

Changes in Firearm Ownership Among Women, 1980-1994

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Introduction

Since the mid-1980s pro-gun groups (especially the National Rifle Association and Smith & Wesson) have been promoting gun ownership among women and claiming that the purchase and ownership of firearms among women have greatly increased. This claim has been accepted by most journalists and repeated in dozens of stories about the feminization of gunnery. The main themes of the story are that: 1) the ownership of guns by women has been and is continuing to notably increase; 2) the number of women owning guns is now quite high; 3) the traditional, gender gap regarding firearms is closing; 4) since the increase is a reaction to a rise in crime in general and the violent victimization of women in particular, the acquisition of handguns is heavily stressed; and 5) women arming themselves tend to be unmarried women living in metropolitan areas.

This paper examines 1) what is being reported about the ownership of firearms by women by pro-gun groups and the mass media, 2) the best available information on how the ownership of firearms by women has changed since 1980, and 3) the reliability of the figures used by pro-gun groups and the mass media.

The Ownership of Firearms by Women According to Pro-Gun Groups and the Mass Media

Pro-gun groups have touted the twin themes that women should arm themselves for self-protection, and that many women have already taken this advise and many more are planning to. The mass media have debated the wisdom of the first theme, but, with few exceptions, have accepted the truth of the second. The typical story cites women who are either the victims of crimes or fearful of becoming victims who buy a handgun and take firearms training in its use.¹ Most of the women in question are unmarried and live in large cities.² The standard article goes on to assert that ownership among women is rapidly increasing, that the level of ownership is already high, and that women are accounting for a large share of sales, trainees, new permit holders, etc. To help

¹Among the dozens of articles examined only one mentioned a woman obtaining a long gun for protection (Draper, 1993) and two said that hunting has become more popular for women (Thomas, 1994a; Marketing to Women, 1993).

²Several articles mention the fear of crime and need for protection of unmarried women (e.g. Pultizer, 1992; Goerne, 1992). In addition, of actual women described in the stories 33 are unmarried and only 17 are married (for another 28 marital status is unknown). Prior to 1990 almost all women were identified as unmarried or depicted as living alone. Since 1990 unmarried women are still over-represented in the stories, but marital status is unstated for a larger share of women and more examples of husbands and wives or families acquiring guns also have been appearing.

fulfill this supposed surge in demand the stories also frequently mention that guns especially designed for women are being marketed and advertised in women's magazines (in particular Smith & Wesson's LadySmith) and that a wide range of gun accessories for women are available (e.g. bra holsters). This standard story has been repeated dozens of times in virtually every women's magazine (e.g. Glamour, Vogue, Mademoiselle), the major newsmagazines (Time, Newsweek, New Republic), most leading newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, etc.), and in many other prominent news sources ("Sixty Minutes," American Demographics, National Journal, etc.).³

The NRA and virtually every article in the media assert that gun ownership, in general, and handgun ownership, in particular, is rapidly increasing. Time (Gibbs, 1988) called the change a "gender revolution" others describe these developments as "a boom," "soaring," and a "surge" ("For the Ladies," 1989; Leary, 1992; Leonetti, 1993; Rossi, 1992). These claims center around 1) ever increasing estimates by the NRA of the number of women owning guns. Cited most prominently and frequently is a Smith & Wesson claim that gun ownership increased by 53% from 1983 to 1986. Smith & Wesson commissioned Gallup to conduct annual surveys on gun ownership from 1983 to 1988 and based on these surveys claimed that the ownership by women increased by 53% from 1983 to 1986. And 2) assertions that many more women are planning to buy guns and that this group of potential gun owners has greatly expanded. This is also largely based on figures from the Smith & Wesson/Gallup surveys, especially the there were 15.6 million potential buyers in 1989 and that this was 100% higher than in 1983.

This central claim is bolstered by supporting assertions that a) more NRA members are women, b) more women are taking training courses, c) the success of the magazine Women and Guns indicates greater female interest in guns, d) retail sales to women are up, and f) gun permits issued to women have increased.

And of course pro-gun groups are doing all that they can to further this supposed development. Smith & Wesson and later other manufacturers developed guns especially designed for women and began widely advertising them in women's magazines. Moreover, the NRA targeted women in their membership drives in the 1980s, set up an Office on Women's Issues and Information in 1990, and launched a massive public relations and recruitment campaign in October, 1993 called Refuse to be a Victim. It urged women to take self-protection and anti-crime measures and equated owning a gun to female empowerment. This has led to the characterization of women owning guns as the "last frontier of feminism" (Larson, 1993).

The Ownership of Firearms by Women According to the General Social Surveys (GSS)

The best available data on the ownership of firearms by gender

³The list of mass media articles appears in the references.

are the GSS conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago.⁴ Table 1 presents figures on the ownership of firearms in general and handguns in particular for men and women from 1980 to 1994. First, for both men and women and for both handguns and all guns there has been no statistically significant trend in the ownership of firearms. Neither women, nor men are more likely to own either a gun or handgun now than they were in 1980. The notion that women are rapidly purchasing guns and notably increasing their ownership of firearms receives no support from these data. Likewise, the gender gap in weapons has not changed. Over the period 1980-1994 male ownership of firearms exceeded female ownership by a constant 31.1 percentage points (better than 4:1) and male ownership of handguns surpassed ownership by women by 19.7 percentage points, or almost 4-to-1 (Table 1).

Second, the level of gun ownership is substantially below that cited by the NRA and the mass media. As detailed below, the typical claims are that 17-20% of women own guns, and these soar to as high as 43.5%. However, the GSS indicates that over the period from 1980 to 1994 about 11.6% of women owned a gun and 7.4% of women had a handgun.

Third, contrary to the heavy media emphasis on handguns many of the weapons owned by women are long guns. For 1988-1993 (Table 2) 88.7% of women did not personally own a gun and 11.3% had a weapon (in their households 3.2% had only handguns, 3.1% only long guns, 4.7% both types, and 0.3% some other or unknown type). This means that from 3.2% to 7.9% of women personally owned a handgun. If we assume that women living without another adult personally owned the handgun(s) reported, then the range would be from 4.5% to 7.9%. Looking at only women who owned a gun we see that in their households 27.9% had only a handgun, 27.5% only a long gun, 41.9% both, and 2.6% some other type.

Fourth, the media profile of women gun owners emphasizes unmarried women living in crime-ridden cities who are either the past victims of crimes or fearful of being future victims. While some female gun owners fall in one or more of these categories, on balance women who own guns differ markedly from these stereotypes. According to the GSS (Table 3), women gun owners are:

1. More likely to be married than unmarried. And among the unmarried widows are much more likely to own a gun than divorced, separated, or never married women. (Many presumably inherited the weapons from their deceased husbands.) Likewise, they tend to be older rather than younger.
2. More likely to live outside the 100 largest metropolitan areas and least likely to live in the 12 largest central

⁴The GSS are full-probability samples of adults living in households in the United States. Interviewing is done in person and the response rate averages about 77-78%. For full details see Davis and Smith, 1993.

cities. Likewise, ownership is highest in rural regions (the South and West) and lowest in the most urbanized area (the Northeast).

3. Not more likely to have been crime victims either in terms of being hit or shot at as an adult or having been robbed or burglarized in the last year. Also, those afraid of their neighborhood are marginally less likely to own a gun than those living in safer areas. However, those living in a fearful neighborhood are slightly more likely to have a handgun in the household than those in less fearful places (8.2% to 7.6%).

Instead of past victimization or fear of crime being associated with being armed, gun ownership varies by whether people hunt. In households in which neither the wife nor the husband hunts, 9.3% of women own a gun. When one or both hunt, 21.3% of women own a gun.

In sum, the reality of gun ownership by women is dramatically different than that portrayed by pro-gun groups and the mass media. Ownership is not increasing, the gender gap is not closing, the level of ownership is much lower than usually reported, many armed women have long guns rather than handguns, and the typical female gun owner is not an unmarried woman living in a large city and the past or fearful victim of violent crime.

**The Reliability and Accuracy of Figures
on the Ownership of Firearms by Women
According to Pro-Gun Groups and the Mass Media**

Statistics on gun ownership, gun sales, potential sales, and other matters relating to women and firearms presented by pro-gun groups and widely cited in the mass media are often based on unreliable data, miscalculations, and otherwise misused figures. We first review the claims as to the level of gun ownership by women and the trends in same and then consider problems with specific statistics and claims.

How Many Women Own Guns?

Table 4 summaries estimates from 33 sources (mostly newspapers and magazines) of the level of female gun ownership, most (at least 28) citing the NRA and/or Smith & Wesson as their source. Two aspects of the estimates of the proportion of women owning guns are of particular interest. First, there is a large range in the estimates. In 1994, for example, they went from a low of 15% to a high of 34% and in 1993 covered an even greater span of from 12% to 43%. Second, from 1986 on even the low estimates have exceeded the best estimates from the GSS. Before examining the basis for standard NRA estimate that 17-20% of women currently own guns, we look at estimates that exceed the GSS figure that 11-12% of women own guns by at least a factor of 2 and even surpass the upper range

estimates of pro-gun groups.

1. 25%

a. Hopkins (1993) in the headline lead asserts "one in four American women...have chosen to pack a pistol." In the body of the article the claim is scaled down from handguns to guns in general and the contradictory statement is made that "at least 20 million of these women - that's one in four adult women - own a gun." At the time the article was written (1992) the 20 million figure would convert into 20.3% of women - one in five, not one in four - owning a gun. Hopkins cites as her source "a Smith & Wesson-sponsored Gallup Poll." This apparently refers to the oft-cited 1986 survey which is usually used to support claims that 12, not 20, million women own guns. The 20 million is actually the typical upper estimate cited by the NRA in recent years.

Hopkins then immediately adds "In other words there's a decent chance that the woman across the aisle in the movie theater, the woman next door, your friend the woman doctor/lawyer/actress/journalist could be armed and at the ready." This passage (along with the headline lead about one in four women packing a pistol) implies that the 20 million armed women are typically carrying their weapons with them. However, few gun owners regularly carry weapons on their person away from home.⁵

b. Apparently based on the Hopkins article Harrington (1993) makes the same contradictory assertion that "at least 20 million - one in four females - own a gun."

c. This figure is also cited by Laird (1994) without any source or elaboration. Laird is unclear on whether the figure refers to guns owned by women or just guns being in the household.

2. 34%

While we find this estimate to be incorrect, it is the most credible of all the high-side estimates, being based on representative data and a question that, on its face at least, appears to measure personal gun ownership. EDK Associates conducted 1,000 telephone interviews with men and women in October, 1993 (EDK, 1993). They asked:

⁵National surveys by Gallup, the Los Angeles Times, Yankelovich, L. H. Research, CBS/New York Times, and Roper indicate that 8-12% of people ever carry a gun in their car or truck and about 5-11% ever carry a gun on their person. About 1.5-2% are "always" armed and about another 1.5-2% carry a weapon on their person "frequently" or "fairly often." No breakdown by gender is available for these national surveys, but a survey of Southern Whites found that women carried guns less often than men (Bankston, et al., 1990). Data available from authors.

Which of the following describes your views on owning a gun:

	All	Men	Women
I own one	45%	56%	34%
I am thinking about owning one	13		
I would never own a gun	33	23	42
Don't Know	10		

This item is problematic because it blurs both attitudes and behaviors and personal and household ownership. First, it asks about "views on owning a gun," but the responses actually cover a) current behavior ("I own one"), b) possible future behavior ("I am thinking about owning one"), and c) intentions ("I would never own a gun"). Second, the question confuses personal and household ownership. It is phrased in terms of the personal ("I"), but fails to address the common situation of guns in the household. Most declarations of ownership are probably references to a gun being in the house.⁶

3. 43-43.5%

a. Branscombe and Owen (1991) cite estimates of up to 42 million owning guns and give Wright, Rossi, and Daly (1983) as their source. This seems based on their statement that "In the combined NORC data [1973, 74, 76, 77], for example, which are based on a household ownership question, ... 44% of the females report a weapon in the home (p. 109, n. 6)." Branscombe and Owen apparently multiplied this percent by the number of women 18+ in 1990 to get the 42 million figure.⁷ Not only do Branscombe and Owen take a figure from 1973-77 and apply it to 1990, but they use it to represent the number of women owning guns despite the fact that Wright, Rossi, and Daly warn that their figure does not represent individual or personal weapons ownership by women (p. 109, 109, n. 6).

b. The Dehere Foundation Poll on Gun Violence in America was conducted by the Roper Organization in October, 1993. 504 men and 503 women 18+ were interviewed by telephone (Dehere, 1993; "On Eve," 1993).⁸ Despite the claim that "Men are more likely than

⁶Sudman and Bradburn (1982, pp. 62-63) argue that even small differences in question wording can produce substantially different estimates of household gun ownership.

⁷They round the 42.4 million estimate down to 42 million. When this figure is then converted to the % of women owning guns, one gets an estimate of 43.5% - a loss of half a percent from the original 44% due to rounding.

⁸It appears that the actual polling was done by the Opinion Research Corporation rather than by the Roper Organization.

women to own a gun (54% vs. 43%)," their data ("Detailed, 1993) actually shows, like the GSS data cited by Wright, Rossi, and Daly from almost two decades earlier, that 43% of women live in a household in which someone owns a gun ("Do you or does anyone in your household own any of the following types of weapons [Shotgun, rifle or other 'long gun'/ Pistol or handgun]?").⁹ It does not determine who owns the guns and thus does not measure personal ownership by gender.

4. Finally, there is the assertion that "A new handgun is produced every 20 second. And if crime continues to rise, by the end of the century nearly seven of every 10 American women will own one of these guns (O'Connor, 1993)." This forecast is not only predicting about a 10-fold increase in handgun ownership by women, but it would also mean that during each of the next seven years more women would buy handguns than currently own these weapons and that the annual level of purchases would be about four times greater than the total number of handguns produced or imported per annum (typically 1.5-2.5 million in recent years - Bureau, 1994). No source or basis for this projection is given.

How Has Gun Ownership Changed Among Women?

Estimates of changes in gun ownership among women rest primarily on the ownership estimates of the NRA and Smith & Wesson cited above. Of the 33 articles citing ownership levels, 14 also include figures on trends in ownership as do an additional 8 articles that do not present statistics on absolute levels. Of these 22 articles, 19 report large increases and 3 report no change. The standard claim cites the Smith & Wesson figure of a 53% increase from 1983 and 1986 and then adds more recent estimates from the NRA indicating large additional gains. Two typical examples are Laird's report (1994) that women owned 8 million guns in 1983, 12 million in 1986, and 17 million in 1994 and Leary's account (1992) that women had 6 million guns in 1983, 12.1 million in 1986, and at least 17 million in 1992.

To assess the accuracy and reliability of the figures of ownership, potential buyers, and related matters we consider how statistics on these issues are generated and used by pro-gun groups and the mass media.

First, on what does the NRA base its estimates? Elizabeth Swasey, director of the Office of Women's Issues and Information at the NRA and main NRA spokesperson on this issue, cites a) the Smith & Wesson/Gallup polls, b) industry sources, c) information from the NRA's 33,000 certified instructors, and d) magazine surveys such as a 1992 readership survey by Self magazine that indicated that 16% had bought a gun to protect themselves (Hirsh, 1993; Horowitz, 1994; Miller, 1994).

⁹This estimate is close to the 1988-93 GSS figure that 53.5% of men and 39.0% of women live in households with guns.

How these various bits of information are put together to yield estimates on how many women own guns is not explained, but of the sources cited only the Gallup polls are possibly a credible and scientifically reliable source and Smith & Wesson has never presented any detailed analysis of their Gallup polls, has refused to allow scholars to examine the data (Smith, 1990; Sheley, et al., 1994), and has been corrected by Gallup for misusing data on potential gun purchases from these same surveys (see below).

Second, even when working with the Smith & Wesson data, the NRA has problems.

a. Swasey asserts "From 1983 to 1986 there was a 53% increase in the number of women who owned guns: It jumped from six million to just over twelve million (Fishman, 1993)." Was there a 53% increase or a 100%+ increase (6 million to over 12 million)? If a 53% increase, is the 6 million or the 12 million right?

b. Robert Hunnicutt (1989), a NRA employee writing in the NRA publication American Rifleman, claimed that an "estimated 12 million women bought sidearms during 1986" - a number that exceeded the total number of handguns manufactured or imported in 1986 by a factor of eight. He apparently transformed the Smith & Wesson estimate that 12 million women owned guns into a claim that 12 million women bought handguns in 1986. In 1986 approximately 1.5 million handguns were manufactured or imported (Bureau, 1994).

Third, as problematic as the published estimates are of current gun ownership by women, projections are even more unwarranted.

a. The Smith & Wesson claim, based on its Gallup surveys, that "15.6 million women are potential buyers in 1989" was refuted by Gallup itself which noted "The 15.6 [million] figure corresponds to survey findings that women say there is at least some chance they will ever buy a gun. In truth, only 900,00 women could be considered potential purchasers and even this would be in terms of the next three years (Smith, 1990)."

b. And as time has gone by the exact exaggeration has changed, but it remains inconsistent with Gallup's understanding of the data it collected. In 1992, a Smith & Wesson spokesman indicated that the Gallup survey had estimated that women would purchase 20 million guns from 1988 to 1991 (Maines, 1992).¹⁰

Fourth, as evidence of the expanding interest of women in firearms, the NRA claims large gains in women members. But the NRA has no consistent or reliable figure on how many of its members are women (Table 5). In 1994, various NRA estimates of what percent of its own members were women ranged from 5% to 16.7%. At another

¹⁰In 1994 Smith & Wesson's current marketing manager admitted that the original projection "was an error. I wasn't here when they released the survey results. It's quite surprising a survey more than four years old keeps resurfacing (Horowitz, 1994)." But not so surprising given that Smith & Wesson had been repeating the claim (in modified form) at least well into 1992 and that the media is still repeating the figures to the present.

point the NRA said that it did not know how many members were women (Ippolito, 1993). The NRA also admitted that it does not even collect information on the gender of members and uses first names to estimate gender; a procedure that is complicated by the fact that one third of its members use only their initials (Horowitz, 1994).

Finally, the existence and growth of the magazine Women and Guns is frequently cited to bolster the assertion that gun ownership among women is widespread and growing. Since its start in 1989 as a simple newsletter, Women and Guns has grown into a glossy, high-production value magazine. However, as of 1993 it had a circulation of only 18,000. This is about 2 hundredth of a percent of all adult women or less than 2 tenth of a percent of all adult, female gun owners. Thus the apparent success of Women and Guns provides little support for the idea of a huge or expanding, mass market for women.

In brief, the standard claims of pro-gun groups and the mass media rest on questionable data and even manage to misinterpret and exaggerate what relatively hard data they have.

Conclusion

Circulating statistics of dubious reliability and accuracy pro-gun groups have successfully created the impressions that gun ownership by women has increased appreciably and has reached unprecedented levels. Most of the media have swallowed these statistical lures¹¹ and sometimes even mangled and exaggerated them further into tales resembling "Thelma and Louise."¹²

But the facts of gun ownership by women is dramatically different from that described by pro-gun groups and the media.¹³

¹¹Among the small minority of articles that question the conclusion that the ownership of firearms among women is increasing are Fishman, 1993; Horowitz, 1994; and Harayda, 1994. They challenge the Smith & Wesson statistics and the first two cite GSS data on no gains in ownership among women. A few additional articles describe the issue of gains as unsettled and present some evidence on both sides (Hirsh, 1993; O'Neill, 1993; Henneberger, 1993). Henneberger cites GSS data.

¹²"Thelma and Louise" is directly referred to in various articles (Davison, 1994; Hopkins, 1993; O'Connor, 1993; Larson, 1993; Rossi, 1992).

¹³Of the few scholarly articles dealing with this issue Smith (1990) and Sheley, et al., (1994) find no evidence of increased firearms ownership among women. These articles and Becker (1992) also report levels of ownership substantially lower than those used by the pro-gun groups and cited in the mass media.

However, other scholars (Branscombe and Owen, 1991; Jacobs, 1989) have accepted the pro-gun group's figures on increases or

According to the best available data, the ownership of firearms among women is not increasing, the gender gap is not closing, and the level of ownership is much lower than commonly stated (about 11-12% of women owning a gun and 4.5-8% owning a handgun). Nor is the typical female gun owner an unmarried woman living in a large city and a past or fearful victim of violent crime. Gun ownership is higher among married women living outside large cities, and it is more associated with hunting than with either fear of crime or past victimization.

ownership levels. In addition, Young (1986) found an increase in firearms ownership among non-hunting women from 15.4% in 1980 and 20.4% in 1982. However, our own analysis of the same data set (the GSS), shows that ownership is actually well below these reported levels. However, as Table 1 shows 1980 is below the 1980-94 average and 1982 is the highest point in the series so a significant trends might exist between those two points.

Table 1

Ownership of Firearms and Handguns by Gender

A. % Owning Firearms by Gender

Year	Men	Women
1980	52.0 (636)	10.5 (778)
1982	48.1 (645)	14.5 (793)
1984	45.6 (616)	10.9 (834)
1985	52.2 (712)	11.9 (806)
1987	48.0 (646)	12.6 (799)
1988	44.5 (409)	11.3 (551)
1989	49.4 (464)	9.3 (562)
1990	52.2 (404)	9.5 (497)
1991	48.2 (446)	10.2 (528)
1993	48.5 (480)	13.8 (573)
1994	47.0 (925)	12.7 (1061)
Pooled Average	48.7	11.6

	Constant Fit Chi-Sq.	Fit Prop.	Model
Men	11.3	GT .25	C
Women	13.7	GT .10	C

B. % Owning a Handgun^a by Gender

Year	Men	Women
1980	.270 (644)	.066 (793)
1982	.234 (653)	.081 (810)
1984	.238 (617)	.063 (835)
1985	.281 (715)	.068 (808)
1987	.294 (649)	.084 (801)
1988	.244 (409)	.089 (553)
1989	.315 (465)	.059 (565)
1990	.293 (404)	.074 (497)
1991	.249 (446)	.059 (530)
1993	.270 (479)	.107 (575)
1994	.301 (923)	.083 (1061)
Pooled average	.271	.074

	Constant Fit Chi-Sq.	Fit Prop.	Model
Men	16.9	GT .05	C
Women	12.2	GT .25	C

Table 1 (continued)

Source: GSS, 1980-1994

C=Constant (for statistical methods see Taylor, 1980)

Wording: Do you happen to have in your home (IF HOUSE: or garage) any guns or revolvers? IF YES: A. Is it a pistol, shotgun, rifle, or what? CODE ALL THAT APPLY. B. Do any of these guns personally belong to you?

^aThese are maximum estimates of handgun ownership. The follow-up questions do not identify which guns are personally owned by the respondent. If both a long gun and a handgun are present in the household, we know that one or more of the guns personally belongs to the respondent, but can not tell which type of gun is owned. For 1988-1993 at least 3.2% of women personally owned a gun (i.e. they said they owned a gun and only handguns were present) and a maximum of 7.9% owned a handgun (i.e. they said they owned a gun and both handguns and long guns were present). That is, in our procedure if a woman personally owns a gun and a handgun is present, we assume that she owned a handgun (See Table 2).

Table 2

Firearm Ownership by Type of Weapon by Gender

	Men	Women
Only Handgun	5.7%	3.2%
Only Long Gun	20.3	3.1
Both Types	21.8	4.7
Other Type ^a	1.0	0.3
No Gun	51.2	88.7
	(2208)	(2725)

Source: GSS 1988-1993

^aThese are mostly guns that were not coded as pistol, rifle, or shotgun. Most are pellet guns or antique weapons (e.g. muzzle-loaders and flintlocks). This also includes a few cases where the type of gun was refused or unknown by respondent.

Table 3

Profile of Firearm Ownership Among Women

	Only Handgun	Only Long Gun	Both Types	Unknown Type	No Gun
Marital Status:					
Married	2.1%	3.9	7.0	0.4	86.7 (1558)
Not Married	4.6%	2.1	1.8	0.2	91.2 (1167)
Widowed	9.0%	5.6	2.7	0.7	82.0 (310)
Divorced	6.3%	2.0	3.3	0.2	88.2 (291)
Separated	5.3%	0.0	0.0	0.0	94.7 (69)
Never Married	0.9%	0.3	0.5	0.0	98.3 (497)

Prob.=.000

Age:

18-29	1.1%	1.5	2.6	0.0	94.8 (624)
30-44	2.9%	2.8	5.0	0.2	89.1 (860)
45+	4.4%	5.6	4.1	0.6	85.3 (1234)

Prob.=.000

Residence:

12 Largest Central Cities	2.5%	1.2	0.7	0.3	95.2 (209)
13-100 Largest Central Cities	6.0%	1.7	2.0	0.3	89.8 (308)
Suburbs of 12 Largest	2.9%	0.6	1.5	0.4	94.6 (273)
Suburbs of 13- 100 Largest	3.0%	1.5	3.7	0.2	91.5 (415)
Other Urban	2.8%	4.7	7.1	0.3	85.0 (915)
Other Rural	2.9%	5.8	4.6	0.2	86.5 (321)

Prob.=.000

Table 3 (continued)

	Only Handgun	Only Long Gun	Both Types	Unknown Type	No Gun
Region:					
New England	2.4	1.5	0.8	0.8	94.5 (132)
Mid-Atlantic	0.4	2.2	1.4	0.7	95.3 (380)
East No. Cent.	2.0	2.5	2.5	0.0	93.0 (458)
West No. Cent.	2.2	3.3	4.1	0.3	90.2 (193)
South Atlantic	4.9	4.7	4.6	0.6	85.1 (413)
East So. Cent.	8.8	4.4	4.4	0.0	77.3 (179)
West So. Cent.	4.4	3.3	3.3	0.0	81.4 (191)
Mountain	4.7	2.4	2.4	0.0	89.3 (147)
West	2.9	3.4	3.4	0.2	88.0 (348)

Prob.=.000

Robbed and/or Burglarized in Last Year

Neither	3.1	3.1	4.7	0.3	88.8 (2529)
One	5.3	2.8	5.9	0.6	85.5 (171)
Both	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0 (15)

Prob.=.681

Threatened or Shot at with Gun and/or Beaten or Punched as an Adult

No	3.8	3.1	4.3	0.2	88.6 (1029)
One	3.4	4.3	2.7	0.0	89.6 (173)
Both	6.5	1.4	5.1	0.0	87.0 (73)

Prob.=.825

Afraid to Walk Alone at Night:

Yes	4.1	2.7	4.1	0.2	88.9 (1484)
No	2.1	3.7	5.5	0.3	88.4 (1219)

Prob.=.011

Hunting:

Hunts	0.8	6.2	8.5	0.0	84.6 (69)
Spouse Hunts	0.0	5.7	13.4	0.0	81.0 (316)
Both Hunt	0.0	12.1	25.6	0.0	62.3 (70)
Neither Hunts	3.8	2.4	2.8	0.4	90.7 (2267)

Prob.=.000

Source: GSS, 1988-1993

Table 4

Published Estimates of the Proportion of Women Owning Guns

Year	Range of Estimates
1983	6.7-8.9%
1986	12.9-16.8
1988	12.6-22.4
1990	43.5
1992	12.2-25
1993	12.1-43
1994	14.9-34

Sources:

1983: Laird, 1994; Hassell, 94; Leary, 1992
 1986: Seligman, 1994; Laird, 1994; Leary, 1992; "Women Buying,"
 1992; Miller, 1994; Lehrman, 1992; Holleman, 1993; Gibbs,
 1988; "For Ladies," 1989; Quigley, 1989
 1988: DePaulo, 1992; Pulitzer, 1992
 1990: Branscombe and Owen, 1991
 1992: Tisdall, 1992; Leary, 1992; Goerne, 1992; Russakoff, 1992;
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 1993: Usborne, 1993; Muir, 1993; Leonetti, 1993; Hirsh, 1993;
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 1994: Seligman, 1994; Laird, 1994; Hillbery, 1994; Hassell, 1994;
 Miller, 1994; Sugermann and Rand, 1994; Jones, 1994; Davison,
 1994; Swift, 1994;

Table 5

% of National Rifle Association Members who are Women

Date	Estimate	Source
1991	13.5	NRA (Thomas, 1994b)
1993	5-7	Director of NRA's Women's Issues and Information Office (Hirsh, 1993)
	9-12.5	Chair of NRA's women's policies committee (Baron, 1993)
	Don't Know	NRA (Ippolito, 1993)
1994	5	Director of NRA's Women's Issues and Information Office (Miller, 1994)
	5-7	Director of NRA's Women's Issues and Information Office (Horowitz, 1994)
	15	NRA Executive Vice-President (Hillbery, 1994)
	16.7	NRA (Thomas, 1994b)

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