



The Association Between Stances on Guns and Abortion Across Income

Ella Fleming, Applied Data Analysis, Wesleyan University

Introduction

- Can the political discourse surrounding guns and abortions be defined as right or left issues, or is there more ideological nuance within these debates?
- Passionate and single-minded voters on either side of the abortion and gun rights debates play a huge role in shaping politicians' policy decisions, as well as delaying them.
- Neoliberal economic policies over time contributed to:
 - Relaxed regulations on arms trades, as well as a growth private gun contractors within the U.S. (Remington Arms makes the guns used by most police officers in America.)
 - increasing privatization of healthcare, which limits the ability of many to obtain safe and affordable abortions.
- The principles and theories advanced to support the right to an abortion intersect substantially with an individual's right to armed self-defense (Johnson, 1997).
- Despite these intersections, it is unclear how many people identify as both pro-gun and pro-choice.

Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between stances on guns and abortion in the United States?
- Is there a substantial overlap? How are both these widely held and polarizing beliefs influenced by their economic and social context?

Methods

Sample

- The General Social Survey (GSS) is a nationally representative survey of adults in the United States monitoring trends in public opinion on politics and social issues in contemporary American society.
- The sample includes adults 18 or older in the United States who live in noninstitutional housing at the time of interviewing.

Measures

- Opinions relating to abortion were assessed by asking respondents **to what extent they agree with the statement, "I consider myself pro-choice."** Possible responses ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).
- Opinions on gun policy were measured using the prompt "Would you favor or oppose a law which would require a person to obtain a police permit before he or she could buy a gun?" Possible responses were coded from 1 (favor) to 2 (oppose).

Results

Univariate

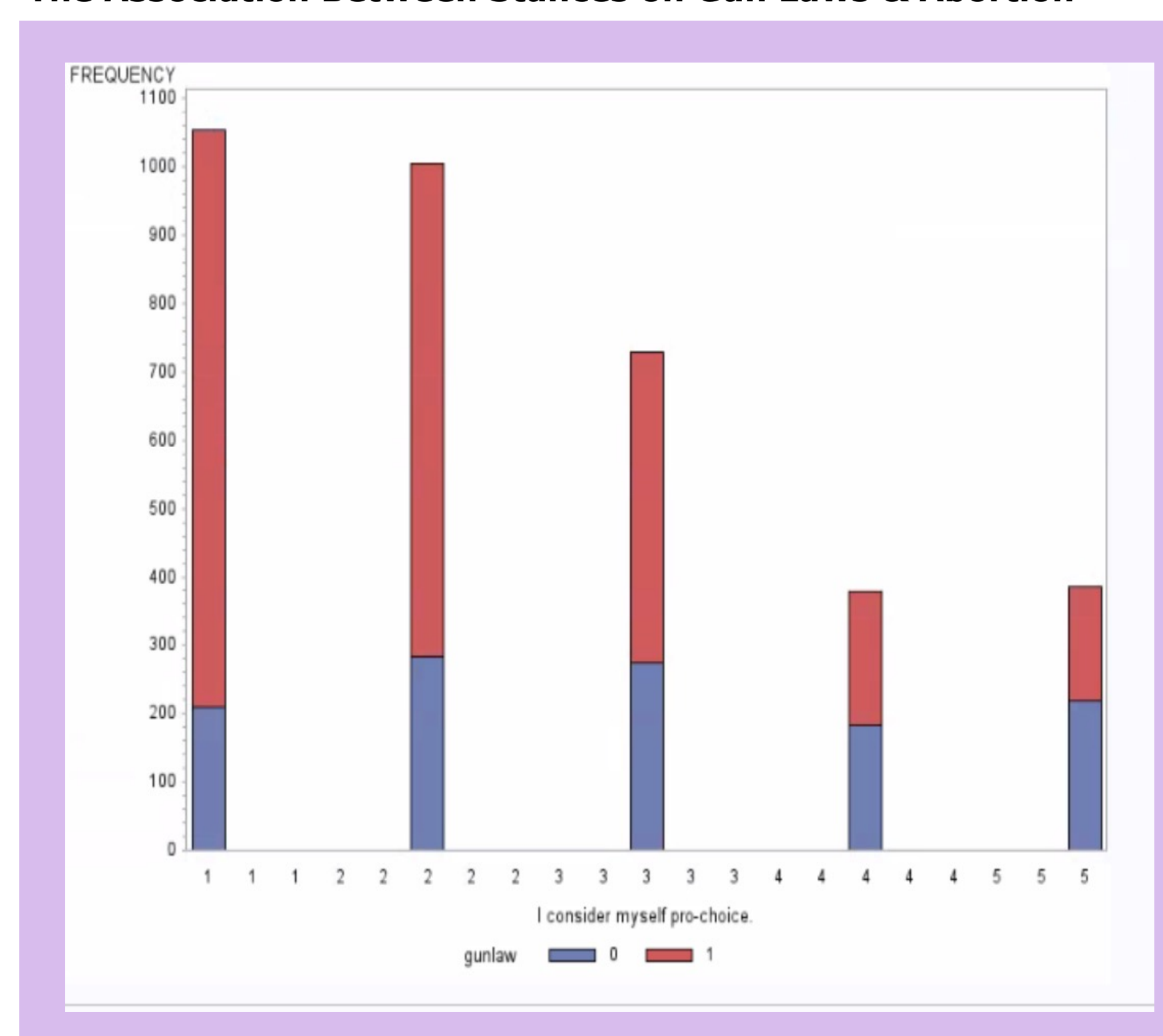
- 57.92% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the statement, "I consider myself pro-choice" compared to the 21.34% respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 66.62% of respondents favor gun laws compared to 33.38% of respondents who oppose gun laws.

Bivariate

• A chi-square analysis showed that there was a significant association between gun law and pro-choice beliefs ($\chi^2 = 236.4$, $df = 4$, $p < .0001$) (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

The Association Between Stances on Gun Laws & Abortion

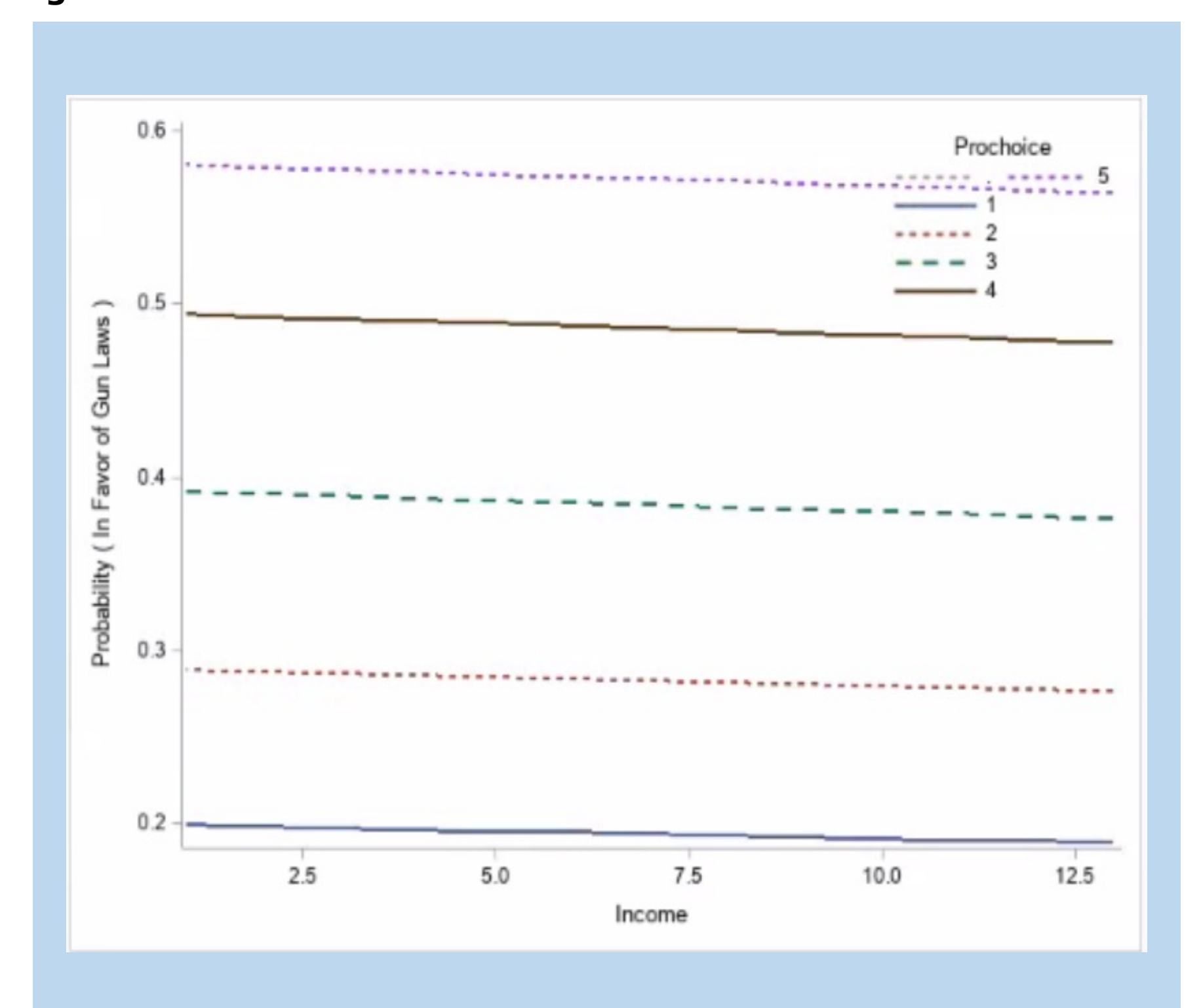


- Further analysis revealed that **individuals who identified as pro-choice were more likely to support gun laws compared to those who did not identify as pro-choice.** The association between gun law support and pro-choice stance was moderate (Figure 1).

Multivariate

- Income is not a moderator for the association between beliefs about abortions and gun laws (Figure 2).
- There is little association between income and Pro-Choice/ Pro-Gun sentiment. However, the association between Pro-Choice and Pro-Gun sentiment is clear
- Bringing in variables such as sex, race, or political affiliation may have more of an association than income

Figure 2. Association between income and pro-choice / pro-gun law stance



Discussion

- As past studies show, those who identify as Democrats are more likely to identify as pro-choice and pro-gun law while those who identify as Republican are more likely to identify as pro-gun or pro-life.
- However, an association between the growing rates of pro-choice and pro-gun law sentiment in the United States might indicate trends in underlying economic and social conditions, though this has not yet been proven.
- If individuals found identifying as both pro-choice also identify anti gun-law, they would represent an important population subgroup indicative of changing political trends in the United States as a result of economic and demographic conditions.
- In future research it would also be important to consider the ways people who identify as both anti-gun law and pro-choice complicate past studies.