

Mass Shootings & Masculinity

PUBLIC PROCEEDING

||| MASS CASUALTY
COMMISSION
COMMISSION
DES PERTES MASSIVES

MAY 3, 2022

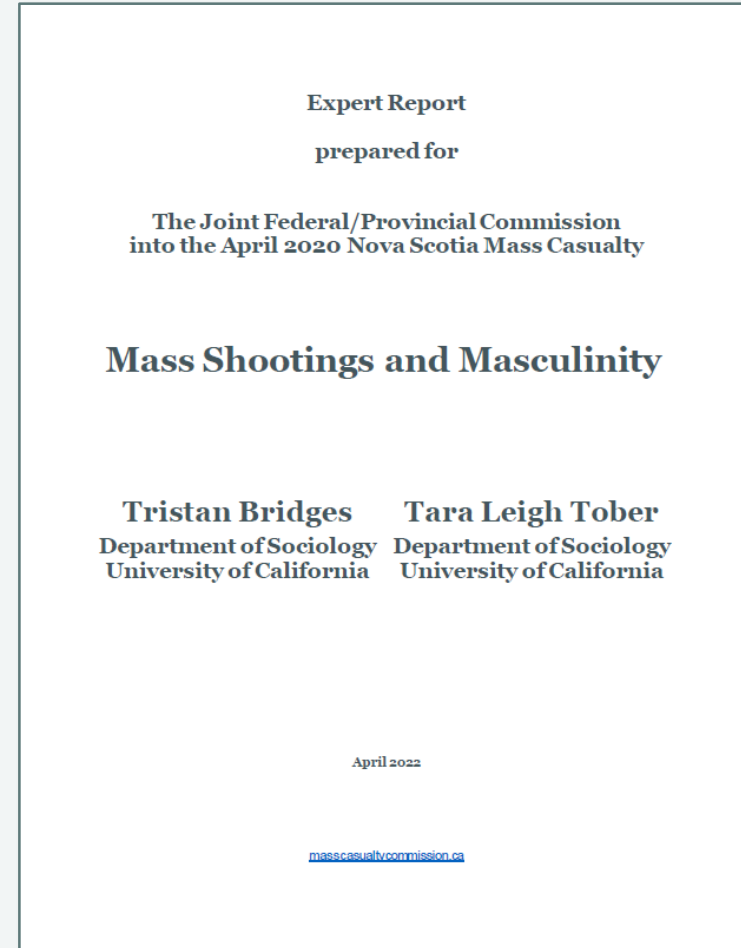
NOW SPEAKING

Jennifer Cox, QC

COMMISSION COUNSEL

Exhibits

- **Commissioned Report:
Mass Shootings & Masculinity**



Report Authors

TRISTAN BRIDGES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Areas of research include:

- Sociology
- Gender Studies
- Qualitative Analysis

TARA LEIGH TOBER

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Areas of research include:

- Cultural Sociology
- Collective Memory
- Inequality

Subject Matter

AREAS OF FOCUS

- **Provides information about rates of gun ownership, gun-related homicides, and mass shootings in the USA and internationally.**
- **Explains that “gun culture” is an important determinant of rates of gun violence, and suggests that gun cultures vary between countries and even between USA states.**
- **Note:** Report refers to “mass shootings” as this terminology is used within the USA scholarly and policy literature that the authors summarize. The Commission refers to the events of April 18-19, 2020 in Nova Scotia as the “mass casualty” in recognition of the broad range of harms experienced by many people over a wide geographic area.

Subject Matter cont.

AREAS OF FOCUS

- **Explains challenges with defining “mass casualty” and “mass shooting”.**
- **Describes research into mass casualty incidents, including gaps in the scholarly and policy literature.**
- **Describes research that addresses the questions (1) why mass shootings are overwhelmingly committed by men; and (2) why men commit mass shootings in the USA much more commonly than in other parts of the world.**
- **Note:** These aspects of the report will be addressed in public proceedings in July.

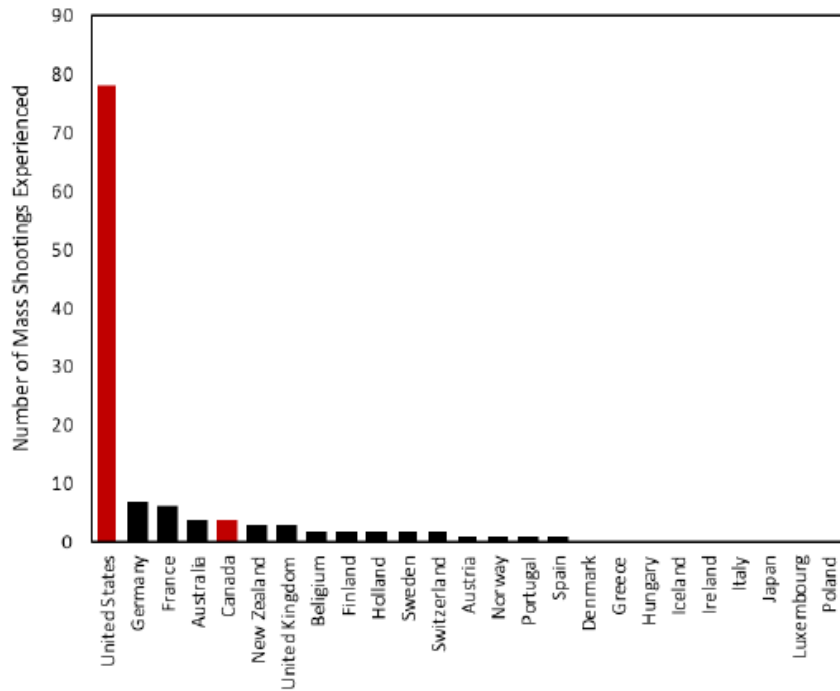
Focus on Data

- Government statistics and research show that mass shootings are more common in the USA than in any other nation.
- Data suggests that mass shootings and related incidents have become more frequent in the USA since 2000.

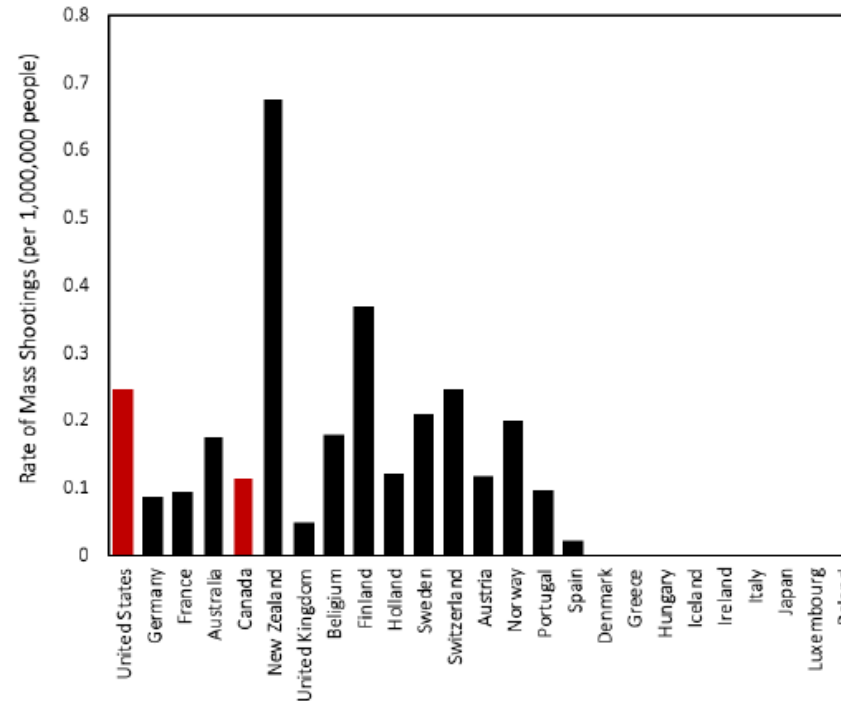
Rates vs. Frequency

MASS SHOOTINGS AROUND THE WORLD, 1983–2013

**Frequencies of Mass Shootings,
1983-2013**



**Rates of Mass Shootings,
1983-2013**



Rates: number of incidents based on a population (per 100K or 1M)

Frequency: actual number of incidents

Sources: Lemieux, Frederic. 2014. "Effect of Gun Culture and Firearm Laws on Gun Violence and Mass Shootings in the United States: A Multi-Level Quantitative Analysis." International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences 9(1): 74-93.
2013 Population Estimates from The World Bank, IRBD.IDA. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org>.

Correlations and Limitations

- “Lankford (2015) found that a country’s rate of gun ownership increased the odds it would experience a mass shooting.”
- “A comparison of Canada and the United States, however, illustrates that a focus only on the rate of gun ownership is insufficient to explain a social problem like mass shootings. .. there are more civilian-owned firearms in Canada than all but five other nations in the world; yet Canada has experienced a similar number of mass shootings to nations with much lower gun ownership rates” (Bridges & Tober p 16-17)
- Gun scholars argue that firearms ownership rates do not fully explain gun violence.

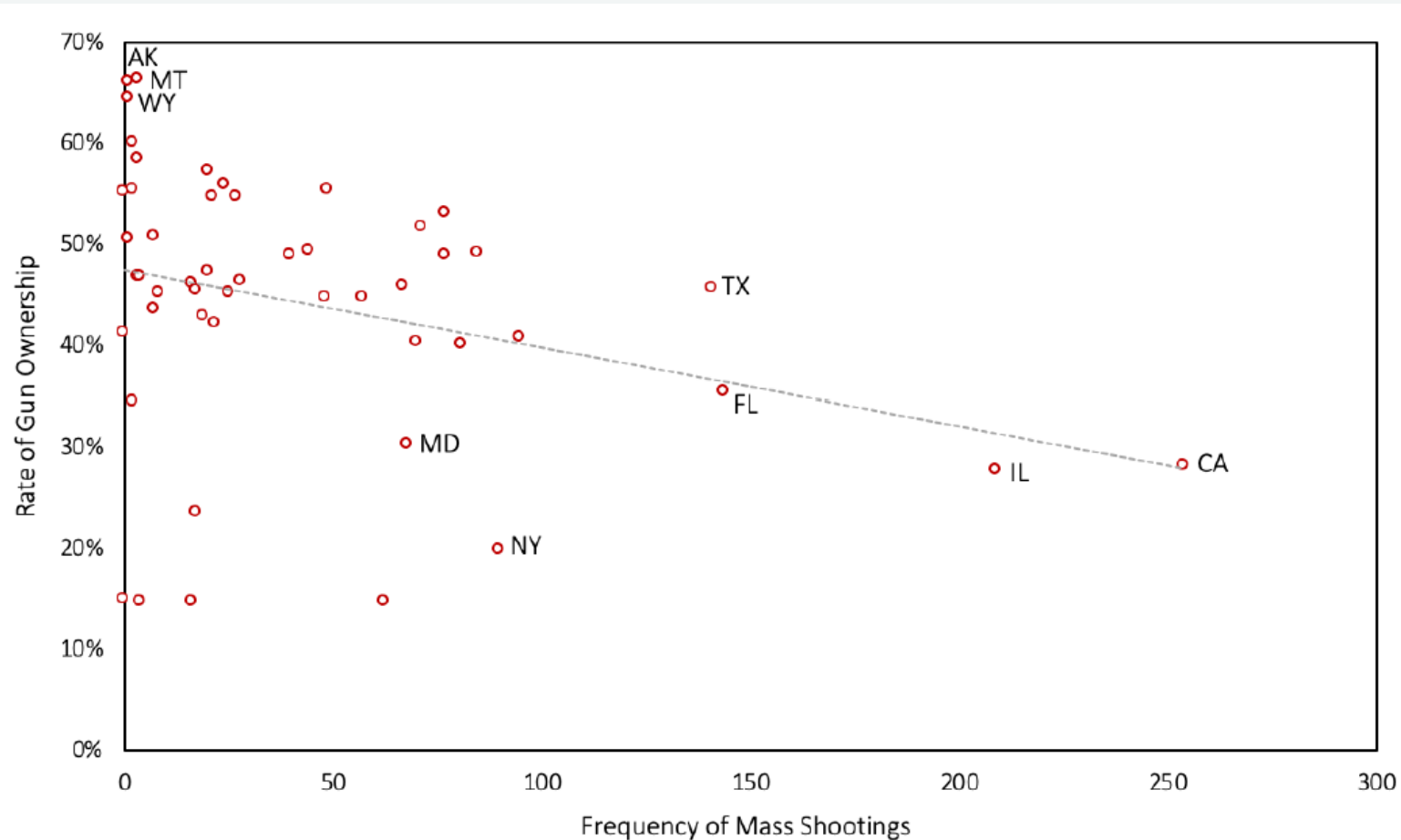
Understanding “Gun Culture”

- “[Gun] culture encompasses the meanings attributed to guns within specific cultural settings.”
- Tober and Bridges explain that firearms “take on different kinds of meanings for different groups even within a single society. And in many societies, firearms are gendered ‘masculine’”.
- The authors argue that firearms policy should account for the cultural significance and meanings of firearms.

Shifts in Gun Culture

- Research suggests that the cultural meaning of guns in the USA has shifted over time, from an emphasis on hunting and recreation towards an ideology of armed self-defence.
- Differing gun cultures also exist within the same nation, which may help to explain variation in the frequency of gun violence in different USA states with similar rates of gun ownership.

Frequency of Mass Shootings by State Compared to Rates of Gun Ownership, 2013-2019



Sources: Tristan Bridges and Tara Leigh Tober Mass Shootings in America Database, based on data collected initially from Gun Violence Archive (mass shootings frequencies); RAND Corporation (gun ownership rates)

Conclusion

- Firearms ownership rates and legislation are factors but not the only things that contribute to understanding gun violence.
- It is also important to pay attention to “gun culture”, which varies between nations and also varies within societies.
- Firearms policy should also attend to the cultural significance and meanings of firearms to the nation or society.
- We will return to other aspects of this report in July proceedings.

Note

- This Commissioned Report is available to read in full at masscasualtycommission.ca under Documents → Research and Commissioned Reports



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