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# The demographics of gun owners, and why they own them

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**Gun enthusiasts looked at weapons for sale at a gun show in Fort Worth, Texas, in June.**

**By Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

Researchers from Harvard and Northeastern universities released some of findings from a new study

on gun ownership in America this week.

One of the more striking results of the study was that [half of the guns in the United States are owned just 3 percent of adults in the country.](#)

The study has not yet been published, but a summary of its findings was released exclusively this week to a pair of news outlets, the [Guardian](#) and [the Trace](#).

The study was based on a survey of nearly 4,000 adults, researchers said. The full results of the study are undergoing peer review and are due to be released next fall by the Russell Sage Foundation.



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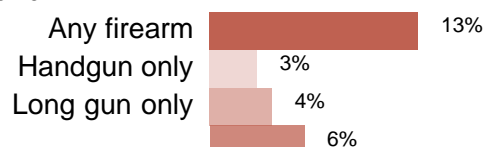
Below are data on some additional findings researchers provided to the two news outlets.

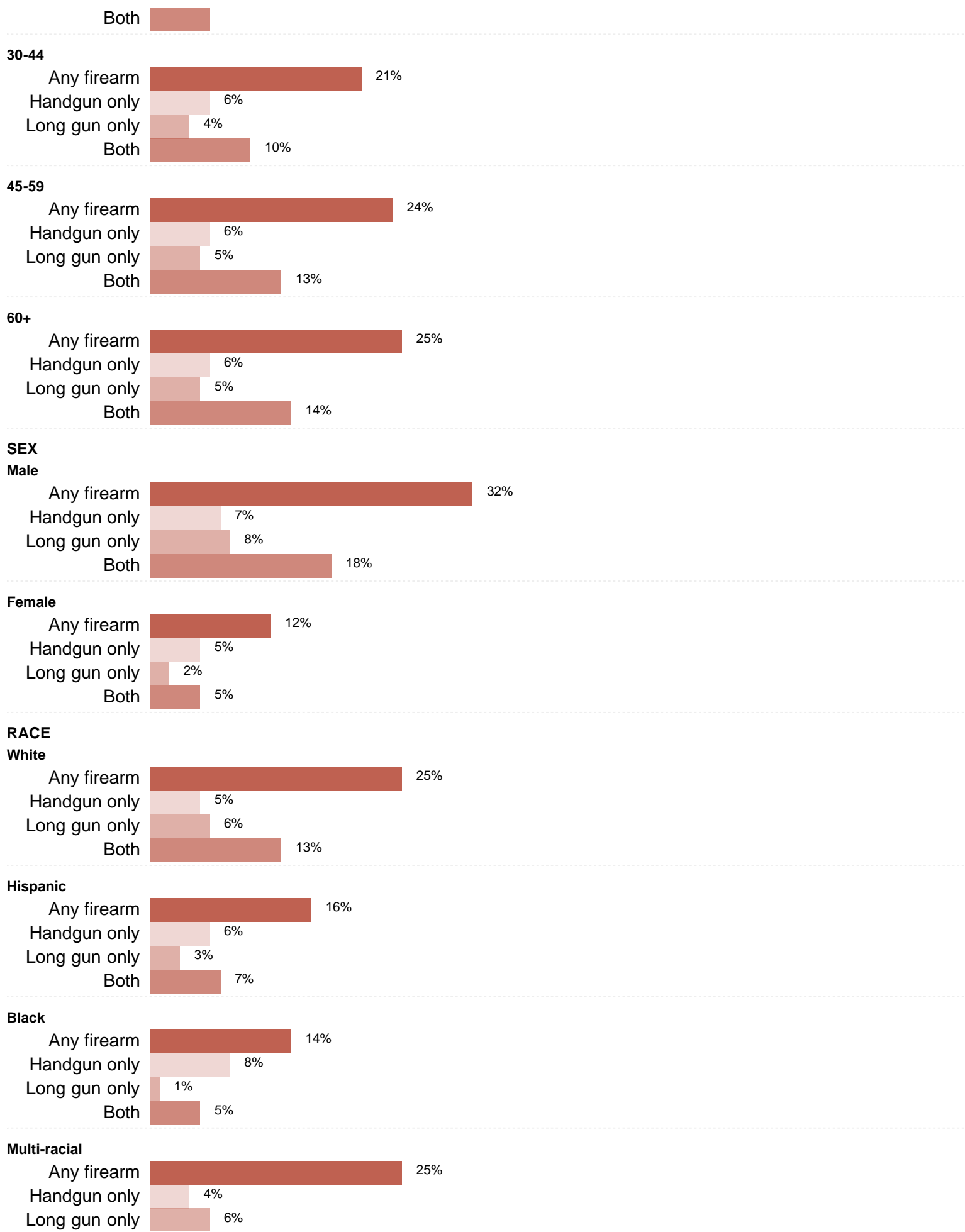
The figures show some clear trends, including that gun owners in 2015 were most likely to be white men, over 45 years old, with at least some college education, conservative views, and living in rural areas. Military veterans were more likely to own a gun than nonveterans. Similarly, people who grew up with a gun in their household were more likely to own than those who did not. The most common reason for owning a gun was for protection against other people:

### Percentage who own a firearm, 2015

#### AGE

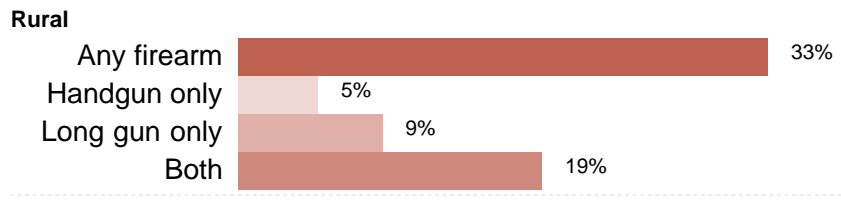
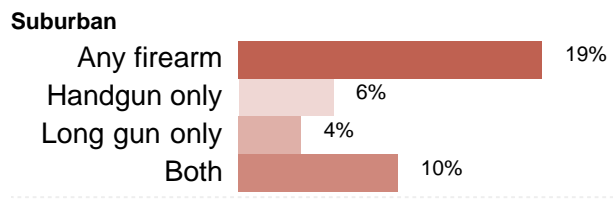
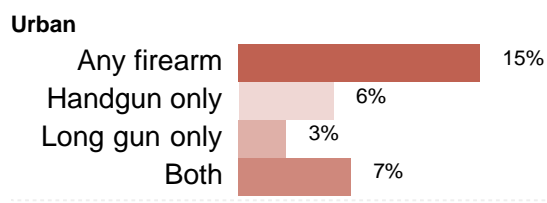
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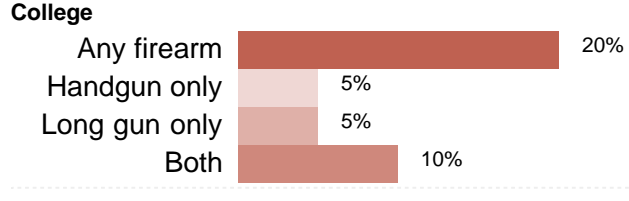
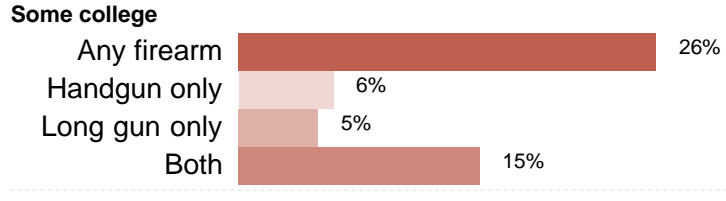
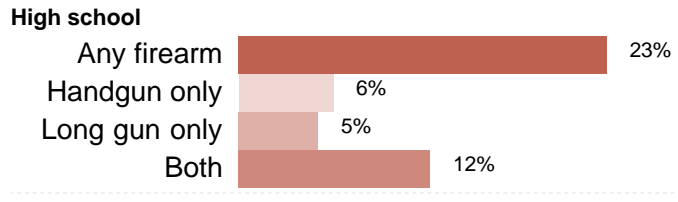
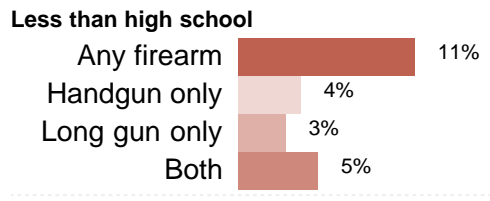




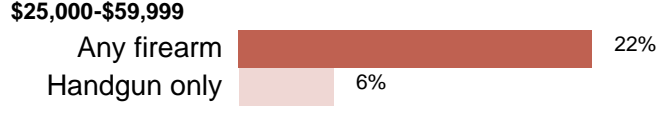
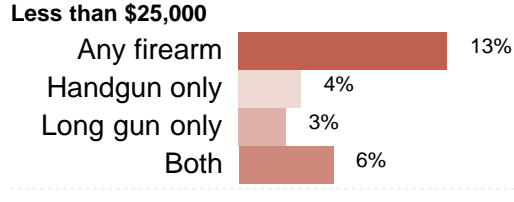
**COMMUNITY**

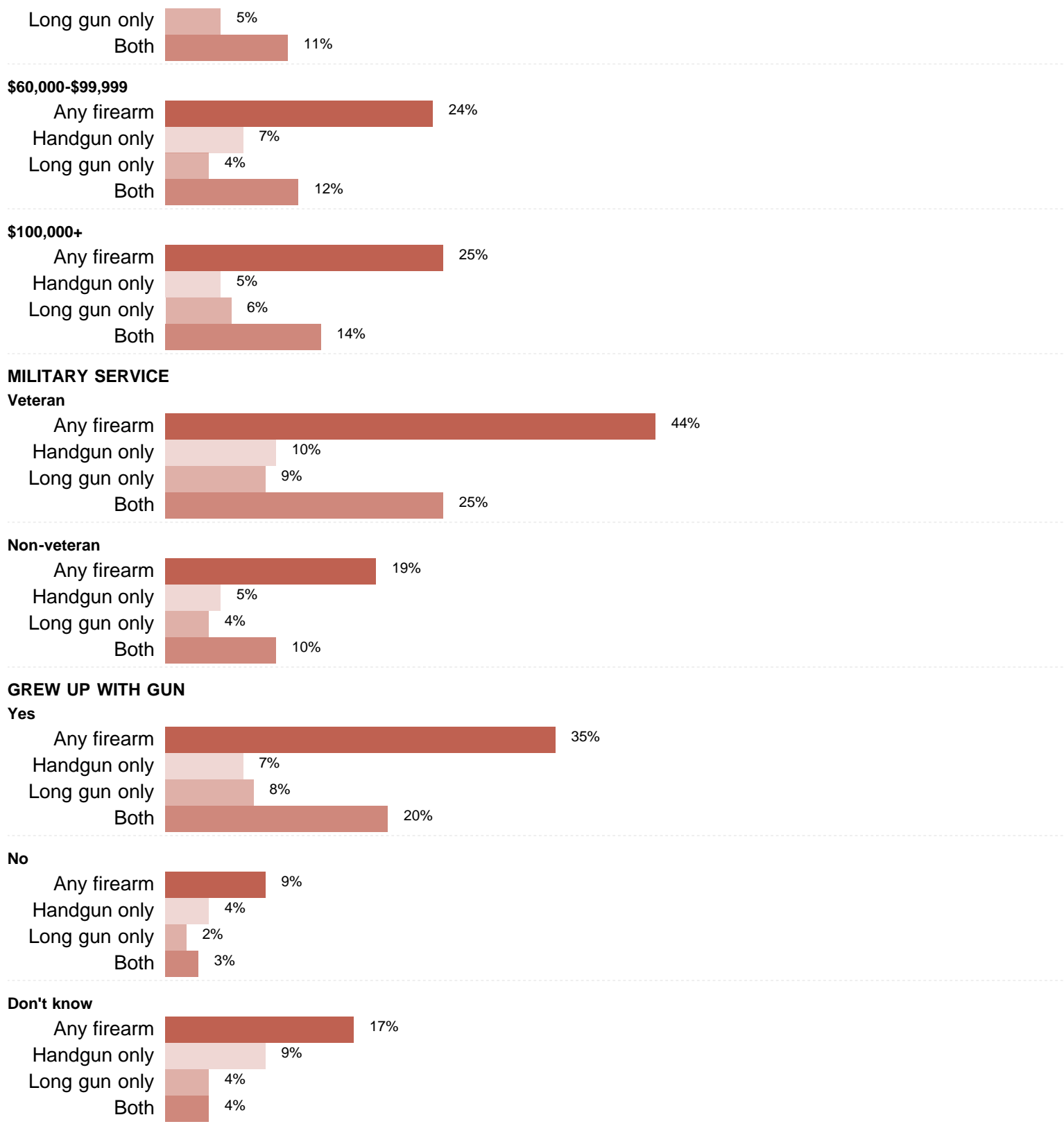


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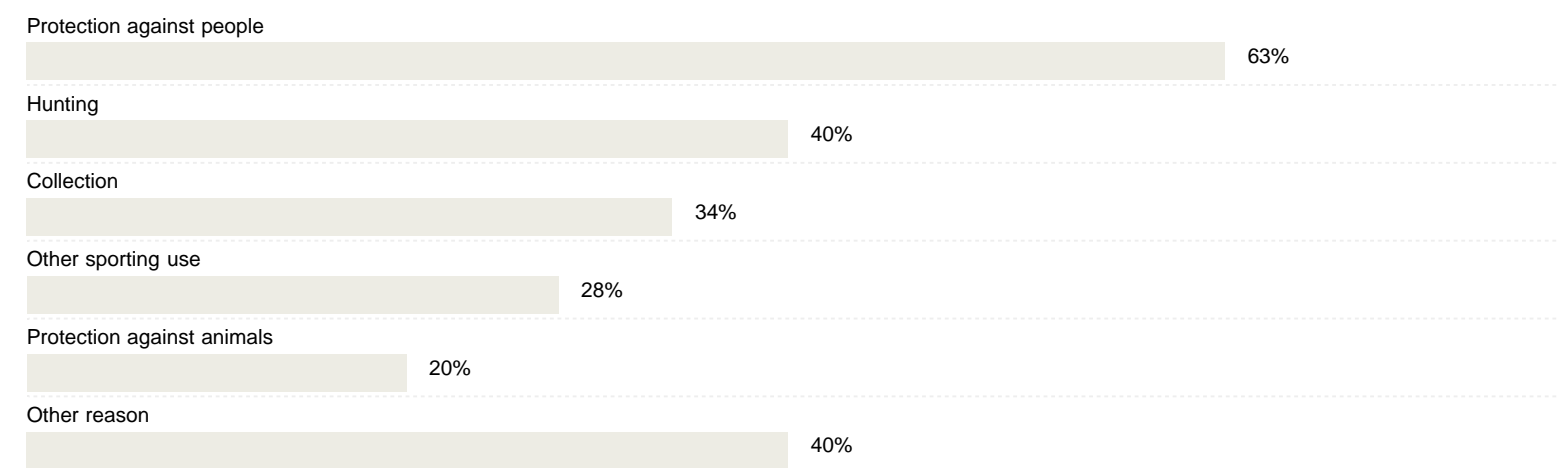




**SOURCES: Harvard Injury Control Research Center; Northeastern University; The Trace; The Guardian**  
 PATRICK GARVIN/GLOBE STAFF




## Reason for gun ownership, 2015



SOURCES: Harvard Injury Control Research Center; Northeastern University; The Trace  
PATRICK GARVIN/GLOBE STAFF

*Matt Rocheleau can be reached at [matthew.rocheleau@globe.com](mailto:matthew.rocheleau@globe.com). Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](https://twitter.com/mrochele)*

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