | S.E. | O.R.       | S.E. | O.R.       | S.E. | O.R.       | S.E. | O.R.        | S.E. | O.R.       | S.E. |
| <i>Religious Affiliations</i> |               |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |             |      |            |      |
| Mainline Protestants          | 0.81***       | 0.03 | 0.86***    | 0.04 | 0.79***    | 0.04 | 0.82***    | 0.05 | 0.91**     | 0.03 | 0.94       | 0.04 | 0.81***     | 0.03 | 0.84***    | 0.04 |
| Black Protestants             | 0.36***       | 0.04 | 0.54***    | 0.06 | 0.51***    | 0.05 | 0.70***    | 0.06 | 0.21***    | 0.06 | 0.29***    | 0.08 | 0.28***     | 0.05 | 0.41***    | 0.07 |
| Catholics                     | 0.44***       | 0.03 | 0.56***    | 0.04 | 0.47***    | 0.04 | 0.61***    | 0.05 | 0.53***    | 0.03 | 0.63***    | 0.05 | 0.44***     | 0.03 | 0.56***    | 0.05 |
| Jews                          | 0.13***       | 0.11 | 0.22***    | 0.14 | 0.25***    | 0.13 | 0.33***    | 0.16 | 0.11***    | 0.16 | 0.20***    | 0.20 | 0.07***     | 0.19 | 0.12***    | 0.23 |
| Other Faiths                  | 0.41***       | 0.06 | 0.61***    | 0.07 | 0.48***    | 0.07 | 0.63***    | 0.08 | 0.52***    | 0.06 | 0.77**     | 0.07 | 0.36***     | 0.07 | 0.51***    | 0.08 |
| Non-Affiliates                | 0.42***       | 0.04 | 0.59***    | 0.06 | 0.56***    | 0.05 | 0.70***    | 0.06 | 0.48***    | 0.05 | 0.62***    | 0.06 | 0.40***     | 0.05 | 0.53***    | 0.06 |
| <i>SES Indicators</i>         |               |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |             |      |            |      |
| Income                        |               |      | 1.28***    | 0.01 |            |      | 1.30***    | 0.01 |            |      | 1.25***    | 0.01 |             |      | 1.26***    | 0.01 |
| Education                     |               |      | 0.79***    | 0.01 |            |      | 0.88***    | 0.02 |            |      | 0.82***    | 0.02 |             |      | 0.80***    | 0.02 |
| <i>Sociodemographics</i>      |               |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |             |      |            |      |
| Age                           |               |      | 0.93***    | 0.01 |            |      | 0.91***    | 0.01 |            |      | 0.97*      | 0.01 |             |      | 0.95***    | 0.01 |
| Women                         |               |      | 0.66***    | 0.03 |            |      | 0.69***    | 0.03 |            |      | 0.64***    | 0.03 |             |      | 0.56***    | 0.03 |
| Southerners                   |               |      | 1.33***    | 0.03 |            |      | 1.68***    | 0.03 |            |      | 1.07†      | 0.03 |             |      | 1.19***    | 0.03 |
| Born in USA                   |               |      | 2.58***    | 0.08 |            |      | 2.11***    | 0.09 |            |      | 2.56***    | 0.09 |             |      | 2.14***    | 0.09 |
| Marital Status                |               |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |            |      |             |      |            |      |
| Widowed/Separates             |               |      | 0.53***    | 0.06 |            |      | 0.74***    | 0.07 |            |      | 0.52***    | 0.08 |             |      | 0.51***    | 0.08 |
| Divorced                      |               |      | 0.55***    | 0.05 |            |      | 0.83**     | 0.06 |            |      | 0.56***    | 0.06 |             |      | 0.54***    | 0.06 |
| Never Married                 |               |      | 0.53***    | 0.04 |            |      | 0.70***    | 0.05 |            |      | 0.59***    | 0.05 |             |      | 0.57***    | 0.05 |
| Community Type                |               |      | 1.28***    | 0.01 |            |      | 1.12***    | 0.01 |            |      | 1.30***    | 0.01 |             |      | 1.34***    | 0.01 |
| Political Views               |               |      | 1.20***    | 0.02 |            |      | 1.21***    | 0.02 |            |      | 1.23***    | 0.02 |             |      | 1.18***    | 0.02 |
| Church Attendance             |               |      | 0.97***    | 0.01 |            |      | 0.94***    | 0.01 |            |      | 0.98*      | 0.01 |             |      | 0.98*      | 0.01 |
| Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>         | 0.06          |      | 0.23       |      | 0.03       |      | 0.13       |      | 0.06       |      | 0.20       |      | 0.07        |      | 0.22       |      |
| χ <sup>2</sup>                | 1593.88***    |      | 4341.21*** |      | 675.07***  |      | 2090.52*** |      | 1464.31*** |      | 3538.76*** |      | 1565.63     |      | 3945.17*** |      |
| N                             | 33978         |      | 23419      |      | 33883      |      | 23347      |      | 33884      |      | 23348      |      | 33884       |      | 23347      |      |

NOTES: †p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001;

**TABLE 4** Logistic Regressions Assessing Gun Ownership Among African American Religious Affiliations

| <i>Independent Variables</i>  | <i>Gun Ownership</i> |      |           |      | <i>Own Pistol</i> |      |           |      | <i>Own Rifle</i> |      |           |      | <i>Own Shotgun</i> |      |           |      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------|-----------|------|-------------------|------|-----------|------|------------------|------|-----------|------|--------------------|------|-----------|------|
|                               | Model 1              |      | Model 2   |      | Model 1           |      | Model 2   |      | Model 1          |      | Model 2   |      | Model 1            |      | Model 2   |      |
|                               | O.R.                 | S.E. | O.R.      | S.E. | O.R.              | S.E. | O.R.      | S.E. | O.R.             | S.E. | O.R.      | S.E. | O.R.               | S.E. | O.R.      | S.E. |
| <i>Religious Affiliations</i> |                      |      |           |      |                   |      |           |      |                  |      |           |      |                    |      |           |      |
| Non-Denom. Prots              | 0.75                 | 0.19 | 0.90      | 0.23 | 1.42              | 0.22 | 1.37      | 0.26 | 0.78             | 0.28 | 0.84      | 0.34 | 0.54*              | 0.26 | 0.68      | 0.32 |
| Black Evangelicals            | 0.75                 | 0.27 | 0.67      | 0.40 | 1.22              | 0.32 | 0.67      | 0.49 | 1.14             | 0.36 | 1.83      | 0.47 | 0.47†              | 0.41 | 0.56      | 0.61 |
| Baptists                      | 1.39**               | 0.12 | 1.50**    | 0.15 | 1.78***           | 0.15 | 1.82**    | 0.19 | 1.01             | 0.17 | 0.98      | 0.22 | 1.04               | 0.15 | 1.12      | 0.19 |
| Methodists                    | 1.62**               | 0.15 | 1.44†     | 0.20 | 2.11***           | 0.18 | 1.78*     | 0.23 | 1.21             | 0.22 | 1.07      | 0.28 | 0.99               | 0.19 | 0.82      | 0.26 |
| Black Mainliners              | 0.93                 | 0.21 | 0.94      | 0.29 | 1.69*             | 0.25 | 1.43      | 0.32 | 1.00             | 0.30 | 1.42      | 0.37 | 1.02               | 0.26 | 1.24      | 0.35 |
| Catholics                     | 0.73†                | 0.17 | 1.57*     | 0.22 | 1.08              | 0.21 | 1.86*     | 0.26 | 0.55*            | 0.27 | 1.14      | 0.34 | 0.55**             | 0.23 | 1.20      | 0.30 |
| Other Faiths                  | 0.58*                | 0.21 | 0.62      | 0.30 | 0.77              | 0.28 | 0.86      | 0.34 | 0.43*            | 0.36 | 0.53      | 0.47 | 0.46**             | 0.30 | 0.42*     | 0.45 |
| Non-Affiliates                | 0.74†                | 0.16 | 1.21      | 0.22 | 1.23              | 0.20 | 1.65†     | 0.26 | 0.50*            | 0.27 | 0.68      | 0.36 | 0.51**             | 0.23 | 0.83      | 0.31 |
| <i>SES Indicators</i>         |                      |      |           |      |                   |      |           |      |                  |      |           |      |                    |      |           |      |
| Income                        |                      |      | 1.25***   | 0.03 |                   |      | 1.27***   | 0.04 |                  |      | 1.26***   | 0.07 |                    |      | 1.19***   | 0.04 |
| Education                     |                      |      | 0.95      | 0.04 |                   |      | 1.07      | 0.05 |                  |      | 0.90      | 0.07 |                    |      | 0.82**    | 0.06 |
| <i>Sociodemographics</i>      |                      |      |           |      |                   |      |           |      |                  |      |           |      |                    |      |           |      |
| Age                           |                      |      | 0.81***   | 0.04 |                   |      | 0.90**    | 0.04 |                  |      | 0.79***   | 0.05 |                    |      | 0.73***   | 0.05 |
| Women                         |                      |      | 0.50***   | 0.09 |                   |      | 0.50***   | 0.10 |                  |      | 0.57***   | 0.13 |                    |      | 0.47***   | 0.12 |
| Southerners                   |                      |      | 1.33**    | 0.09 |                   |      | 1.27*     | 0.10 |                  |      | 1.16      | 0.15 |                    |      | 1.00      | 0.13 |
| Born in USA                   |                      |      | 7.79***   | 0.30 |                   |      | 6.86***   | 0.35 |                  |      | 24.22**   | 0.96 |                    |      | 17.07***  | 0.71 |
| Marital Status                |                      |      |           |      |                   |      |           |      |                  |      |           |      |                    |      |           |      |
| Widowed/Separates             |                      |      | 0.58***   | 0.14 |                   |      | 0.79      | 0.16 |                  |      | 0.56**    | 0.22 |                    |      | 0.48***   | 0.20 |
| Divorced                      |                      |      | 0.46***   | 0.14 |                   |      | 0.68*     | 0.16 |                  |      | 0.39***   | 0.24 |                    |      | 0.47***   | 0.20 |
| Never Married                 |                      |      | 0.42***   | 0.11 |                   |      | 0.56***   | 0.13 |                  |      | 0.49***   | 0.18 |                    |      | 0.47***   | 0.16 |
| Community Type                |                      |      | 1.15***   | 0.02 |                   |      | 1.03      | 0.02 |                  |      | 1.29***   | 0.04 |                    |      | 1.30***   | 0.03 |
| Political Views               |                      |      | 1.00      | 0.05 |                   |      | 1.00      | 0.06 |                  |      | 1.04      | 0.08 |                    |      | 1.07      | 0.07 |
| Church Attendance             |                      |      | 1.05†     | 0.03 |                   |      | 1.04      | 0.03 |                  |      | 0.99      | 0.04 |                    |      | 1.05      | 0.04 |
| Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>         | 0.03                 |      | 0.22      |      | 0.02              |      | 0.15      |      | 0.01             |      | 0.17      |      | 0.02               |      | 0.21      |      |
| X <sup>2</sup>                | 91.52***             |      | 605.61*** |      | 46.05***          |      | 337.48*** |      | 29.76***         |      | 288.51*** |      | 44.86***           |      | 426.13*** |      |
| N                             | 5379                 |      | 3784      |      | 5380              |      | 3783      |      | 5379             |      | 3782      |      | 5380               |      | 3783      |      |

NOTES: †p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001;