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Honors Thesis

ARE WOMEN THE SILVER BULLET? UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF GUN REFORM AND RED FLAG LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES

By Emmeline Farwell

Submitted to Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of graduation requirements for University Honors

Political Science Department Brigham Young University June 2024

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ABSTRACT

ARE WOMEN THE SILVER BULLET? UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF GUN REFORM AND RED FLAG LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES

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This thesis examines women's perceptions of gun reform policies and how they can be used as a measure to predict how women could potentially view specific gun reform policies like red flag laws. Specific policies like the assault weapons ban and red flag laws are becoming increasingly common, practical measures to reduce gun violence, but little academic research has been done on them. Using data from the 2022 Congressional Election Survey conducted by the University of Texas at Austin University, I use several linear regressions to ascertain how one's gender affects feelings or support for gun reform generally and for the assault weapons ban. I find that gender does play a significant role when determining respondents' views of gun reform. These gender differences become more complex when gender and race are taken into account.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

itle	. i
bstract	ii
cknowledgments i	iii
able of Contents	iv
ist of Tables and Figures	. v

I.	Introduction	7
II.	Literature Review and Theory	8
III.	Research Methods and Hypothesis	15
IV.	Results	16
V.	Discussion and Conclusion	32
VI.	Works Cited	35
VII.	Appendix 1	38
VIII.	Appendix 2	41

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Gendered Support of Gun Reform Generally 16
FIGURE 2: Gendered Support of the Assault Weapons Ban
16
FIGURE 3: Gun Ownership in This Survey 18
FIGURE 4.1: Support for Assault Weapons Ban in White Respondents 20
FIGURE 4.2: Support for Assault Weapons Ban in Black Respondents20
FIGURE 4.3: Support for Assault Weapons Ban in Hispanic Respondents
FIGURE 4.4: Support for Assault Weapons Ban in Asian Respondents
21
FIGURE 4.5: Gun Control Importance Ranking in White Respondents
FIGURE 4.6: Gun Control Importance Ranking in White Respondents
FIGURE 4.7: Gun Control Importance Ranking in White Respondents
FIGURE 4.8: Gun Control Importance Ranking in White Respondents
FIGURE 5: Gender and Party Identification Breakdown
TABLE 1: Regression Analysis 1 24
TABLE 2: Regression Analysis II
TABLE 3: Regression Analysis 1II 30
TABLE 4: Regression Analysis 1V 32

 TABLE 5: Regression Analyses III & IV With Full List of Control Variables

INTRODUCTION:

In 2018 Christopher Ingraham of the Washington Post published an article asserting that there are more guns than people in the United States. Ingraham got his numbers from The Small Arms Survey, a report executed by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. This report drew from official data and survey data from around 230 countries. They found that among survey respondents, gun ownership was most concentrated in the United States (Ingraham 2018). More recently, Pew Research published their findings in 2023 that one in four Americans live in a household with a gun. Of these, 32% say they own a gun personally. The gender breakdown of this survey found that 40% of men say they own guns, where only 25% of women could report owning a gun (Schaeffer 2023).

These figures make sense when cultural stereotypes in the United States are brought into play. Gun ownership has been coupled with masculinity for generations. It seems clear, however, that gun ownership, and even the conversation about guns, does not simply belong to men anymore. While more men own guns than women in the United States, women still have 25% of ownership rates. Groups like the NRA have begun catering specific messaging towards female gun users, and groups like Moms Demand Action persuade women to join the cause for public safety in their communities. Although gun ownership has fluctuated in the United States, it has become increasingly clear that the level of controversy surrounding it certainly has not changed.

An interesting puzzle arises when issues regarding gun policy have yet to be effectively advanced in the United States, despite continued mass shootings and vocal supporters for some kind of regulation. This begs the question: where does the gap in support for specific facets of gun reform policy and the actual gun-related legislation come from? Does gender have something to do with this gap?

In this paper, I will attempt to answer this question by studying how women feel about specific policies relating to gun reform. By addressing these perceptions, I hope to gain a fuller understanding of how women would perceive red flag laws if similar tests were applied in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY:

In this section, I will establish the necessary context for understanding how gender affects the perception of gun reform policies here in the United States. First, we will define and contextualize key terms like gun reform and red flag laws to better understand how they fit into the greater discussion of gun policy in the United States. Next, I will discuss the literature about gun reform generally to gauge where academic literature stands. I will then include a discussion of women and gun policy, specifically addressing the empirics of gun ownership among women and how women have voted on gun policies in the past. After that, I will address perceptions of gun policies generally. Finally, I will explore how examining female perceptions of gun reform and specific laws fit into the literature surrounding gender and gun policy.

Definitions

I believe that the Library of Congress has the best definition of the term "gun reform" broadly. They state that gun reform is "... a set of laws or policies that regulate the manufacture, sale, transfer, possession, modification, or use of firearms by civilians." Similar to the definition used in Gary Kleck's piece entitled *Policy Lessons from Recent Gun Control Research* these definitions do not address laws that regulate the use of guns (open carry laws, using guns to further a crime, etc). The terms "gun reform" and "gun control" are often used interchangeably. For this paper, I will use the term "gun control" most often.

This paper relies heavily on feelings and perceptions of an assault weapons ban. When using this term, I am referring to H.R.3355 or similar bills. This bill is known as the Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act, popularly known as the Federal Assault Weapons Ban. This legislation was enacted in 1994 under the Clinton administration and expired in 2004 (Congress.gov, 1994). Pro-gun reform politicians and groups have since been advocating for another version of this bill to become law and limit the amount of assault weapons that can be manufactured and purchased.

This paper also touches on Americans' perceptions of concealed carry policies. The United States Concealed Carry Association defines this term as "... carrying a handgun in a way that isn't visible in casual observation...can also refer to other weapons, such as knives or stun guns" (Campbell 2022). Some of the earliest forms of gun reform legislation in the United States were concealed carry laws, but gun owners have been granted discretion to own permits to carry in recent years.

The Washington Post provides an excellent definition of red flag laws. According to Amber Phillips of The Washington Post staff, a red flag law "... allow[s] police, family

members or even doctors to petition a court to take away someone's firearms for up to a year if they feel that person is a threat to themselves or others" (Phillips 2022). This definition is excellent because it frames where red flag laws fit into the broader scope of gun reform policy due to its regulatory nature.

Gun Reform Literature & Impact of Gun Reform Policies

Much of the literature surrounding gun reform aims to understand the effectiveness of these types of laws. Kleck and Patterson's 1993 analysis of the impact of gun ownership on violence rates found several things. First, they found that gun prevalence levels generally have no positive effect on total violence rates. Second, they found that already existing instances of homicide, gun assault, and rape rates increase gun prevalence. Third, the authors discussed how gun control restrictions do not affect gun prevalence levels, and finally, most gun control restrictions generally do not affect violence (Kleck and Patterson 1993). Although these findings are legitimate, it is important to note that this paper was published in 1993, before the Columbine, Sandy Hook, Parkland, Pulse Nightclub, and Aurora Movie Theatre shootings (to name a few).

In another, slightly more recent analysis of the effectiveness of gun control measures, Kwon and Back find that comprehensive gun control legislation lowers the incidents of gun-related deaths (in states that have the most extreme gun-related legislation). They also find, however, that factors like socioeconomic status and prevalence of law enforcement contribute equally to lowering gun fatalities (Kwon and Baack 2005).

Perhaps one of the most controversial additions to this literature was the book *More Guns, Less Crime* by John R. Lott Jr. In this book, Lott Jr. examines the effect on gun possession on crime rates. After statistically analyzing crime data from each county in the United States from 1977 to 2005, Lott Jr. asserts that crime rates actually decrease when states pass "shall issue" concealed carry laws (Lott, 1998). A shall issue law stipulates that the permit issuing authority must grant the applicant a conceal carry permit if the applicant passes the basic requirements as dictated by state laws.

Several authors sought to debunk Lott Jr.'s findings. Immediately after the release of More Guns, Less Crime, the United States Research Council put together a 16member panel to address the question of whether or not concealed carry laws influence crime rates. In the report, "Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review," the panel found that Lott's datasets could have been subject to manipulation. They specifically stated that "While the trend models show a reduction in the crime growth rate following the adoption of right-to-carry laws, these trend reductions occur long after law adoption, casting serious doubt on the proposition that the trend models estimated in the literature reflect effects of the law change" (National Research Council). Other academic researchers also expressed doubt of Lott's findings. Dan A. Black and Daniel S. Nagin wrote in their 1998 article Do Right-To-Carry Laws Deter Violent Crime? that Lott's model and findings were inappropriate and could not be used to predict or influence public policy. Black and Nagin had critiques similar to the ones brought up by the Research Council's report, specifically citing their issue with the time between the installation of concealed carry laws and the violence rate actually decreasing. Lott countered several of these statements and articles by providing additional evidence about

crime rates and citizen gun ownership. Lott also provided the stipulation that "[V]iolent crime rates were rising before the law[s] [were] passed and fell thereafter" (Lott, 1998).

Gendered Perceptions of Gun Policy and How My Theory Fits In

A majority of the literature surrounding gender and gun policy has a lot to do with empirics. According to Gallup, men are twice as likely to personally own a gun than their female counterparts (Brenan 2022). Gallup has been tracking gun ownership in the United States since 2007, and the trends have remained largely the same. Women are less likely to own guns, but more likely to support stricter gun control policies regardless of their own or their household's gun ownership status (Brenan 2022). This observation has been accepted and compounded by other pieces like a 2014 article written by Hannah Dönges and Aaron Karp, which observes how when talking about gun violence or gun policies, women are more likely to be painted as victims of gun violence than as gun owners, even though women do own guns and live in households with gun-owners (Dönges and Karp 2014).

One of the most compelling discussions of gender and gun policy comes from Kachel et. al. 's paper *Gaining Masculine Power Through Guns? The Impact Of Masculinity Threat On Attitudes Toward Guns*. In this piece, the authors assessed male masculinity and its relation to feelings on gun policy. Their experiment examined if men whose masculinity was threatened found gun policies or the possibility of receiving a voucher for a local gun range more appealing. The authors found that "Men whose masculinity was threatened (vs. affirmed) showed more positive attitudes toward guns and were more likely to choose the voucher" (Kachel et al 2024).

The narrative surrounding perceptions of gun policy in the United States is largely skewed because gun reform is such a hot-button issue. Partisan ideology, in particular, seems to determine what people think about any kind of gun reform. In his article *Public* Opinion about Gun Policies, author Tom W. Smith touches on this idea by acknowledging the partisan nature of the issue, but highlighting the widespread and deep public support for some kind of regulation (Smith 2002). In my survey of gun reform literature only a few articles focused on women specifically. M. Elizabeth Blair and Eva M. Hyatt found in their 1995 article that perceptions of gun ownership (women's perceptions, specifically) are not influenced by marketing campaigns by corporations, but are instead "... complex reflections of societal and personal influence" (Blair and Hyatt 1995). These societal and personal influences run deep. According to the authors of The Socialization of Conflict and Its Limits: Gender and Gun Politics in America, groups that support gun rights have a hard time persuading women to become "pro-gun" in their behaviors or attitudes. Groups that support regulation, however, have a hard time mobilizing enough women to offset the votes presented by pro-gun men. All of these articles focused on gun reform as an issue generally. Only a handful touched on specific facets of gun reform. One of these articles was Sweating Bullets: Female Attitudes Regarding Concealed Weapons and the Perceptions of Safety on College Campuses. Authors Ryan Patten, Matthew O. Thomas, and Paul Viotti attempted to ascertain how women perceive concealed carry policies on college campuses via a survey at California State University, Chico. They found that over 80% of female respondents did not want qualified individuals like faculty, students, and staff to carry concealed firearms. The study also found that women did not feel safer on their college campuses if someone

were carrying a concealed weapon, and did not think additional guns would promote a greater sense of campus safety (Patten et al 2013).

When asserting why women feel the way they do about gun reform, many point to general stereotypes about women. They assert that women are more risk-averse and protective and recognize guns as threats to general safety. There have been movements that counteract these stereotypes, however, especially by pro-gun organizations like the NRA. Since the 1980s, the NRA and other pro-gun organizations or lobbying firms have leaned on risk-aversion gender stereotypes to urge women to own guns/vote for pro-gun policies to protect themselves and their families.

This would mean that women would be more likely to support legislation that reduce gun deaths. Others point to the influence guns have on domestic violence, arguing that because women experience gender-based violence at higher rates than men, they would be more receptive to laws that limit gun ownership. One of the most intriguing figures that lends itself to the idea that women would be more supportive of policies that limit gun ownership comes from the National Library of Medicine. In a 2023 study, researchers found that "...[M]ore than half of all intimate partner homicides involve a firearm and firearms are frequently used by perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV) to injure and threaten victims and survivors" (Tobin-Tyler 2023). Author Elizabeth Tobin-Tyler goes on to explain that intimate partner violence is intrinsically a woman's issue, as "... A victim or survivor of IPV is five times more likely to die when an abusive partner has access to a gun..." These figures change when race is involved, as some racial groups in the United States are more likely to experience IPV than white women.

Like many similar pieces about public perception of gun reform, these sources do not mention specific gun reform policies, only what they define as gun reform generally. Because of this, there is a slight gap in the literature about how people, but especially women, feel about specific working parts of gun reform like the assault weapons ban or red flag laws. I lean on these theories when I hypothesize that women will be more likely to support gun reform and policies like the assault weapons ban or red flag laws, because women generally think these policies will aid in reducing gun deaths.

RESEARCH METHODS AND HYPOTHESIS:

To ascertain recent feelings about gun reform among women in the United States, I pull data from three Cooperative Election Study datasets that include questions about gun reform. The Cooperative Election Study (formerly known as the Cooperative Congressional Election Study) is a national online survey conducted before and after each presidential and midterm election in the United States. The dataset I draw my analysis from comes from the University of Texas at Austin's 2022 survey. Survey weights are applied throughout the analyses.

It is widely acknowledged that women hold different political perceptions than their male counterparts. To this end, I predict that this assumption will hold when gun policies are put into question, and women will be more in favor of gun reform policies than their male counterparts. I also predict that women will be less inclined to support pro-gun policies.

RESULTS:

Women and Men Are Different on Guns- Descriptive Statistics

At first glance, it is clear that men and women in this dataset differ on their views of guns and gun reform. Even gun ownership differs. In Figure 1, the number of women who support the assault weapons ban nearly doubles in comparison to the amount of men that oppose the legislation. The amount of women who support the assault weapons ban is also significantly higher than the percentage of men that support the legislation. This seemingly makes it clear that men and women have different views on the assault weapons ban.



A similar pattern emerges when addressing gun reform generally. Figure 2 demonstrates that 27% of women in this survey ranked the issue of gun control as "very

important," where only 17.1% of men ranked the issue as "very important." This 10% change is interesting and definitely worth addressing. It is also worth noting that only 5% of female survey respondents ranked gun control importance as "not important," where 7% of male respondents ranked gun control importance as "not important."



One other descriptive statistic should mention the difference in gun ownership between men and women in this survey. These percentages can be found below in Figure 3. Overall, there were not a lot of gun owners in this survey. 7.6% of respondents who reported that they owned a gun were women and 12% were men. Of the small percentage that did report owning a gun, nearly double were men.



There are several underlying factors that could be influencing the gendered differences in both policy views and ownership. These underlying factors could include race, socioeconomic status, educational background, party identification, or marital status. Below are the number of observations for racial groups and party identification in this survey.

In terms of gender and race, it is apparent that white individuals appear most frequently in this survey. Middle Eastern, Native American, and Asian racial groups, as well as those who identified as one or more races or marked "other" appeared the least. These percentages will be taken into account during the analysis portion of this piece.

The several gender and racial specific graphs below underline how women across racial groups tended to favor gun control more than their male counterparts, and were more supportive of the assault weapons ban. See Figures 4.1-4.8 for details.



Figure 5 presents the breakdown of survey respondents and their party affiliation. It appears as if strong Democrats appear the most frequently in this survey, and those who marked "not sure" appeared the least. However, it is important to note that there is a distinct gap between strong Democrats and "not so strong" Democrats. Roughly 27% of respondents (both male and female) identify as strong Democrats. This percentage drops to roughly 11% when observing "not so strong" Democrats. A similar phenomenon occurs for Republican respondents, where there are significantly more respondents who identify strongly with their respective parties. As discussed in the literature review, party plays an important role when discussing a person's views on gun policy. This could present interesting results when party identification is factored into the statistical analysis later in this essay.

Gender and Imp	ortance Rankings	of Gun (Control as	an Issue
----------------	------------------	----------	------------	----------

Table 1:

VARIABLES	(1) Gun Control Importance Ranking	(2) Gun Control Importance Ranking	(3) Gun Control Importance Ranking
White Women			0.149
			(0.0951)
Black Men			0.0694
Dia da Warran			(0.284)
Black women			(0.111)
Hispanic Men			0.330
F			(0.219)
Hispanic Women			0.705***
Asian Man			(0.150)
Asian Men			(0.214)
Asian Women			0.693***
			(0.200)
Native Men			-1.805***
Nution Women			(0.0729)
Native Women			0.794
Biracial Men			0.383
			(0.549)
Biracial Women			0.944***
			(0.153)
Other Men			-0.216
Other Women			(0.356)
Other wonnen			(0.724)
Middle Eastern			0.195***
Men			
			(0.0729)
Middle Eastern			-1.805***
women			(0.0729)
Gender	0.267***	0.267***	(0.0723)
	(0.0836)	(0.0821)	
Race		0.102***	
Constant	2 (02***	(0.0340)	2 805***
Constant	(0.143)	(0.149)	(0.0729)
	(0.175)	(((1)))	(0.072))
Observations	1,000	1,000	1,000
R-squared	0.016	0.031	0.067
Robust standard errors in parentheses *** $p < 0.01$ ** $p < 0.05$ * $p < 0.1$			

In my first round of analysis, I ran three regressions analyzing rankings of gun control importance as the dependent variable and gender as the independent main variable. As the regressions progress, control variables increase and interactions are accounted for. Survey weights are applied throughout the analysis. In the 2022 UT Austin survey, respondents were asked to rank several issues based on their importance. The options were:

- 1. Not Important At All
- 2. Not Very Important
- 3. Somewhat Important
- 4. Very Important

Regression One shows that a one point increase in gender (where male=0 and female=1) accounts for a 0.267 increase in the importance ranking of gun control. This figure is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.001. In regression two, I added race as a control variable. The addition of race as a control variable did not change the gender coefficient, as a one point change in gender still accounted for a 0.267 increase in the importance ranking of gun control. It remained statistically significant. I was curious, however, of the specific changes that might take place when gender and different racial groups interact. To this end, I ran a third regression where I created interacted race and gender variables. Several important figures emerged.

In Regression Three, gender accounted for a 0.149 point increase in gun control issue importance ranking for white women. This figure was not significant with a p-value of 0.118. A significantly higher coefficient of 0.7829 emerged for black women. This figure was statistically significant with a p-value of 0.000. Black men only accounted for a 0.0694 increase in importance ranking, but this figure was not statistically significant, so that figure won't be discussed at length. Similarly, Hispanic and Asian women both accounted for coefficients of 0.705 and 0.693 respectively, both with statistical significance. Their male counterparts, however, only accounted for coefficients 0.330 and

0.661, respectively. Only Asian men accounted for a coefficient with statistical significance.

Several other racial groups like Native Americans and Middle Eastern men and women had significantly different coefficients. These coefficients are interesting, and most definitely call for more research about how specific racial or ethnic groups in the United States perceive gun control policy. It is important to note, however, that these racial groups were not well represented in this survey, meaning that these coefficients may not be reflective of these racial groups' feelings on gun reform as a nation. It seems, therefore, that gender and race both play important roles when deciding whether or not someone ranks gun reform as important.

Table 2: Gender, Race, and Support for Gun Reform Policies
--

VARIABLES	Support for the Assault Weapons	Support for the Assault Weapons	Support for th Assault Weapo
	Ban	Ban	Ban
White Women			0 169***
white women			(0.0427)
Black Men			0.0131
Diack Wien			(0.104)
Black Women			0.303***
			(0.0715)
Hispanic Men			0.0311
			(0.101)
Hispanic Women			0.225**
1			(0.113)
Asian Men			0.311**
			(0.126)
Asian Women			0.412***
			(0.0794)
Native Men			-0.483***
			(0.0325)
Native Women			0.383**
			(0.169)
Biracial Men			-0.368***
			(0.103)
Biracial Women			0.370***
			(0.137)
Other Men			-0.400***
			(0.0939)
Other Women			-0.142
			(0.184)
Middle Eastern Men			0.517***
			(0.0325)
Middle Eastern			-0.483***
women			(0.0225)
Conton	0.004***	0.004***	(0.0325)
Gender	0.204^{***}	0.204^{***}	
Page	(0.0385)	(0.0383)	
Race		-0.00287	
Constant	0 278***	(0.0170)	0 / 92***
Constant	(0.0620)	(0.0665)	(0.0225)
Observations	1 000	1 000	1 000
R-squared	0.043	0.043	0.082
<u>1X-squateu</u> 1	O.UHJ Robust standard arres	v. uto	0.062
1	Coust standard error	s in parentileses	

Table 2:

I performed the same process as above, with support for an assault weapons ban as the independent variable. In Regression one, a one-point change in gender accounted for a 0.204 point increase in support for the assault weapons ban. This figure was statistically significant with a p-value of 0.00. In Regression 2, I added race as a control variable. The addition of this variable did not change the gender coefficient, nor did it affect its statistical significance. The addition of race, however, did produce a negative coefficient. This was not statistically significant, but it begged the question again: how would these numbers change if race and gender interacted?

In Regression three, the most interesting coefficients appeared in the interaction terms. Similar to the analysis done in Table 1, white women and black women, hispanic women, and asian women had the largest coefficients with statistical significance. I will list them and their male counterparts (if applicable) down below. The terms White Men and Middle Eastern women were omitted due to collinearity. It is important to note that all of these figures below, with the exception of the black male and hispanic male coefficients, are statistically significant.

White Women: 0.168

Black Women: 0.303

Black Men: 0.0131

Hispanic Women: 0.225

Hispanic Men: 0.0311

Asian Women: 0.412

Asian Men: 0.311

These numbers seem to indicate that gender and race matter increasingly more when they factored together. There are several reasons why this could be the case. The first is that there could be a lack of knowledge about more specific facets of gun reform like the assault weapons ban. It is perhaps easier to mark something as important on a scale rather than deciding you support a policy in a binary way. The term assault weapons ban can also be misleading. A ban means different things to different people. One person could think a ban only means that high-capacity weaponry would be banned, whereas another survey participant could perceive this law as the government forcing them to give up any guns they own. This slippage could have potentially altered responses.

Table 3			
	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	Gun Control Importance	Gun Control Importance	Gun Control Importance
	Ranking	Ranking	Ranking
Gender	0 267***	0 261***	0 162**
Gender	(0.0821)	(0.0813)	(0.0748)
Race	0.102***	0.0932***	0.0599**
	(0.0340)	(0.0321)	(0.0289)
Marital Status	()	0.0485**	0.00697
		(0.0221)	(0.0198)
Education		-0.0312	-0.0773***
		(0.0282)	(0.0253)
Family Income		-0.000502	0.000438
		(0.00133)	(0.00122)
Weak Democrat			-0.290***
			(0.0952)
Lean Democrat			-0.321***
			(0.103)
Independent			-0.947***
-			(0.122)
Lean Republican			-1.001***
			(0.140)
Weak			-0.822***
Republican			
-			(0.142)
Strong			-1.117***
Republican			
			(0.116)
Not Sure			-0.420***
			(0.161)
Constant	2.432***	2.430***	3.513***
	(0.149)	(0.206)	(0.195)
Observations	1,000	999	999
R-squared	0.031	0.043	0.200
	Robust stand	ard errors in parentheses	

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

For my final set of analysis, I attempted to see if factors other than race contributed to an individual's perceptions and ranking of gun control importance. Regression 1 of Table 3 presents the same coefficient and statistical significance as regression 1 in Table 1. This coefficient decreased slightly to 0.261 in Regression Two, when control variables like race, marital status, education level, and socioeconomic status/income were accounted for. This figure was statistically significant with a p-value of 0.001.

I added party identification as the final control variable in Regression Three. The the University of Texas at Austin survey provided respondents with the option of choosing the option that best suited their political affiliation on the eight-point scale below:

- 1. Strong Democrat
- 2. Not Very Strong Democrat
- 3. Lean Democrat
- 4. Independent
- 5. Lean Republican
- 6. Not Very Strong Republican
- 7. Strong Republican
- 8. Not Sure

Each of these party identification variables are listed in the regression below, with the exception of "strong democrat," which served as the base variable. Several statistically significant figures emerged when factoring in party identification to this regression. First, the gender coefficient decreased significantly from the first two regressions in this table. The coefficient jumped from 0.261 with statistical significance to 0.162. This figure remained significant, but it is clear that the addition of political identification as a control variable warped the way gender affects feelings about the importance of gun control compellingly. Secondly, "not very strong" or "weak Democrats" accounted for a 0.290 decrease in ranking of gun control issue importance. Lean Democrats also presented a negative coefficient of 0.321. Both of these coefficients were statistically significant. This figure is surprising, especially when you consider that Democrats in the United States usually have issue ownership or feel very strongly about promoting policies that support gun reform/control. As expected, those who identified as

Republican in any capacity resulted in negative coefficients, all with statistical significance.

	(1)	(2)	(2)
VARIARIES	(1) Support for	(2) Support for	(3) Support for
VARADELS	Assault	Assault	Assault
	Weapons Ban	Weapons Ban	Weapons Ban
	Weapons Dan	Weapons Dan	tt cupons Dun
Gender	0.204***	0.212***	0.175***
	(0.0383)	(0.0384)	(0.0364)
Race	-0.00287	-0.00149	-0.0175
	(0.0170)	(0.0159)	(0.0145)
Marital Status		0.0180*	-0.00688
		(0.00990)	(0.00969)
Education Level		0.0470***	0.0260*
		(0.0131)	(0.0138)
Income		-0.000629	-9.69e-05
		(0.000643)	(0.000562)
Not Very Strong Democrat			-0.0429
			(0.0579)
Lean Democrat			-0.0422
			(0.0640)
Independent			-0.274***
			(0.0609)
Lean Republican			-0.547***
			(0.0664)
Not Very Strong Republican			-0.326***
			(0.0863)
Strong Republican			-0.539***
			(0.0556)
Not Sure			-0.294***
			(0.0998)
Constant	0.283***	0.0649	0.535***
	(0.0665)	(0.0929)	(0.100)
Observations	1,000	999	999
R-squared	0.043	0.067	0.249
Robust	standard errors in	parentheses	

Table 4

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4 displays support for the assault weapons ban as the dependent variable, with the addition of several control variables as the regressions progress. Table 4 differs from Table 3 slightly in that the gender coefficient actually increases from Regression 1 to Regression 2, with the addition of control variables like marital status, education level, and household income. However, the gender coefficient significantly decreases as party

identification is added as a control variable. This time, however, virtually none of the coefficients in which respondents identified as Democrats (in any capacity) resulted in statistically significant coefficients.

There were, however, several statistically significant coefficients for those who identify as Republican and Independent. For example, a one-point change in those who marked lean Republican resulted in a 0.547 decrease in support for an assault weapons ban. This figure was statistically significant with a p-value of 0.000. Those who identified as Independent resulted in a 0.247 decrease in support for the assault weapons ban, again with statistical significance.

As stated previously, gender did not change dramatically when control variables like race, marital status, income, and education levels were controlled for. However, when party identification was added as a control variable, the gender coefficients changed significantly. It is possible that the addition of these variables contributed to "overcontrolling," thereby warping gender coefficients in Regression 3 of both Tables 3 and 4.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

This study calls for further research on gendered perceptions of specific facets of gun control policies. In this study, I learned that gender accounts for significant differences in feelings about both gun control generally and the assault weapons ban. It is important to note, however, these gender differences become more complex when race is interacted with gendered terms. Intersectionality is becoming an increasingly important factor when discussing specific policies in the United States, especially when they are related to guns. This could perhaps be attributed to the increasing number of mass

shootings that are motivated by xenophobia or racism, like the 2021 Atlanta Spa shooting or the Jacksonville shooting in 2023, where Asian women and black individuals were targeted.

Additionally, it must be recognized that I cannot make legitimate causal inferences based on these results. The Congressional Election Study dataset that I utilized for this analysis had a limited sample size, stipulating that results are not generalizable to the nation as a whole. This is especially true with regard to the number of observations for the Asian, Native American, and Middle Eastern racial groups within the University of Texas at Austin dataset itself.

It is with this understanding that I recommend further research to be done about how specific gender and racial groups perceive additional facets of gun reform. For example, there is a distinct lack of literature surrounding red flag laws, or extreme risk protection order laws. In order to accurately capture how specific gender and racial groups feel about these types of laws, this future study should take inspiration from Patten et al 2013, and utilize the Likert Scale over a longer period of time to assess specific gender and racial perceptions of red flag laws. Sustained exposure over time is ideal, and would allow potential changes to occur developmentally, rather than observing near-instantaneous reactions. In addition to the Likert scale, future research should also include experiments with feeling thermometers. Feeling thermometers are useful resources when assessing feelings about specific policies and can aid in predictions as well.

As stated previously, gun policy is a controversial topic in the United States. Like the debates about abortion, foreign policy, or climate change, groups on both sides feel as

if they own the moral high-ground. Because of this, finding equitable solutions seems impossible. It is my hope that this piece provides a "sneak peek" into potential literature surrounding perceptions and feelings about specific facets of gun legislation. Oftentimes, when we boil gun policy down to simply "gun reform/control" it feels as if we are oversimplifying the issue. Although it seems binary, where one party or group supports gun control and one party or group opposes it, gun control policy actually encompasses several groups. There are hunters and sportsmen who, in addition to their support for gun ownership, feel as if practical change should be made with regard to automatic weapons. There are women of several racial groups who feel as if they need to be able to conceal their weapons in order to protect themselves and their families. There are several people, including myself, whose families or friends have experienced gun violence and simply wish for some kind of impactful change in the wake of increasingly deadly shootings. What we learned in this study has the potential to provide the nation with practical solutions to limit gun deaths, while respecting the rights and privacy of those who use guns safely and responsibly.

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APPENDIX 1:

Table 5:

	(1)	(2)
VADIADIES	(1) Cun Control Importance	(2) Support of the
VARIADLES	Banking	A secult Weepong
	Kalikilig	Assault weapons
		Dall
Gender	0.117	0.152***
	(0.0747)	(0.0350)
Black	-0.0349	-0.0861
21001	(0.135)	(0.0537)
Hispanic	0.253**	-0.0240
1	(0.109)	(0.0706)
Asian	0.575***	0.231**
	(0.150)	(0.0993)
Native American	0.306	0.418
	(0.822)	(0.368)
Biracial	0.190	-0.176*
	(0.222)	(0.0938)
Marked "Other"	-0.0673	-0.278***
	(0.306)	(0.0838)
Middle Eastern	-0.120	0.159
	(0.817)	(0.434)
Separated	-0.0563	0.139
1	(0.229)	(0.0927)
Divorced	0.0873	0.0862
	(0.113)	(0.0598)
Widowed	0.0532	0.121*
	(0.161)	(0.0686)
Never Married	0.0273	-0.0342
	(0.0903)	(0.0423)
Civil Partnership	-0.0841	-0.0563
	(0.152)	(0.0729)
High School Grad	-0.171	0.0681
-	(0.196)	(0.123)
Some College	-0.357*	0.0637
-	(0.204)	(0.128)
2-Year	-0.544**	-0.0180
	(0.222)	(0.128)
4-Year	-0.413**	0.102
	(0.201)	(0.128)
Post-Grad	-0.398*	0.101
	(0.204)	(0.128)
\$10,000 - \$19,999	0.304	0.0385
	(0.216)	(0.122)
\$20,000 - \$29,999	0.154	0.132

	(0.202)	(0.0981)
\$30,000 - \$39,999	-0.0126	0.0200
	(0.211)	(0.111)
\$40,000 - \$49,999	0.256	0.183*
	(0.216)	(0.0988)
\$50,000 - \$59,999	0.0520	0.0502
	(0.217)	(0.0989)
\$60,000 - \$69,999	0.400	0.137
	(0.251)	(0.148)
\$70,000 - \$79,999	0.144	0.199**
	(0.224)	(0.100)
\$80,000 - \$99,999	0.239	0.0695
	(0.228)	(0.103)
\$100,000 - \$119,999	0.183	0.127
	(0.221)	(0.104)
\$120,000 - \$149,999	0.127	0.137
	(0.230)	(0.110)
\$150,000 - \$199,999	-0.00687	0.0624
	(0.265)	(0.114)
\$200,000 - \$249,999	-0.320	0.187
	(0.314)	(0.188)
\$250,000 - \$349,999	-0.561	0.0209
	(0.375)	(0.165)
\$350,000 - \$499,999	-0.481	0.237
	(0.670)	(0.157)
\$500,000 or more	0.296	0.221
	(0.546)	(0.153)
Prefer not to say	0.250	0.117
	(0.210)	(0.0980)
Not very strong	-0.239**	-0.0639
Democrat		
	(0.103)	(0.0573)
Lean Democrat	-0.309***	-0.0383
	(0.104)	(0.0605)
Independent	-0.968***	-0.308***
	(0.131)	(0.0573)
Lean Republican	-0.979***	-0.593***
	(0.147)	(0.0627)
Not very strong	-0.835***	-0.371***
Republican		
	(0.140)	(0.0734)
Strong Republican	-1.141***	-0.574***
	(0.119)	(0.0561)
Not sure	-0.426***	-0.311***

	(0.150)	(0.0959)
Constant	3.541***	0.471***
	(0.280)	(0.136)
Observations	999	999
R-squared	0.238	0.299

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

APPENDIX 2:

// changing variable names below //

rename CC20_330b AWB

rename CC20_330c ConcealC

rename PARTY_AFFILIATION pid

rename CC20_330a releasename

rename UTA333 gcontrol_importance

//generating new variables for variables that need to be split//

generate DEM = (pid == 1)

generate REP = (pid == 8)

generate UNK = (pid == 9)

generate female = (gender == 2)
generate support_AWB = (AWB == 1)

// logit regressions for AWB //

logit support_AWB female i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid i.houseincome, r logit support_AWB gender i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid i.houseincome, r logit support_AWB female i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid i.houseincome, r

//going to try an interaction//

logit support_AWB female i.race##female i.educ i.marstat i.pid i.houseincome, r

//installing export //

ssc install outreg2

// changing pid variable for a the one that only lists dems, reps, and ind //
logit support_AWB female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new, r
outreg2 using official.first.interaction.doc

logit support_AWB female##i.race i.pid3 i.educ i.marstat i.faminc_new, r

//linear regressions for gun control importance levels //
reg gcontrol_importance female i.educ i.race i.pid3 i.marstat i.faminc_new
[aweight=teamweight], r

//back to logit//

logit ConcealC female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid3 i.faminc_new, r

//generating new conceal carry variables //
generate support_cc = (ConcealC == 1)

logit support_cc female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid3 i.faminc_new, r

logit support_cc female##i.race i.pid3 i.educ marstat faminc_new, r logit support_cc female##i.race i.pid3 i.educ i.marstat i.faminc_new, r logit support_cc female##i.race i.pid7 i.educ i.marstat i.faminc_new, r

// margins! //

margins female##i.race

//gun control importance levels //

reg gcontrol_importance female i.race i.pid7 i.educ i.faminc_new [aweight=teamweight],

r

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race i.pid7 i.educ i.faminc_new

[aweight=teamweight], r

margins female##i.race

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race i.pid7 i.educ i.faminc_new

[aweight=teamweight], r

margins

marginsplot

// gun ownership //

generate ownagun = (gunown == 1)

// regressions with gun ownership factored in //

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race i.pid7 i.educ ownagun i.faminc_new

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using linear.reg.official.doc

reg gcontrol_importance female i.race i.pid7 i.educ i.faminc_new i.ownagun [aweight=teamweight], r outreg2 using sighhhhh.doc

// charts! //

hist female

graph bar female ownagun graph bar gender ownagun graph bar gender gunown

graph bar gunown, over(gender)

// switching to all linear regressions //

reg support_AWB female i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.houseincome, r reg support_AWB female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new, r outreg2 using uglydata.doc reg support_AWB female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new, r outreg2 using prettydata2.doc, keep (female female##i.race pid7) addtext (Control, YES) reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new, r outreg2 using prettydata2.doc, keep (female female##i.race pid7) addtext (Control, YES)

// trying to add regressions together //

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new, r reg support_AWB female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new, r reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new, r outreg2 using prettydata3.doc, keep (female female##i.race pid7) addtext (Control, YES)

reg support_AWB female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new, r

outreg2 using prettydata3.doc

reg support_AWB female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using prettydata3.doc, keep (female female##i.race pid7) addtext (Control, YES)

// forgot to apply weights //
reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new
[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using prettydata4.doc, keep (female female##i.race pid7) addtext (Control, YES)

reg support_AWB female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using prettydata4.doc, keep (female female##i.race pid7) addtext (Control, YES)

// data weights now applied //

// finding observations for native americans and arab participants //

// controlling for gun ownership //

generate ownagun = (gunown == 1)

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race ownagun i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r

tab race

// graph break! //

graph bar (mean), over(gender) percent

graph bar gender support_AWB

graph bar support_AWB, over(gender)

// ^ that was okay //

graph bar gcontrol_importance, over(gender)

// ^ also okay //

graph bar gcontrol_importance support_AWB, over(gender)

graph bar gcontrol_importance, over()

graph hbar gcontrol_importance, over(race) over(gender) graph hbar gcontrol_importance race, over(gender) graph hbar gcontrol_importance, over(gender) over(race)

graph hbar support_AWB, over(pid7)

graph hbar gunown, over(gender) over(race)

// break from datavis //

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race female##ownagun i.educ i.marstat i.pid7

i.faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using prettydata5.doc, keep (female female##i.race female##ownagun) addtext (Control, YES)

reg support_AWB female##i.race female##ownagun i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using prettydata5.doc, keep (female female##i.race female##ownagun) addtext (Control, YES)

tab gunown

// tables for appendix - w/o gun ownership //

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r

reg support_AWB female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using uglydata2.doc

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r outreg2 using uglydata2.doc

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using uglydata3.doc

reg support_AWB female##i.race i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using uglydata3.doc

// with gun ownership //

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race female##ownagun i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using uglydata3.doc

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.race female##ownagun i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r outreg2 using uglydata4.doc

reg support_AWB female##i.race female##ownagun i.educ i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r

// party identification interaction? //

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.pid7 i.educ i.marstat i.faminc_new i.race

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using uglydata5.doc

reg support_AWB female##i.pid7 i.educ i.marstat i.faminc_new i.race

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using uglydata5.doc

// graphs for paper //

reg gcontrol_importance female##i.pid7 i.educ i.marstat i.faminc_new i.race

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using prettydata6.doc, keep (female##i.pid7) addtext (Control, YES)

reg support_AWB female##i.pid7 i.educ i.marstat i.faminc_new i.race

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using prettydata6.doc, keep (female##i.pid7) addtext (Control, YES)

// cross tabulations //

help tab

tab gender gunown

tab gender support_AWB

tab gender race

tab gender pid7

tab gender gcontrol_importance

// fixing regressions //

// importance ranking first //

reg gcontrol_importance gender i.race i.educ i.faminc_new i.pid7 i.marstat outreg2 using newdata1.doc reg support_AWB gender i.race i.educ i.faminc_new i.pid7 i.marstat outreg2 using newdata1.doc

reg gcontrol_importance gender i.race [aweight=teamweight], r reg support_AWB gender i.race [aweight=teamweight], r

// forgot to add weights //

reg gcontrol_importance gender i.race i.educ i.faminc_new i.pid7 i.marstat

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using amendeddata1.doc

reg support_AWB gender i.race i.educ i.faminc_new i.pid7 i.marstat

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using amendeddata1.doc

reg gcontrol_importance gender i.race [aweight=teamweight], r outreg2 using amendeddata2.doc reg support_AWB gender i.race [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using amendeddata2.doc

// interaction terms - splitting variables //

egen white_men = anycount(race gender), values (1 1)

drop white_men

generate white_men = (gender == 1) & (race == 1) generate white_women = (gender == 2) & (race == 1) generate black_men = (gender == 1) & (race == 2) generate black_women = (gender == 2) & (race == 2) generate hispanic_men = (gender == 1) & (race == 3) generate hispanic_women = (gender == 2) & (race == 3) generate asian_men = (gender == 1) & (race == 4) generate asian_women = (gender == 2) & (race == 4) generate native_men = (gender == 1) & (race == 5) generate native_women = (gender == 2) & (race == 5) generate biracial_men = (gender == 1) & (race == 6) generate biracial_women = (gender == 2) & (race == 6) generate other_men = (gender == 1) & (race == 7) generate other_men = (gender == 2) & (race == 7) rename other_womenmen other_women

generate mideast_men = (gender ==1) & (race ==8) generate mideast_women = (gender ==2) & (race ==8)

// regressions //

reg gcontrol_importance white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women i.educ i.faminc_new i.pid7 i.marstat [aweight=teamweight], r outreg2 using amendeddata3.doc, keep (white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women

biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women)

addtext (Control, YES)

reg support_AWB white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women i.educ i.faminc_new i.pid7 i.marstat [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using amendeddata3.doc, keep (white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women) addtext (Control, YES)

// more descriptive stats //

tab gender

tab gender race

tab gender pid7

tab white_women support_AWB

tab black_women support_AWB

tab hispanic_women support_AWB

tab asian_women support_AWB

tab native_women support_AWB

tab biracial_women support_AWB

tab other_women support_AWB

tab mideast_women support_AWB

tab white_women gcontrol_importance tab black_women gcontrol_importance tab hispanic_women gcontrol_importance tab asian_women gcontrol_importance tab native_women gcontrol_importance tab biracial_women gcontrol_importance tab other_women gcontrol_importance

// new regressions ! gcontrol_importance first //
reg gcontrol_importance female i.race [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata1.doc

outreg2 using finaldata1.doc, keep (gcontrol_importance gender) addtext (Controls YES)

reg gcontrol_importance gender [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata1.doc

reg gcontrol_importance gender i.race [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata1.doc

reg gcontrol_importance white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women i.educ i.faminc_new i.pid7 i.marstat [aweight=teamweight], r outreg2 using finaldata1.doc, keep (white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women) addtext (Controls YES)

// trying again //

reg gcontrol_importance gender [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata2.doc

reg gcontrol_importance gender i.race [aweight=teamweight], r outreg2 using finaldata2.doc, keep (gender) addtext (Controls YES)

reg gcontrol_importance white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men

biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women i.educ
i.faminc_new i.pid7 i.marstat [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata2.doc, keep (white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women) addtext (Controls YES)

reg gcontrol_importance gender white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women i.educ i.faminc_new i.pid7 i.marstat [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata2.doc, keep (gender white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women) addtext (Controls YES)

reg gcontrol_importance gender i.race i.marstat i.pid7 i.faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata2.doc, keep (gender) addtext (Controls YES)

// second round of analysis - AWB //

// simple reg //

reg support_AWB gender [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata3.doc

reg support_AWB gender i.race [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata3.doc, keep (gender race) addtext (Constrols YES)

reg support_AWB gender white_women black_men black_women hispanic_men

hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men

biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women i.educ

i.faminc_new i.pid7 i.marstat [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata3.doc, keep (gender white_women black_women black_men hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men mideast_women) addtext (Constrols YES)

//re-do!//

reg gcontrol_importance gender [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata4.doc

reg gcontrol_importance gender race [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata4.doc

reg gcontrol_importance gender white_women black_men black_women hispanic_men hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men

mideast_women[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata4.doc

// AWB simple regressions //

reg support_AWB gender [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata5.doc

reg support_AWB gender race [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata5.doc

reg support_AWB gender white_women black_men black_women hispanic_men

hispanic_women asian_men asian_women native_men native_women biracial_men

biracial_women other_men other_women mideast_men

mideast_women[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata5.doc

// complicated regressions //

reg gcontrol_importance gender race [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata6.doc

reg gcontrol_importance gender race marstat educ faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata6.doc

reg gcontrol_importance gender race marstat educ faminc_new i.pid7

[aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata6.doc

reg support_AWB gender race [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata7.doc

reg support_AWB gender race marstat educ faminc_new [aweight=teamweight], r

outreg2 using finaldata7.doc

reg support_AWB gender race marstat educ faminc_new i.pid7 [aweight=teamweight], r outreg2 using finaldata7.doc