

A New Agenda ... Values, World Society, Modelling

<https://sites.google.com/site/gordonburtmathsocsci/home/a-new-agenda>

A New Agenda seeks to explore all aspects of society using all the academic disciplines paying special attention to values ... with special interest in modelling ... not disinterested in practice ... and aspiring to high academic standards.

Commentary, March 2018

No. 51

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Mothers' Day ... peace

Three mothers adorn the front cover of my Yearbooks. The family photo is intended to express the notion of 'values' which is the first word in the title of the Yearbooks ... and in particular to express positive values, and to express love. Last Sunday was Mothers' Day. It started with Catherine receiving a loving message from Katrin on her machine and later we went over to Rona's for lunch and a card and bunches of tulips. Rona had a card from Callum and Robert; and Katrin had a card from Kaia, Rosa and Rory.

That evening, Catherine and I watched *Call the Midwife*. Lots of mothers and babies! (My own birthing performances have been: done 3, bawling 1, conscious 1 and fainting 1 – in that order.) I find watching the programme challenging – heart-warming and heart-wrenching.

But is it proper for men to watch such a programme? Indeed is it proper for sophisticated people to do so? Not for the first time reviewer Carol Midgley entertains an ambivalence:

“It’s clichéd and twee, but I can’t stop blubbing

Call the midwife is uniquely irritating. Thank goodness it’s over for another year so I can stop crying against my will. Someone should arrest Heidi Thomas, the creator, for witchcraft. Every week I summon all my cynicism, remind myself that it’s so often clichéd and twee and my tastes are far too sophisticated for such shameless sentimentality, thank you very much. Then what happens? Forty minutes in, like millions of other viewers, I’m blubbing like a human snot machine. It’s mainstream mind control.

Last night ... it was possible to hold it together for awhile. But then Oh no, here we go again ... my eyes brimmed. Annoying. ... a cheesy coincidence, yes, but it set me off again. ... Where do they get all that amazing real birth footage that brings a lump to my throat? ... By the end ... it was easier just to give in and openly bawl. With the final voiceover from Vanessa Redgrave (“We flicker on a screen ... eternal as a heartbeat and even when the heart falls silent we do not cease to be because in the end we all become memories”) we were being played like an orchestra of cheap violins. But this is *Call the Midwife’s* uniquely irritating superpower. Resistance is futile.”

Midgley, Carol. “It’s clichéd and twee, but I can’t stop blubbing.” *The Times*, *Times* 2, March 12, 2018: 10.

So what do mothers do? The literature uses phrases such as ‘maternal thinking’, ‘maternal practice’ and ‘motherwork’. These notions have been related to peace, and some writing relates mothering to security. Also interesting to me are the aspects of mothering which are least like security.

“The most popular uniting theme in feminist peace literature grounds women's peace work in mothering. I argue if maternal arguments do not address the variety of relationships different races and classes of mothers have to institutional violence and/or the military, then the resulting peace politics can only draw incomplete conclusions about the relationships between maternal work/thinking and peace. To illustrate this I compare two models of mothering: Sara Ruddick's description of "maternal practice" and Patricia Hill Collins's account of racial-ethnic women's "motherwork."”

Ruddick, Sara. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London, The Women’s Press: 1989.
<https://philpapers.org/rec/RUDMTT>

More recently, Cohn has written:

“Ruddick writes that three demands—for preservation, growth, and social acceptability—constitute maternal work: “to be a mother is to be committing to meeting these demands by works of preservative love, nurturance, and training” (Ruddick, 1989: 17). Of these three demands, the one that most obviously is an equally central demand of state security practice would be preservation, classically in the form of preservation of the (one’s own) state. (It would be very interesting and potentially fruitful, though, to imagine what it might mean to security practice if preservation and growth of “Other” states, and social acceptability of one’s own state, were included among the central demands of security work.)”

Cohn, 2013, p. 51:

Cohn, Carol. “‘Maternal thinking’ and the concept of ‘vulnerability’ in security paradigms, policies, and practices.” *Journal of International Political Theory*, 10, 1, 2013: 46-69.

http://genderandsecurity.org/sites/default/files/Cohn_-_Maternal_thinking_and_the_concept_of_vulnerability_in_security_paradigms_policies_and_practices.pdf
; <http://genderandsecurity.org/>; <http://genderandsecurity.org/who-we-are/staff/carol-cohn>.

Fellow CRS Council member Yeshim Harris writes: “Engi is currently involved in a women’s grassroots network worldwide which aim to work towards UNSCR 1325.”

Gender-Sensitive Peace Processes

Gender, Peace and Security Alliance (GPSA) is a dialogue platform to enable women to directly connect and communicate with others in similar circumstances in conflict areas around the

world; through a bank of experiences and case studies of gender inclusive peace processes in different regions.

GPSA aims to better equip women in areas affected by conflict and/or the members of diaspora groups around the world, by bringing them together to exchange experiences, share information, transfer knowledge, receive guidance and provide systematic co-mentoring and support to each other. This idea came as a result of many conversations which took place with women who live and suffer on the ground. There are a number of organisations which offer ‘expert-to-grassroots’ based learnings, but ‘grassroots-to-grassroots’ approach (also known as peer support methodology) is rare. This methodology is what differentiates GPSA from other platforms.

The foundations of GPSA have been built by Engi’s past work of building dialogue platforms by using the peer support method (details can be found on [here](#)). This was used in many other parts of the world such as Northern Ireland, Colombia, Cyprus and Sri Lanka with well proven success as it provides: practical information, promotes synergy and coordination in a very direct and effective way.

[Conflict Analysis and Research Centre University of Kent](#) is a funding partner of this project through their Diaspora as Peace Agents Programme.

Values: positive, negative and neutral; harmony, war and peace; conflict cooperation; love; nurturing flourishing

The discussion in the previous section has related mothers and women to certain values ...

The fact-value distinction in philosophy is a key idea in philosophy. Value is a foundational concept whereas other concepts are specific cases of value or are concepts derived from value.

Value may be positive, negative or neutral. A recent article comments on the balance between positive and negative. People have a ‘tendency to pessimism’ and to ‘cure’ this there should be ‘a bit of positivity’. Bad news is newsworthy, good news is not. This distorts our view of the world. There is a bias against good news and it is getting worse. (Bad news about good news!?) Humans are loss-averse. Also the present looks bad because we forget the bad events of the past. Despair is a bigger problem than optimism. Astronomer royal, Lord Rees, challenges at least part of this argument: it is rational to be concerned about high-cost low probability events.

Ridley, M. “My cure for Disease X? A bit of positivity.” *The Times*, March 12, 2018: 25.

Rees, Lord. [Astronomer royal]. “Humanity and risk.” *The Times*, March 14, 2018: 32.

A long-standing debate in peace and conflict research is the balance between researching peace/cooperation and researching war/conflict. A valuable recent contribution to this debate is by John Gledhill and Jonathan Bright:

“As many of you know, for some years, I have been working with my colleague, Jonathan Bright, on a project aimed at ‘mapping’ the field of peace and conflict studies. I’m happy to report that the primary findings of the project have just been published in *International Studies Perspectives*:

<https://academic.oup.com/isp/advance-article/doi/10.1093/isp/ekx009/4907910>

While our project is empirical, our motivations were underwritten by a question with normative foundations: Are scholars of peace and conflict collectively realizing the founding ontological goal of their discipline, which was to study conflict in order to understand how it can be managed peacefully?

Overall, our findings suggest that divisions that exist within the field -- between studies of 'peace' and studies of 'conflict' -- may be preventing a realization of that goal. But that's just the headline; if you're interested, you'll need to read the rest!

We hope that the article, and related projects, might foment reflection among peace and conflict scholars -- hence my reason for sending it along to you.

I'm not great on social media. Actually, I don't have any presence on social media and, indeed, I don't even have a smart phone. But I am happy to free-ride off the social media activism of others! Thus, if you think that your followers might be interested in the piece, then it would be great if you could help spread the virtual word."

"Scholars in the field of peace and conflict studies have long worried that their discipline is divided -- between studies of war and war making, and studies of peace and peacemaking. However, empirical research into the existence, extent, and nature of such a division is scarce. We remedy this by addressing two questions: 1) how is work in the field of peace and conflict studies distributed between its two nominal pillars: "peace" and (violent) "conflict"? and 2) to what extent is there communication and exchange between the two sets of studies? Making use of a unique combination of methods, we find that studies of violence hold a dominant position in the field, although there is also a sizable body of work that explores topics of peace, understood as conflict prevention and/or response. That said, we find limited evidence of intellectual exchange between studies of war/making and peace/making. We also find evidence of gendered, regional, and methodological divides. We argue that such schisms may be preventing scholars of peace and conflict from collectively realizing the founding ontological goal of their discipline, which was to understand the causes of war in order to contribute to an understanding of how conflict can be managed peacefully."

A Divided Discipline? Mapping Peace and Conflict Studies, Jonathan Bright John Gledhill, *International Studies Perspectives*, ekx009, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekx009>, 23 February 2018.

As well as the distinction between war and peace, a distinction has been made between positive peace and negative peace. And is cooperation perhaps more actively positive than peace? John Burton before he died was unhappy with the notion of peace as the absence of war and preferred the phrase 'harmonious relationships'. Roger Mitchell talks about a politics of love. And I rather like the phrase 'nurturing flourishing'.

Burt, Gordon. *Values, World Society and Modelling Yearbook*, 2014. Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars: 2016. Pages 65-66.

Tragedies, individuals and systems

Are tragedies caused by individuals or by systems? For some, World War I was caused by the Kaiser and World War II was caused by Hitler. For some, both were caused not by an individual person but by an individual country: Germany. Others, in the aftermath of World War I, felt that it was caused by systems such as international alliances and arms races.

And of course a central foundational contribution to peace research was Lewis Fry Richardson's model of the arms race. A system of two peace-loving countries through fear of one another can interact, both building up their arms, building up a tension that breaks into war. In abstract the model is just a pair of differential equations. It provides a general model of reciprocation. It might refer to any reciprocation - any negative reciprocation or indeed any positive reciprocation (Richardson cites the reciprocation of trade and the reciprocation of love).

It was in the aftermath of World War II and with the onset of the Cold War that game theory was developed. The notion of the prisoner's dilemma situation with its alternative strategies of cooperation and non-cooperation can be seen as providing an underpinning for Richardson's model and was applied to the nuclear arms race. (An interesting study by Axelrod found that a strategy of tit-for-tat combined with forgiveness and regret was the winning strategy in a tournament between computers.)

Whereas bystanders see two 'others' interacting, participants see the 'self' interacting with the 'other'. Commonly participants see the 'other' as causing the tragedy. Challenging that perception is the notion that tragedies are caused by negative systems - and hence that tragedies can be averted by dismantling the negative systems.

These arguments are applied to recent events. See Table 1.

Table 1 Recent news headlines

The Times front page, unless otherwise stated.

February

15 Chaos at Florida high school as gunman opens fire (Blakely, Rhys, 28)

...

27 Saudi prince sacks senior generals on eve of UK visit

28 -

March

1 Spend more on armed forces or risk defeat, military chief warns

2 My rockets are bigger and faster, boasts Putin. (Parfitt, Tom, pp. 30-31.)

3 Trump hails trade war as allied recoil. Aides seek to rein in US president's tariff pledge amid market volatility. 'We risk seeing a dangerous domino effect from this'

Wounded globalists plot feedback. Cohn tried in vain to stop steel move as economic nationalists gain upper hand. (Donnan, Shawn and Robin Wigglesworth, FT 4; Donnan, Shawn and Courtney Weaver, FT 4)

4 Big freeze costs UK £1bn a day as fears mount for GDP growth [The Observer]

5 Xi to grab Mao's dictatorial powers (Tang, Didi. p. 30)

6 Russian spy critically ill after suspected poisoning

7 MI5 believes Russians tried to kill former spy. Deaths of family members under investigation

8 Nerve agent used on spy leaves policemen critical.

9 Traitors are not safe on British soil, says Russia. State TV mocks 'industrial quantities' of deaths

9 Trump gives US allies hope of bypassing new trade tariffs

10 Saudi prince signs £5bn deal for BAE fighter jets (Spencer, Richard and Lucy Fisher, p. 6)

11 Russians link Skripal poisoning to exile deaths [The Observer]

12 May set to hit back at Russia over spy attack

13 May gives Putin deadline to explain spy poisoning.

Retreat on pledge to raise age limit on gun purchase (Blakely, Rhys. p. 31)

14 Don't try to intimidate us, Russia warns Britain. Putin defies may's ultimatum on nerve agent. UK to investigate 14 'Kremlin-related' deaths

14 Russian spy: UK calls for UN meeting over nerve agent attack

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-43402506>.

School shooting in the USA

"Chaos at Florida high school as gunman opens fire."

Blakely, Rhys. "Chaos at Florida high school as gunman opens fire." *The Times*, February 15, 2018: 28.

"Florida shooting.

US prosecutors are seeking the death penalty for the teenager accused of killing 17 people at a Florida high school last month.

Nikolas Cruz, 19, has admitted carrying out the attack and is charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder. The attack, at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, is the deadliest US school shooting since 1999. It has re-ignited long-running debates about tougher firearm restrictions.”

March 13, 2018: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-43391505>

Here, surely, is a tragedy caused by an individual. Sadly such tragedies are so common in the USA that we are all familiar with the nature of the situation and the debates it gives rise to. Some people focus on the individual perpetrators. Applying self-other thinking, we are sane and they are ‘crazy’. We are not to blame, they are. Other people focus on the weapon and the system in the USA that facilitate such a use of weapons. Gun culture in the USA is a negative system which needs to be dismantled through at least some degree of ‘disarmament’. Not everyone agrees. Like actors in the arms race model, fear drives people to get more weapons – Donald Trump proposed that schoolteachers should be armed. Like those in the prisoner’s dilemma people would like there to be less guns but only if others also have less guns. A later section provides an extensive discussion of gun control in the USA.

Postscript:

Lagan, Bernard. “Gun ban ‘has prevented 16 massacres’.” *The Times*, March 12, 2018: 39.

Chapman, Simon, Michael Stewart, Philip Alpers and Michael Jones. “Fatal firearm incidents before and after Australia’s 1996 National Firearms Agreement banning semiautomatic rifles.” *Annals of Internal Medicine, Letters*, March 13, 2018.

<http://annals.org/aim/article-abstract/2675234/fatal-firearm-incidents-before-after-australia-s-1996-national-firearms>.

Russian spy critically ill after suspected poisoning

Day 1 of year 2018 started with a BBC serial about the international activities and London presence of Russian mafia bosses. Traumatic viewing with a lot of suffering and dead bodies. A lot of tragedies caused by a lot of individuals, reciprocating violence, in the negative system of organised crime:

McMafia is a British crime drama miniseries created by Hossein Amini and James Watkins, and directed by Watkins. It is inspired by the book *McMafia: A Journey Through the Global Criminal Underworld* (2008) by journalist Misha Glenny.^[1] The series, which stars James Norton as Alex Godman, the British-raised son of a Russian mafia boss living in London whose father is trying to escape from the world of organised crime, is co-produced by the BBC, AMC, and Cuba Pictures. It was first broadcast on BBC One from 1 January 2018,^{[2][3][4]} premiered on AMC on 26 February 2018.^[5]

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McMafia>

A couple of months later in real life a Russian spy and his daughter were found poisoned but still alive on a park bench in Salisbury, UK. See the headlines for March 6 to March 14 above.

Like the school shooting, this is a tragedy caused by an individual. Quite unlike the school shooting, the (unknown) individual(s) is(are) of secondary importance in the news. The assumption is that the individual was acting on behalf of some organisation, state or non-state. There is some uncertainty about who is to blame but

the headlines in the UK show that Putin and the Russian government are the prime suspects. UK prime minister Theresa May stated that “Russia had carried out ‘a direct attack on our country’ or had ‘lost control of this potentially catastrophically damaging nerve agent’.” [Times, March 13, p. 1]. Speaking on Wednesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Russia is ready to respond to any official request from London but Moscow has yet to receive any such contact regarding the case. Moscow denies any involvement in the incident. [<https://www.rt.com/uk/421257-spy-attack-salisbury-unsc/>]. RT offers ‘conversation’ of a fairly robust nature. Wednesday: May announces expulsion; Corbyn says there is no definitive proof. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-43405680>

Beyond the individuals or organisation that carried out the attack, there is a wider encompassing negative system: the global military system. It is this negative system that involves espionage, chemical weapons and violence.

Military air power, 1918-2018

“On 1 November 1911, during the [Italo-Turkish War](#), the [Kingdom of Italy](#) had carried out the first aerial military mission in history—a [tactical bombing](#)—when Giulio Gavotti dropped bombs by hand on [Turkish](#) positions in the [Libyan](#) desert.”
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_bombing_during_World_War_I

“There is no greater cause of that fear than the fear of the air. Up to the time of the last War, civilians were exempt from the worst perils of war. They suffered sometimes from hunger, sometimes from the loss of sons and relatives serving in the Army, but now, in addition, they suffer from the fear, not only of being killed themselves, but, what is perhaps worse for a man, the fear of seeing his wife and children killed from the air.

I think it is well also for the man in the street to realise that there is no power on earth that can protect him from being bombed. Whatever people may tell him, the bomber will always get through ...”

point 632 INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, HC Deb 10 November 1932 vol 270 cc525-641
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1932/nov/10/international-affairs>

The First World War had seen the systematic introduction of aerial bombing. The year 2018 marks the centenary of the formation of the Royal Air Force, the world’s first (organisationally independent) air force.

“This letter is sent by the British governor of the Somalis to the dervishes of the Mullah Mohammed Abdullah Hassan. It is carried by British officers who, like birds of the air, fly far and fast. The day of the destruction of the Mullah is at hand.” So ran the leaflets dropped from RAF aircraft on the remote fortresses of the so-called Mad Mullah in 1920. His warriors were unperturbed, for he had promised that true believers were immune to infidel bullets. Bombs and strafing followed, and the prophet and his jihadis scattered: the Pax Britannica now ran throughout Somaliland.”

“The bombing and machine-gunning of Iraqi villages were condemned as callous, indiscriminate and a disproportionate response for such minor misdemeanours as tax evasion. ... a raid in which women and children were slaughtered ... appalled ... grisly details ... were officially suppressed.”

Overy, Richard. *The Birth of the RAF, 1918*. London, Allen Lane: 2018.

James, Lawrence. “How the Mad Mullah got the RAF flying. Without colonial rebels to bomb, the RAF might have been quickly abolished.” *The Times, Saturday Review*, February 24, 2018: 13.
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/review-the-birth-of-the-raf-1918-by-richard-overy-how-the-raf-survived-and-thrived-c2bmzk0hl>.

There followed Guernica, the Blitz, Pearl Harbour, Hamburg, Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Suez, Vietnam ... Trump's Mother of all Bombs, Syria, Yemen.

Hypothesis: military air power is a negative system.

UK economic dependence on the arms trade ... Saudi Arabia

The UK has agreed to sell Typhoon jets to Saudi Arabia – despite the fact that Saudi Arabia uses Typhoons to bomb Yemen. Thousands of civilians have been killed. As well as the \$5bn, the contract will help secure the 5000 jobs on the Typhoon at BAE Systems.

	military expenditure % GDP	troops	airforce
Saudi Arabia	10%	230,000	365
UK	\$ 67bn 2%	153770	258

Spencer, Richard and Lucy Fisher. "Saudi prince signs £5bn deal for BAE fighter jets." *The Times*, March 10, 2018: 6.

UK defence: Richardson arms race thinking

For some time now there has been discussion in the UK about UK military expenditure. The thinking is exactly that postulated by Richardson in his arms race model: "in a hostile world, we must boost our defence and intelligence budgets".

There is a view that the UK cannot defend itself against the Russians. I do not understand why one would ever imagine the UK could do this – in the light of the figures below.

	military expenditure	troops	nuclear warheads
Russia	\$ 70bn	1013000	7300
UK	\$ 67bn	153770	215

Editorial. "Defence of the realm. Government has a duty to invest more in the nation's protection." *The Times*, March 1, 2018: 33.

Haynes, Deborah. "Spend more on armed forces or risk defeat, military chief warns." *The Times*, March 1, 2018: 1, 8.

Haynes, Deborah. "General: the army must wake up to information war." *The Times*, March 1, 2018: 8.

Richards, David and Clarke, Michael. "Britain will need a strategic surge after Brexit. In a hostile world, we must boost our defence and intelligence budgets to enhance our influence." *The Times*, March 1, 2018: 30.

Times editorial calls for arms reduction talks

"New nukes. Old threats

Putin is playing to the gallery with boasts about terrifying new nuclear weapons. He should recall the lessons of the Cold War, and learn from them

[Putin] spent heavily on

Russia's nuclear arsenal while Barack Obama's priority ... was to cut the American stockpile to its smallest size since the 1950s.

... Mr Trump has vowed to spend hundreds of billions of dollars modernising the US nuclear deterrent ... to deal with 'the return of great power competition'...

... This is a posture crafted by hawks for a president who seeks above all to project strength, and with good reason ... China has emerged as a third superpower ...

[Both leaders] should huff and puff less and give more time to old-fashioned arms reduction talks."

Editorial. "New nukes. Old threats." *The Times*, March 2, 2018: 29.

The editorial was in response to a speech by Putin to MPs and his political elite announcing new weapons development.

Parfitt, Tom. "My rockets are bigger and faster, boasts Putin." *The Times*, March 2, 2018: 30-31.

The article provides the following statistics. The USA spends ten times as much as Russia.

.	military expenditure	troops	nuclear warheads
USA	\$825bn	1281900	4480
Russia	\$ 70bn	1013000	7300
UK	\$ 67bn	153770	215

Disarmament, 1932

"Mr Atlee: I beg to move, That, in the opinion of this House, it is an essential preliminary to the success of the forthcoming World Economic Conference that the British Government should give clear and unequivocal support to an immediate, universal, and substantial reduction of armaments on the basis of equality of status for all nations, and should maintain the principles of the covenant of the League of Nations by supporting the findings of the Lytton Commission on the Sino-Japanese dispute. ...

...

Resolved: That this House, having heard the statement of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, approves it and assures His Majesty's Government of its support in the vigorous promotion of a policy of limiting and reducing armaments by international agreement through the Disarmament Conference at Geneva; expresses its appreciation of the efforts already made by the Government in that direction; and also its approval of the determination of His Majesty's Government to continue their loyal cooperation with the League of Nations in dealing with the Sino-Japanese dispute ..."

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, HC Deb 10 November 1932 vol 270 cc525-641

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1932/nov/10/international-affairs>

Gun culture in the USA

[my Social Modelling Note 19 in 4 January 2013]

Sandy Hook elementary school

"A 20-year-old man wearing combat gear and armed with semiautomatic pistols and a semiautomatic rifle killed 26 people — 20 of them children — in an attack in an elementary school in central Connecticut on Friday. Witnesses and officials described a horrific scene as the gunman, with brutal efficiency, chose his victims in two classrooms while other students dove under desks and hid in closets."

Barron, James. "Nation reels after gunman massacres 20 children art school in Connecticut." *New York Times*, December 14, 2012. Accessed 14 March 2018.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/nyregion/shooting-reported-at-connecticut-elementary-school.html> .

International comparisons

Countries in the Americas provide the highest numbers of gun deaths and also the highest gun death rates. The gun death rate in the USA is six times that of Switzerland and a hundred times that of the UK.

Table 1 Homicides by firearm

	number, 2007-2012 average per year*	rate per 100,000 citizens**
Brazil	34,678	
Colombia	12,539	28.1
Mexico	11,309	10.0
Venezuela	11,115	
USA	9,146	2.98
South Africa	8,319	
Philippines	7,349	
Honduras	5,201	
Guatemala	5,009	
India	3,093	
Switzerland		0.52
Finland		0.41
Italy		0.41
Germany		0.20
Norway		0.19
Australia		0.10
UK		0.03

*Law Center to prevent gun violence <http://smartgunlaws.org/>; Monday December 17, p. 8.

**GunPolicy.org p. 7

cited in The Times (2012)

Comparisons between states in the USA

There is a correlation of 0.49 between strong gun laws and low gun death rates. There is a correlation of 0.69 between strong gun laws and the % vote for Obama; and a correlation of 0.49 between low gun death rates and the % vote for Obama.

The reporting of the issue in The Times (London)

Here are fragments I have gleaned from the Times / Sunday Times, Saturday 15 December to Wednesday 19 December 2012:

Saturday

‘History of violence’:

Connecticut 2012, California 2012, Virginia 2007, Pennsylvania 2006, Minnesota 2005, Colorado 1999, Arkansas 1998, California 1986, Texas 1966, Michigan 1927.
p. 11

‘Three quarters of the gunmen responsible for the last 60 mass murders carried out in America since 1982 bought their weapons legally.’ p. 11

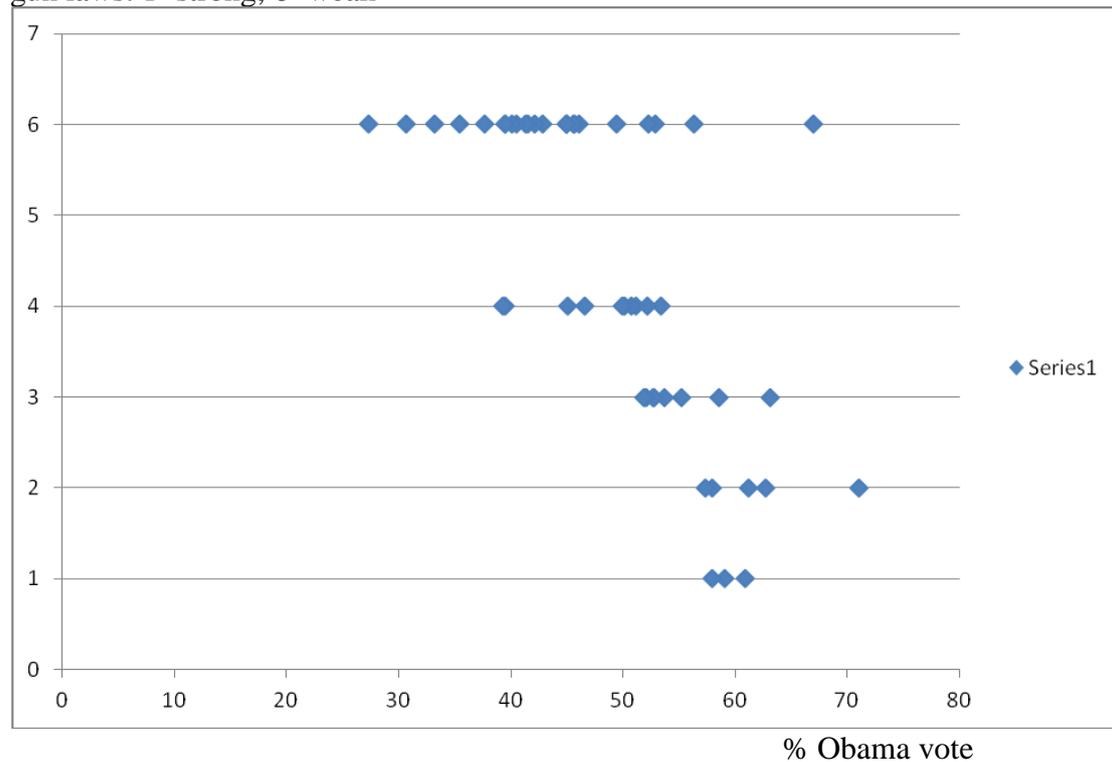
Table 2 States in the USA: % vote for Obama; gun law laxity; gun death rates

% vote Obama	state	* laxity of gun laws: 1 strong laws ... 6 lax laws * gun death rates: 1 low death ... 6 high death	
71	Hawaii	2	1
67	Vermont	6	
63.1	Rhode Island	3	1
62.7	New York	2	1
61.2	Maryland	2	
60.9	Massachusetts	1	1
59.1	California	1	1
58.6	Delaware	3	
57.9	New Jersey	1	1
	Connecticut	2	1
57.3	Illinois	2	
56.3	Maine	6	1
55.2	Washington	3	
53.7	Michigan	3	
53.4	Oregon	4	
52.9	New Mexico	6	6
52.8	Minnesota	3	1
52.7	Wisconsin	3	
52.3	Nevada	6	6
52.2	New Hampshire	4	
52.1	Iowa	3	1
51.9	Pennsylvania	3	
51.2	Colorado	4	
50.7	Virginia	4	
50.1	Ohio	4	
49.9	Florida	4	
49.4	North Carolina	6	
46.6	Georgia	4	
46.1	Missouri	6	
45.7	Indiana	6	
45.6	Mississippi	6	6
45.1	South Carolina	4	
45	Montana	6	6
45	Arizona	6	6
45	Alaska	6	6
42.8	Texas	6	
42.1	South Dakota	6	
41.5	Louisiana	6	
41.3	North Dakota	6	
40.5	Tennessee	6	6
40.1	Kansas	6	
39.5	Kentucky	6	
39.5	Arkansas	6	
39.5	Nebraska	4	
39.3	Alabama	4	6
37.7	West Virginia	6	
35.4	Idaho	6	
33.2	Oklahoma	6	
30.7	Wyoming	6	
27.3	Utah	6	

Source: Law Center to prevent gun violence. <http://smartgunlaws.org/gun-law-statistics-and-research/>
 But column 1 figures from:
<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbmxb3Jkb25idXJ0bWF0aHNvY3NjaXxneDozNjA3YzAyMwVhOWMwYWE4>

Figure 1 States in the USA: % vote for Obama v. gun law laxity

gun laws: 1=strong; 6=weak



Sunday

‘The worst rampages’:

Norway 2011, Brazil 2011, Germany 2009, Virginia 2007, Finland 2007, Pennsylvania 2006, Germany 2002, Colorado 1999, Scotland 1996, Iowa 1991, California 1989, California 1976, Texas 1966. p. 4

Daniel Davies, a forensic psychologist ... social isolation and depression are two factors identified in the majority of spree killers over the past century ... many start at home. P. 4

‘Gun homicides (rate per 100,000 citizens)’

Columbia 28.1, Mexico 10.0, USA 2.98, Switzerland 0.52, Finland 0.41, Italy 0.41, Germany 0.20, Norway 0.19, Australia 0.10, UK 0.03

Source: GunPolicy.org p. 7

‘American fantasies that lead to massacre’

Paradox 1: Stranger violence occurs in all countries but only in the USA are dozens killed.

Paradox 2: Since 1990, crimes rates in USA have fallen but gun massacres seem to have increased.

Paradox 3: since the 1990s home gun ownership in USA has fallen from 50% to 33% - yet as gun ownership has declined opposition to gun control has strengthened.

In 1990-2005 there were 37 mass shootings; in 2005-2012 there were 25 mass shootings.

[2.3 per year v. 3.1 per year – the statistical significance of this needs to be checked]
[David Frum, is author of ‘Why Romney lost’.] p. 23

Monday

11% of Hispanics own guns; 27% of white Americans do. p.2

See Tables 1 and 2 above. p. 8

% favouring stricter laws overall on firearm sales fell from 78% in 1990 to 44% in 2010. p. 8

States with more immigrants have lower levels of gun-related deaths. The Atlantic 2011. p. 8.

Tuesday

US gun ownership: the facts

310m: the approximate number of firearms owned by civilians in the US

98.4: privately owned firearms per 100 people in the US, the most in the world. There are 6.2 in England and Wales.

Up to 40%: gun sales in US made without a background check - as they are deemed ‘private sales’ at gun shows and protected by a legal loophole.

For the first time since 2007, significantly more people said they strongly favoured than strongly opposed stricter laws (44 to 32 per cent). Washington Post ABC News poll. p. 10.

Shares in the gunmaker Smith & Wesson slumped.

Christopher H. Schroeder, Professor of Law and Public Policy, Duke, detects change in national mood. <http://law.duke.edu/fac/schroeder/>

David Hemenway, a public health specialist at Harvard: children aged 5 to 14 in America are 13 times as likely to be murdered with guns as children in other industrialised countries. Author of ‘Private guns; public health’.

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/faculty/david-hemenway/>

<http://www.press.umich.edu/script/press/17530>

Every 15 or 20 seconds a deep thud from the gun range reminded shoppers of the power that would be generated by the merchandise they were browsing. The queue was seven deep. ‘Jesus, Mary and Joseph,’ said Deborah Curtis, a middle-aged gun store owner with dyed red hair. ‘We need to get more staff out here.’

National Rifle Association: ‘the longest-standing civil rights organisation in the United States ... proud defenders of history’s patriots.’ p. 10

Wednesday

Quentin Tarantino:

‘There’s violence in the world. Tragedies happen ... It’s a western. Give me a break.’

Joe Scarborough, a former pro-gun Republican announced he supports stricter firearms controls, adding that Hollywood should also bear responsibility for fuelling a ‘violent popular culture ... I say good luck to the gun lobbyist, good luck to the Hollywood lawyer who tries to blunt the righteous anger of millions of parents by hiding behind twisted readings of our Bill of Rights’. p. 11

Some useful links

Institute for Economics & Peace

<http://economicsandpeace.org/>

Violence containment spending in the United States.

<http://inec.usip.org/resource/violence-containment-spending-united-states-new-methodology-categorize-and-account-economic>

The US Peace Index 2012

<http://www.visionofhumanity.org/uspeaceindex/>

GunPolicy.org

<http://www.gunpolicy.org/>

Law Center to prevent gun violence

<http://smartgunlaws.org/>

Private Guns; Public Health:

<http://www.press.umich.edu/script/press/17530>

CRS conference in Birmingham, September 17-18, 2018

CALL FOR PAPERS

CRS Annual Conference, 2018.

RETHINKING THE TRANSITION FROM VIOLENCE TO PEACE IN
UNCERTAIN TIMES

School of Government and Society

University of Birmingham

September 17-18, 2018

The annual conference of the Conflict Research Society (CRS) will be hosted by the University of Birmingham’s School of Government and Society, on 17-18 September 2018. We invite you to submit panel and individual paper proposals that bridge theory, empirics and practice in peace and conflict research.

The conference theme is *Rethinking the transition from violence to peace in uncertain times*. We are, therefore, particularly keen to invite submissions that discuss the processes, drivers and actors involved in peaceful transitions. In recent years, the Arab Spring and increasing instability in Central and Eastern Europe have led to a range of protracted transitions which have been characterised by conflict between distinct ethnic, religious or regional identity groups, and have seen significant international involvement in response to this violence – or the potential for it to erupt. These developments not only invite comparison with previous transition waves in Latin America, the post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe and Africa but prompt us to question what exactly ‘post-conflict’ means, in theory and in practice.

The conference seeks to generate debate and relationship-building between scholars and practitioners interested in key issues surrounding these issues, and the wider dynamics of political conflict, dialogue, diplomacy and peacebuilding. Contributions from practitioners working to forge peaceful transitions are especially welcome. As always, the CRS conference will offer a range of participants, papers and invited keynote speakers from both practitioners and academics. The conference will continue its tradition of multi-disciplinary focus and is open to the full range of quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches to the subject. The conference is being held in association with the journals *Civil Wars*, *Ethnopolitics* and *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* and the journal editors particularly welcome panel and paper proposals aimed at these journals.

The conference will feature two keynote speeches (to be announced shortly), and the winner of the Conflict Research Society book prize. In recent years the book prize winners have included Steven Pinker for *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, Kathleen Cunningham for *Inside the Politics of Self-Determination*, Joshua Goldstein for *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide*, Kevin Avruch for *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution*; Kristin M. Bakke for *Decentralisation and Intrastate Struggles: Chechnya, Punjab, and Québec*; and Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley for *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping*.

We will be emailing you more details on the keynote events shortly, but for now we would like you to make a note of the date in your diaries and submit your proposals. Individual and panel proposals should be submitted online by March 16, 2018. Panel Proposals should include a title, abstract (less than 200 words) and a list of four papers. Individual paper proposals should likewise include a title and abstract. Looking forward to seeing you on 17-18 September, 2018 for another great conference!

Best regards
Programme Chairs 2018