



Mohamed Khider University of Biskra  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of Foreign Languages

# MASTER THESIS

## Dissertation

Literature and Civilization

---

Submitted and Defended by:  
**Yaiche Temam Amina**

**Investigating the phenomenon of mass shooting: Gun Policy  
and National Rifle Association (2009\_2017)**

---

### Board of Examiners:

Mrs. AMRI CHENINI Boutheina	MAB	University of Biskra	Supervisor
Mrs. ZERIGUI Naima	MAB	University of Biskra	Examiner
Mr. SMATI Said	MAB	University of Biskra	Chairperson

Academic Year: 2019-2020

## **Dedication**

*I humbly dedicate this work to the candle of my Life my mother and to my  
grandmother may her soul rest in peace*

*Without their support and prayers, I would not be able to conduct this research  
I dedicate this work and give my special thanks, to my gang and my rock my best  
friends.*

## **Acknowledgments**

All praise and glory to Allah the Most Gracious the Most Merciful and The Most compassionate, for giving me strength and resolve to do this research. I would like to express my sincere Gratitude to my supervisor for her guidance, support and patience. My deepest appreciation to my teacher **Dr. Karboua Salim**, for his insightful instruction and advices.

My sincere gratitude to **Mr. Chenini** for the help he provided when I most needed it.

Special thanks to my mother and my older brother for their love and prayers. My heartfelt thanks and appreciation to my friends Touha, Hadjer, Jiwoon, Latifa, Kami, Safa for their constant encouragement and support. I would like to thank the board of examiners not only for accepting to examine and read my work, but also for their valuable instructions and advices.

## **Abstract**

The present work explores the phenomenon of mass shooting in the United States of America with the gun policy and the national Rifle association. Mass shootings have been on the rise for the last decades, since that Political makers and gun advocates expressed concerns about their frequency. This research examines the role of the gun lobby relationship with Obama on the gun discussions and its impact on the increase of Mass killings in USA. The study investigates the development of mass shootings throughout history. Along with its prevalence, discovering the contributing parts in that rise during Barack Obama's administration, to prevail prejudices held by pro-gun right advocates. And the role of Obama administration in mass shootings increases. The study aims to discover the reasons behind the complexity of Mass shootings. Findings of the research illustrate that the issue of mass shootings and gun violence is a continuous controversy with no chance for consensus. Agreement over the problem of gun violence remains as long as the parts involved have unwavering resolves about their perceptive.

**Keywords: Gun Policy, Guns, Mass Shootings, National Rifle Association, Obama.**

## ملخص

تدرس هذه الأطروحة ظاهرة إطلاق النار الجماعي في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية من خلال سياسة التسليح والمنظومة الوطنية للبنادق. تصاعدت عمليات إطلاق النار الجماعية على مدار العقود الماضية، حيث أعرب صناع السياسة والمدافعون عن السلاح عن مخاوفهم بشأن تواترها، ويهدف هذا البحث في دور مجموعة تأثير على البرلمان. بالإضافة الي. موضوع إطلاق النار العشوائي الذي أثاره أوباما في المناقشات المتعلقة بالأسلحة النارية وأثرها على زيادة عمليات القتل الجماعي. في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. هذا البحث يهتم بدراسة تطور عمليات إطلاق النار الجماعية عبر التاريخ. مع انتشاره، الاكتشاف. الأجزاء المساهمة في النقاش حول السلاح. وزيادة دور إدارة أوباما في عمليات إطلاق النار الجماعية. تهدف الدراسة إلى اكتشاف سبب تعقيد عمليات إطلاق النار الجماعية. توضح النتائج أن قضية إطلاق النار الجماعي والعنف باستخدام الأسلحة النارية هي قضية جدل مستمر دون أي فرصة لتوافق الآراء. يظل الاتفاق على مشكلة عنف السلاح قائماً ما دامت الأجزاء المعنية لديها قرارات ثابتة بشأن إدراكها.

## **List of Acronyms**

**USA:** United States of America

**NRA:** National Rifle Association

**ILA:** Institute of Legislative Actions

**CDC:** Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

**ATF:** Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

**FBI:** Federal Bureau of Investigation

**KKK:** Ku Klux Klan

## **Glossary of Concepts**

**The Second Amendment:** One of the ten amendments that form the Bill of Rights, the amendment establishes the right to bear arms. The Amendment reads: “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed” (qtd. in History).

**Spree Shootings:** The act of killing people in more than one location without a cooling off period.

**Sunset Provision:** A sunset provision is a clause in a statute that states the expiration of section or the whole law in certain date. The piece of regulation expires automatically, which means the law is not permanent.

**Gun Shine State:** Term used to refer to Florida because it is shaped similar to a gun. Another reason is the existence of several legislation that gives permission carry concealed weapons more than any other state.

**Institute for Legislative Actions (ILA):** A lobbying organization that is established by the NRA in 1975. The institute is committed to protect the right of lawful citizens to purchase, possess, or use firearms legally.

**The Dicky Amendment:** It is a provision that deterred federal funding for gun violence research. The amendment effectively prohibited the CDC’s gun violence research.

## Table of Contents

Dedication .....	i
Acknowledgment .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
ملخص.....	iv
List of Acronyms.....	v
Glossary of Concepts .....	vi
Table of Contents .....	vii
General Introductions.....	1
Chapter One: An Overview on Mass Shootings in the USA and Globally	
1.1. Introduction .....	6
1.2. Defining Mass Shootings .....	6
1.3. Difference between Mass Murders, Mass Shootings, School Shootings, and Mass Killings.....	11
1.4. History of Mass Shootings in the World .....	12
1.5. Notable Mass Shootings in World History.....	13
1.6. Mass Shootings in the United States .....	14
1.7. Trends and Waves of Mass Shootings in America.....	15
1.7.1. Trends of Mass Shootings.....	15
1.7.1.1. Familicides.....	15
1.7.1.2. Mass Public Shootings.....	15



1.7.1.3.	Other Felony Mass Shootings.....	16
1.7.2.	Waves of Mass Shootings .....	16
1.7.2.1.	The First Wave of Mass Shootings (1900-1960's).....	16
1.7.2.2.	The Second Wave of Mass Shootings (1960s-1999).....	18
1.7.2.3.	The Third Wave of Mass Shootings (2000-2016) .....	20
1.8.	Barack Obama (2009-2017) .....	21
1.9.	Conclusion.....	23

## Chapter Two: The Debate over Gun Policy and Mass Shootings

2.1.	Introduction .....	25
2.2.	Gun Policy in America.....	25
2.3.	The Gun Debate in America.....	28
2.4.	The Impact of Mass Shootings on Gun Politics.....	31
2.5.	Causes of Mass Shootings.....	32
2.5.1.	Mental Illness .....	32
2.5.2.	Violent Video Games .....	35
2.5.3.	Other Causes for Mass Shootings .....	37
2.6.	Conclusion.....	39

## Chapter three: the National Rifle Association's Impact on Mass Shootings and the Dispute with Obama Administration

3.1.	Introduction .....	41
3.2.	Introducing the National Rifle Association.....	42
3.3.	National Rifle Association Influence on Gun Policy .....	44

3.4. Barack Obama and the National Rifle Association.....	47
3.5. The Impact of Gun Debate on Mass Shootings .....	51
3.6. Conclusion.....	54
General Conclusion.....	55
Work Cited .....	57

## **General Introductions**

The United States Constitution embodies the Second Amendment that grants individual freedom of bearing firearms. The ratification of the amendment as part of the Bill of Rights was on December 15, 1791. Interpretations of the Second Amendment took place when gun crimes rose. One of the forms of gun violence that had a noticeable increase in recent years is the phenomenon of Mass Shootings. It fueled the disagreement over whether the right to possess guns was intended for militia or the ordinary individuals as well. Gun legislation debate about the right to bear guns had been going for a long time. However, due to the changes in the political climate, discussions over gun control legislation became more intense.

Mass shootings are incidents that usually occur in public settings. They result in the death of two or more people. Scientists still have not found common ground to define and identify what constructs mass shootings. Mass shootings existed in the Nineteenth Century, but their frequency was smaller compared to recent decades. Grant Duwe, in his research *Mass Murder in America*, revealed a pattern and trends of mass shootings throughout history. His studies were a valuable source to uncover social, political, and historical factors involved in these events. The gun policy debate surfaced with the occurrence of mass shootings of high profile that takes the attention of the public opinion. During the two terms of Barack Obama, shootings increased to triple compared to other presidencies. Gun debate took another turn when Obama announced his plans for restrictions as a measure to reduce gun violence. The National Rifle Association 'NRA' that defied his plans and promised to preserve the right to bear arms. The spokesmen of the organization saw that Obama is planning to grab people's guns.

Obama and NRA stirred political opinions with their conflict, with each part attached to his preconceived perspectives. The NRA claimed that guns do not kill people; it is people who kill people. Obama blamed the association for being rigid to the gun control subject. These conflicting views on this matter include several reasons. It involves significant factors embedded, such as gun ownership. Furthermore, it exists a relationship between gun policy and the increase of violence in American society. This issue created a significant problem that continues to shake the common ground of the American nation.

The proposed research investigates mass shootings in American society by exploring the aspects of gun policy debate during the presidency of Barack Obama. It analyses the growth of mass shootings, concerning gun policy discussions and the failure to apply strict gun control laws. Framing gun restriction laws as invalid solutions and inconsistent with the Second Amendment. This proposed research aims to answer questions related to the main issue.

- How have mass shootings evolved throughout history?
- How have gun policy affected in the increase shootings?
- How does the relationship between gun opponents and proponents affect mass shootings?

This proposed research aims to trace back the elements that helped the speeding development of mass shootings in America in 2009. Therefore, to identify how the arm associations are reacting against any attempt to gun control legislation, emphasizing on its impacts on gun policy. Also, this study aids in providing a new perspective on US mass shootings. Rather than the usual angle in which the focus is on the shooters and their psychological state.

## **Research Aims and Objectives**

This study, therefore, aims at investigating the recently evolving phenomenon of mass shootings to the gun legislation dilemma. Obama's administration brought with political changes like the gun policy agenda. This research intends to explore the correlation ship between the National Rifle Association and the gun policy-making process. It contributes to discovering the impact of that relationship on mass shootings. In other words, the study offers to those interested in that form gun violence in the United States of America, a general review and analysis of factors and elements involved in the rise of shooting during Obama's two terms in office.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The significant hindrance while inspecting mass shootings or exploring the correlation between gun debate and mass shootings increase is the lack of sources since the topic is relatively recent and new. Also, the investigation of mass shootings and gun discussions to realize this study is a challenge per se because the available data do not offer conclusive answers for the problem. Another difficulty was identifying mass shootings since scientists and researchers in the field have not agreed on one constructed definition of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the lack of fundamental agreement about the politics of firearms and mass shootings played a significant role in pushing us to search and provide some of its features. It is an attempt to shed light on reasons behind the complexity of shootings and gun ownership proponents.

## **Methodology**

The research is based on the eclectic approach in the sense that a number of approaches are adopted in which the historical approach will be used to trace back the historical framework of mass shootings with the constructivist approach and the quantitative approach. It relies on critical analysis of primary sources. Thus, what has been said or done before is analyzed in depth to deduce new ideas and perspectives. It also investigates relevant books, papers and articles relevant to the research proposed. The study is based on looking for the available studies made by historians and scholars on this subject relating to this phenomenon, gun violence and its interrelation with mass shootings.

## **Chapter One: An Overview on Mass Shootings in the USA and Globally**

- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2. Defining Mass Shootings
- 1.3. Difference between Mass Murders, Mass Shootings, School Shootings, and Mass Killings..
- 1.4. History of Mass Shootings in the World
- 1.5. Notable Mass Shootings in World History
- 1.6. Mass Shootings in the United States
- 1.7. Trends and Waves of Mass Shootings in America
  - 1.7.1. Trends of Mass Shootings
    - 1.7.1.1. Familicides
    - 1.7.1.2. Mass Public Shootings
    - 1.7.1.3. Other Felony Mass Shootings
  - 1.7.2. Waves of Mass Shootings
    - 1.7.2.1. The First Wave of Mass Shootings (1900-1960's)
    - 1.7.2.2. The Second Wave of Mass Shootings (1960s-1999)
    - 1.7.2.3. The Third Wave of Mass Shootings (2000-2016)
- 1.8. Barack Obama (2009-2017)
- 1.9. Conclusion

## **1.1. Introduction**

Recently, the news of mass shootings was the only intensifying title on media reports. People started to wonder about the reasons behind its growth and how it touched the American society. This caught the media's attention with conflicting outlooks. Therefore, this chapter analyzes the ambiguity and the definitional issues of mass shootings. It also explores the different categories of mass killings and on which basis they differ from each other. Additionally, this chapter focuses on tracing back mass shooting in the world and American history. The Gun Archive and Mother Jones in addition to other sources data are used as elements to compare and identify the parameters each institution uses to examine shootings in America. Grant Duwe 's interpretations about this firearm violence phenomenon is crucial. Establishing a historical examination on mass shootings aids us to figure out the social, cultural, historical, and political factors that might played a role in the increase of violence in United States. Finally, this chapter aims at setting the fundamental ideas about mass shootings and correlating with the findings with the gun debates later on.

## **1.2. Defining Mass Shootings**

The term Gun violence describes the results of the use of fire arms to inflict or to cause harm on individuals without consideration for the intents or consequences. It encompasses the use of weapons for different objectives; some people use guns to defend themselves and their families in cases of danger. In contrast, others use guns to hunt animals. The police force, on the other hand, uses weapons to catch criminals, whereas another category of people uses arms to take their own lives ("General").

Mass shootings are a type of gun violence that characterizes the American nation. On a universal level, there is no conventional definition for mass shootings due to the circumstances and motives involved in these incidents, along with difficulty in covering them since their occurrence is unpredictable. Mass killings are incidents in which an active shooter



or shooters kill or injure more than two people in public places. Grant Duwe defines mass public shootings as a kind of firearm violence in which four or more victims die or get an injury in twenty-four hours period at an open location. Without the presence of any other criminal activity such as robbery, drug deals, gang, or any military conflict (Duwe). The Congressional Research Service considers a mass shooting as an attack that result in the death of four or more people with a firearm the statements in green seem contradictory. At the same time, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) regards mass killings (under which mass shootings fall into) as the rampage of the perpetrator that leads to the murder of three or more people.

A mass murderer is an individual who kills more than four people in a single incident. Federal statutes defined mass murderers during the 1980s, contemporary with their frequent occurrence in America. The latter classification aimed to clarify procedures when profiling criminals not to have valuable data or statistics. The FBI recognized mass shootings in 2008 as acts of violence where one individual or rarely individuals kill more than four people. Excluding the shooter in a single incident, and it usually happens in one location. Nevertheless, in 2013 the FBI shifted its focus to identify "An Active Shooter" to being an individual who actively engages in an attempt to kill or killing people in a populated area. Law enforcement agencies widely accept the given definition of mass shootings (Lemieux). However, to settle on one explanation to this type of gun violence for the Federal Bureau of Investigation was problematic to define mass shootings. Due to the parameters used to identify mass shootings from other kinds of homicides. It affects the accuracy of the number of cases that includes mass shootings because the data excludes the people with injuries along with one or two deaths in specific incidents, i.e., the FBI considers mass shootings if it involves three or more deaths (Lord). An example of such inconsistency is a shooting at a theatre in Lafayette, Louisiana, in 2015 that resulted in the death of two people and the injury

of nine others. Although the latter received a full spread media attention; however, it was not considered as a mass shooting since it did not meet the requirements set by the federal definition.

The labeling of mass shootings as a type of mass killings was after the congressional act of 2013, which defines mass killings as three or more killings in a single incident. Thus, FBI does not explain mass shootings but mass killings, which include all types of arms, not just guns. Gun violence Archive as an independent resource of data provided its definition to mass shootings as "four or more shot or killed in a single event at the same general time and location not including the shooter" (Willingham).

The mass shootings tracker uses somehow the explanation used by the Gun Violence Archive with the difference of exclusion and inclusion of the shooters, while Mother Jones Magazine stresses on public locations and indiscriminate stance on the shooter's motivation. It is an incident in which the shooting of four people or more takes place, leading to injuries or deaths. Mass shootings can be carried out by one individual or group of people. The problem of defining mass shootings and not reaching a general consensus about it, results in misinterpretations of reported evidence. And that can be seen in the data analysis confusion between the media along with the other data collection resources specialized in tracking violence forms and types ("Mass ").

The complication to identify the parameters that determine the description of mass shooting presents the main issue for its coverage. The Rand Organization study on Gun Policy in America observes the variety of explanations to mass shootings from several sources and institutions, for instance, FBI, Mothers Jones, Mass Shooting Tracker, and Gun Archive. Based on research in 2015, a description of the difference in the data collected taking the basics of the definitions given from each source. According to Mother Jones, the number of

U.S mass shootings in 2015 is seven. Gun violence archive estimated mass shootings to be three hundred thirty-two (Smart).

While the mass shooting tracker found three hundred seventy-one, the Mass Shootings in America database counted sixty-five incidents. The table below shows a variation in mass shootings and the numbers counted. The diversity to point out what identifies mass shootings creates the conflicting data represented in the table below. In which it goes from a limited identification to a broader one. For example, Mother Jones provides a restrictive definition that stresses the prevalence of high-profile events that usually a mass murder perpetrates them. However, they ignore incidents related to domestic violence or criminal activity.

Furthermore, the data collected by the latter rely on media reports and newspapers and does not consider data within the Supplemental Homicide Reports. At the same time, it can question the accuracy of its results and findings, but the magazine presents a different approach and perspective to mass shootings. Both of the Gun Violence Archive and the Mass Shootings Tracker use definition broader in scope. While they still have an ambiguous stance on the variety of the circumstance involved, with implicated policy used. However, they provide a more comprehensive depiction of the epidemic of gun violence and the effects of firearms policies in hand.

### Variation in How Mass Shootings Are Defined and Counted

Source	Casualty Threshold (for injuries or deaths by firearm)	Location of Incident	Motivation of Shooter	Number of U.S. Mass Shootings in 2015
<i>Mother Jones</i> (see Follman, Aronsen, and Pan, 2017)	Three fatal injuries (excluding shooter) *	Public	Indiscriminate (excludes crimes of armed robbery, gang violence, or domestic violence)	7
<b>Gun Violence Archive</b> (undated-a)	Four fatal or nonfatal injuries (excluding shooter)	Any	Any	332
<b>Mass Shooting Tracker</b> (undated)	Four fatal or nonfatal injuries (including shooter)	Any	Any	371
<b>Mass Shootings in America database</b> (Stanford Geospatial Center, undated)	Three fatal or nonfatal injuries (excluding shooter)	Any	Not identifiably related to gangs, drugs, or organized crime	65
<b>Supplementary Homicide Reports (FBI)</b> (see Puzzanchera, Chamberlin, and Kang, 2017)	The FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports do not define <i>mass shooting</i> but do provide information on the number of victims, and the reports have been used by researchers in conjunction with news reports or other data sources.			

(“Rand”) <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/mass-shootings.html>

Homicide reports and other violence trackers provide information on the number of victims. Researchers and institutions used these data in an attempt to identify mass shootings. Researchers such as Follman, Duwe, and Fox are still unable to give a universally agreed definition of mass shootings. There exist multiple measurements of mass shootings as a reason. To have a clear explanation for this type of violence, can enhance the analysis of these incidents and their relation with gun policy ("Mass"). The constant reading about mass shootings implies that they are any violent activity that results in the death or injuries of

people, regardless of their number in an open location and in the time frame of twenty-four-hour.

### **1.3. Difference between Mass Murders, Mass Shootings, School Shootings, and Mass Killings**

According to the Gun Violence Archive, mass murder is an incident that involves the death of four or more people in a singular event. That occurs at the same time and setting, not including the shooter. Mass shootings count the high-profile shooting of four or more people, whether killed or injured in a populated area or open location. School shootings represent death or injury of students or teachers on educational institutions' premises like academies, colleges, universities. ("General").

Since the absence of scholarly consensus on a standard definition of mass shootings, it has been a fundamental problem to define school shootings as well. Even the shootings that occur in a near place to schools, is considered by some a school shooting. The general difference between these various forms of rampage is the focus on fatalities rather than non-fatalities. Although there is confusion to detect a clear difference between mass murders and mass shootings. Still there is some consensus that the element of time with several attacks taking place in immediate succession to one another, in addition to the total number of victims killed. Those elements are the necessary parameters from which media and other sources can identify assault incidents. Moreover, the existence of such difference aids in a way at tracking diverse types of firearm assault and to tackle in depth the issue of gun policy legislations in America. It is suggested that all these types of violence are under the umbrella term “Mass Killings”; which describes the death of numerous people in a particular incident. Criminologists such as Grant Duwe use the terms of Mass Killings, Mass Murders, and Mass Shootings interchangeably. There is a thin line that distinguishes between such phenomena. It

is attributed to the inability of criminologists and scholars to reach a general definition, which covers the circumstance and situations involved in the shootings.

#### **1.4. History of Mass Shootings in the World**

The phenomenon of mass shootings existed throughout history since the creation of weapons and their development. Around the world, countries witnessed atrocities and deaths that portrayed different forms of violence, whether wars, gang conflicts, massacres, or the shooting of random people to spread chaos and terror. Countries across the globe lived such catastrophes in Asia, Africa, Europe, and other parts of the world. One of the prominent mass shootings that world history documented was the 1878 Hyderabad shooting in India that inflicted the death of six people and the injury of another four. Another incident is the 1983 the Temple shooting, where an Indian police officer Ramesh Sharma opens fire at Mandasaur India, killing fourteen people and injuring nine others ("Ramesh").

Japan is known for its low crime rates, because the Japanese government adopts a strict gun policy. However, historically speaking, there was a spree revenge killing of 1938. In which a mentally ill man who was insecure about his sickness. He developed certain hatred towards his neighbors that ended in the killing thirty people than shooting himself with a shotgun. Another shooting in Japan that happened in modern times is the shooting of 2010. The attack In the Ii-Chan bar located in Habikino, where spree shootings led to the death of three people. The 1948 Babrra massacre in Pakistan occurred in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan resulted in the death of 611 and the injury of 1200 others. In addition to the 1993 Chongqing shooting in China, where three people were killed. And the 1994 Tian Mingjian incident in China that had seven people died and seventy harmed (Jenne), as well as the 2001 Nepalese royal killing (Crossette). When it comes to the African continent, mass shootings are particularly rare, but documents showed some cases of such incidents; including the shot of 1927 in South Africa along with the 1994 Kampala Wedding

Massacre in Uganda ("AROUND THE WORLD; Massacre Is Reported at Wedding in Uganda"). Also, there was the Grand Bassam attack of 2016 in the Ivory Coast ("Mass Shooting").

Europe, On the other hand, has its share number of shootings, for example, the Hungerford massacre of England in 1987, The Puerto Hurraco massacre in Spain, and the Luxiol mass shooting in France 1989. In which an angered farmer named Christian Dornier went into a rampage. He killed fourteen people among them was his mother and sister (GOLDSMITH), the Zug incident in Switzerland in 2001. Fredrich Leibacher started shooting legislators in Zug Canton Parliament. He killed fourteen and injured eighteen people (Dan). The 2002 Erfurt at the Gutenberg high school in the eastern city of Erfurt In Germany, where an expelled student shot fourteen high school staff members dead and three others, then he ended up killing himself ( Kareem). In Finland, the Jokela school shooting of 2007. The 2010 Bratislava shooting that consequently led to the death of seven and injury of almost seventeen people in Slovakia. The 2011 Norway attacks as the deadliest mass shooting that led to the end of sixty-nine people, and the 2018 Macerata attack in Italy (Dillinger). The phenomenon of mass shootings existed in other parts of the world. But the American nation is famously recognized by shootings that confused and shocked people, since it is one of the powerful countries across the globe. President Barack Obama expressed sorrow in his speech after the 2015 church shooting in Charleston. He acknowledged the danger of such incidents on America.

### **1.5. Notable Mass Shootings in World History**

On the night of April 26, 1982, In South Korea, over sixty-five people died after a policeman named Woo bum-kon gone into a mass shooting, and he killed himself after reports showed that he had drinking problems. In Scotland, in 1996, the Dunblane elementary school witnessed a bloody bath when Thomas Watt Hamilton shot twenty-eight students dead and

three children during four minutes after he took his own life. Debates opened about guns, and consequently, two laws of restrictive private ownership of firearms were passed in the UK. James Huberty felt the need to have mental treatment when he did not get the help he needed; he went for hunting humans. On July 18, 1984, he went into McDonald's restaurant in San Diego, and he shot twenty people dead. In England, Michael Robert Ryan shot randomly at people and killed sixteen. The columbine high school incident of 1999 considered one of the prominent mass shootings when two students cooperated to bomb the school but ended up killing twelve students and one teacher. After the attack, the two perpetrators committed suicide. Another rampage that occurred in Sousse, in Tunisia was the Mass Shooting of 2015, when Seifeddine Rezgui Yacoubi, allegedly under the influence of drugs, opened fire at the tourists at Sousse Beach Resort leading to the death of over thirty-nine people (Rao).

### **1.6. Mass Shootings in the United States**

Wars and massacres are a common aspect of the country's history. The United States, as a nation in formation, had its share of violence and blood baths since the existence of the natives. One of the slaughters that took place in school was the 1764 Pennsylvania massacre. It marked the death of Enoch Brown and ten of his students (Strait). As mass shootings are acquainted with the use of guns to kill several people, the Jim Jumper massacre of 1889 that left six deaths is said to be one of the earliest firearm violence during that time. Followed by Howard Unruh's mass shooting of 1949 that is referred to as the walk of death (Knighton). Tracing back this phenomenon during history was characterized by trends that came as a result of the social, political environment of each pattern.



## **1.7. Trends and Waves of Mass Shootings in America**

Mass shootings are one of the phenomena related to gun violence. Shootings existed since the American nation fought its war of independence. The general development and change of mass shootings from familicides to mass public shootings represent the trends that characterize mass shootings. Waves of mass murders denote the frequency of high-profile mass shootings throughout history.

### **1.7.1. Trends of Mass Shootings**

There are several trends of mass shootings in the United States; however, three of them dominated through the American history and characterized each given period.

#### **1.7.1.1. Familicides**

In a study under the title Familicides: A Systematic Literature Review by Linda C Karlsson et al. The term Familicides refers to a kill or an attempt to kill a current or former wife / or an intimate partner and one or more biological children or stepchildren by an offender. Wilson, Daly, and Daniele (1995) defined Familicides as the killing of a spouse and one or more children. The definition of Familicides can differ from one study to another while the use of the term itself in other reviews is not clearly defined (C. Karlsson et al.). Thus, Familicides are defined by victim-offender relationships.

#### **1.7.1.2. Mass Public Shootings**

Identifying mass public shootings is still a debatable issue due to the factors involved in the occurrence of shootings and the number of casualties. What characterize mass public shootings is the media attention, and its public locations. They are defined through the setting. Grant Duwe defines mass public shootings as “incidents that occur in the absence of other criminal activity (e.g., robberies, drug deals, gang “turf wars”) in which a gun was used to kill four or more victims at a public location.” (Duwe)

### **1.7.1.3. Other Felony Mass Shootings**

It includes other types of homicides like robberies, drug-related killings, and gang conflicts. Among mass shooting trends, felony related killings take almost plenty number of deaths and represent the rise of crime rates in the United States of America. They are the second-largest category of mass murder. Felony mass shootings are characterized by the shooter's motives, whether to silence witnesses for drug deals or revenge shootings in gang fights (Fridel).

### **1.7.2. Waves of Mass Shootings**

Mass shootings emerged in form of waves, with which each wave had its significant factors and features. Mass shootings had internal and external aspects throughout history. shootings incidents changed and became deadlier each time. Many mass shootings were the result of social and political issues that each decade suffered from. Mass shootings are characterized by different patterns. One of the features of shootings is its unexpected occurrence, starting from the twentieth century until the beginning of the twenty-first century.

#### **1.7.2.1. -The First Wave of Mass Shootings (1900-1960's)**

The beginning of the progressive era marked the age of reforms and changes as the immigrations increased, and society started to form. At the peak of the industrial revolution, cities began to be urbanized, and the scientific and technological advancements came to surface. Labor laws, ban on the sale of alcohol, and woman's suffrage took place during the 1900s. Political leaders such as President Theodor Roosevelt sought to fight corruption and to limit monopolistic business practices (Portero). At the beginning of the twentieth century, mass shootings were relatively rare. In 1903 a war veteran named Gilbert Twigg, shot into a crowd of people intentionally in Winfield Kansas immediately killing nine and wounding twenty-five others. Thomas Jones a few years later also went on a murderous shooting spree on January 1913 in Houston, until the 1910s, the mass murder of African Americans in east

Texas that is called the Slocum massacres of 1910. The number of deaths is still ambiguous and these killings were considered as blemish in the American history. Followed with 1915 shooting in Brunswick, Georgia in which a businessman used a shotgun left six people dead and thirty-two injured. As reaction after he lost considerable amount of money in a real estate transaction. A Mass shooting took place in 1918 and another two during the late of 1920s. In the 1930s, there were two more mass shootings, which followed a psychotic farmer's 1927 attack on a Bath, Mich., schoolhouse. Andrew Kehoe used a rifle and explosive and killed forty-four people, thirty-eight of them were students. Thus, he wiped out most of the children in an entire town and exacted a death toll greater than Columbine High School and Sandy Hook Elementary combined. His wife, who had been a teacher at the school, had filed for divorce the week before. February 15, 1933, in Downey, California, Dr. Vernon Blythe shot his wife Eleanor and his eight-year-old son dead and fired three more shots to his other son venom before killing himself. From the 1920s to the 1930s, this period was characterized by Familicides and felony related killings as the earliest part of the twentieth century comprised of racism, bombings, Familicides related to divorce and poverty, labor union strikes, and felony robberies (Duwe).

During the 1930s a wave of labor strikes emerged as a result of Demobilization, yet the strikes were not matching with the nature of their core demands. And while employers decided to bring back unions and claim the control prerogatives of management, employees stood against it, and attempted to expand their war time gains. Due to the fear of revolutions outside and inside the country; the Justice Department started deporting immigrants, under the accusation of being radical and unfaithful, without a trial. A burst of race violence appeared, in which white people started attacking African Americans in their neighborhoods and houses, in more than twenty cities. To loom up not only blacks but also Catholics, immigrants, and radicals, a new Ku Klux Klan (KKK) emerged in the North and the South (Hammack).

In 1940, principal of junior high school killed six adults, including the school's district business manager. From 1940 to the 1960s, the era was characterized by relatively low crime rates. For instance, in 1948, Melvin Collins started shooting people walking outside while hiding inside the boarding house he was resident in. He killed eight people and injured countless more. Similarly, an ex-military man, Howard Unruh, shot thirteen people and wounded at least five others in Camden, New Jersey, in September 1949 as social issues such as unemployment decreased. Grant Duwe suggests that the low rates in mass public shootings can be due to the improvement in the American society when it comes to employment and prosperity, educational opportunities, and a rise in conformity. Duwe also notes the increased prosperity and attainability of the “American Dream” at that time may be related to a lower incidence of mass killing. The first wave of mass shootings was characterized by low periods of incidents. The rise of shootings reached its peak from 1910s to 1930s. As a result, with the social and political issues the country witnessed. The USA witnessed technological advancements, along with scientific developments when it comes to weaponry.

#### **1.7.2.2. The Second Wave of Mass Shootings (1960s-1999)**

The 1960s was memorable decade for the United States, from the space race with the Soviet Union to the cold war and the Cuban crisis of 1962. A time when prejudices and marginalized people came to the surface after race crimes accelerated. With civil rights movements leaded by DR. Martin Luther king Jr as the father figure for desegregation movements and call for equality of rights between whites and blacks. His stance paved the way for the desegregation process of schools and other institutions. Other movements appeared such as feminist waves. Post Second World War resulted in a baby boom in America which represented the birth of youth generation with different mindset that questioned traditions and welcomed nonwestern thoughts i.e. liberal values replaced traditional habit of thought (Vulcan).

The University of Texas clock tower shooting of 1966 also referred to as the Texas Tower shooting. That resulted in the death of fourteen people and the wounding of thirty-one. A twenty-five-year-old student named Charles Whitman, who served in the marine, previously murdered his mother and his wife; before climbing. He began firing at pedestrians below. On the same year in Mesa, Arizona Bob Smith, from what was reported he had an admiration for both Richard speck and Charles Whitman. Consequently, he took seven people hostages at Rose-Mar College of Beauty, a school for training beauticians. Smith asked the hostages to lie down. He then proceeded to shoot them in the head with a 22-caliber pistol. Four women and a three-year-old girl died, one woman and a baby were injured but survived. Starting from the 1970s school shootings rose considerably, for example the two most notable U.S. school shootings in the early 1970s were the Jackson State killings, where police opened fire on the campus of Jackson State University and the Kent State shootings. Also, in May 1970 where the National Guard opened fire on a crowd gathered to protest the Vietnam War in the campus of Kent State University, four died and nine were wounded. During the 1980s and 1990s a considerable growth of mass shootings can be noted. Additionally, the 1982 Welding shop shooting, a Junior high school teacher Carl Robert Brown opened fire inside the shop. He killed eight people and was later shot dead by a witness as he fled the scene. The 1984 San Ysidro McDonald's massacre James Oliver Huberty, 41, opened fire in a McDonald's restaurant he killed twenty-two people before he was shot dead by a police officer. 1990 GMAC Massacre James Edward Pough opened fire at a General Motors Acceptance Corporation office before committing suicide. The day prior he shot a pimp and prostitute it led to the death of ten people. 1999 the Columbine high school in Littleton, Colorado two perpetrators Eric Harris, and Dylan Klebold, went on shooting fire throughout Columbine High School before committing suicide. They left what is estimated to thirteen deaths and twenty people with injuries (Henriques).

Duwe suggested that this rise might be attributed to significant social and cultural developments. During this period there was a declining marriage rate, an increasing divorce rate, and a rise in the number of illegitimate children alongside with single-parent households. And an increasing amount of social isolation experienced by the adult population. Moreover, the change of the U.S demographics, due to the immigration waves of the 70s and 80s, can be seen as another factor that changed the social construction of the American society. It fueled the hatred and racist thoughts towards African Americans evident to this the formation of the white supremacist groups such as the KKK (Peralta).

### **1.7.2.3. The Third Wave of Mass Shootings (2000-2016)**

The epidemic of mass shootings is still on the rise. Based on study conducted by The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Active Shooting database recorded 220 active shooter incidents between 2000 and 2016. Although mass shootings are rare incidents comparing to other mass murders, but that does not deny the fact they are on the rise based on data collected by the FBI. The more frequent they become the deadlier they shake the American nation. The era from 2000 to 2016 was mainly dominated by mass public shootings and school shootings, in addition to an important increase in workplace shootings. For example, the Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, in 2007 when an English major from Centreville named Seung-Hui Cho entered the campus of Virginia Tech and opened fire. Thirty-two people were killed, and seventeen others were injured. Cho also killed himself. Another deadliest shooting was the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, 2012 Adam Lanza went into Sandy Hook Elementary and killed twenty-six people mostly children before killing himself. He also killed his mother, Nancy Lanza. Another incident was the shooting at The Pulse Orlando nightclub in 2016. Based on the claim of the police a 29-year-old Omar Mateen opened fire at the club that calls itself the city's hottest gay bar. He took hostages, and after a three-hour standoff, police moved in. The gunman was killed, but not before perpetrating the deadliest mass

shooting in recent United States history. At least forty-nine people were killed, and more than fifty were wounded and taken to area hospitals. Mateen was killed during a firefight with police (Peralta).

### **1.8. Barack Obama (2009-2017)**

Barack Hussein Obama II is the 44th president of the United States of America and the first African American commander in chief. He was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, 1961. His father is from Kenya, and his mother is from Kansas. Obama was born and grew up in Hawaii. He is a graduate of Columbia University and head of the Harvard Law School review. Obama was Illinois' representing senator after serving on the Illinois State Senate in 2004. He and wife Michelle Obama have two daughters, Malia and Sasha. Obama made headlines when he announced his candidacy for the 2008 democratic presidential elections in February 2007. He won in the primaries against the former first lady and then-U.S. senator from New York Hillary Rodham Clinton, Obama became the Democratic Party's presumptive nominee. Clinton delivered her full support to Obama for the duration of his campaign. Obama defeated Republican presidential nominee John McCain, 52.9 percent to 45.7 percent, to win election as the 44th president of the United States and the first African American to hold this office. Barack Obama served two terms as America's president 2008 and 2012 ("Barack Obama Biography").

Barack Obama's presidency was characterized as being ambitious since his agenda brought a distinctive policy approach. He faced the challenge of the 2008 financial crisis. He initiated the Affordable Care Act and ended the 2008 recession. Obama bailed out the U.S. auto industry in 2009, which helped the modernization of the auto industry. In addition to winning the noble peace prize 2009, legalizing same-sex marriage, allowing gay people to join the military, and tax cuts of 2010. Obama administration witnessed challenges and problems, among them the issue of gun policy. Earlier at the beginning of his term in office,

Obama expressed his respect for the second amendment. "If you've got a rifle, you've got a shotgun, you've got a gun in your house, I'm not taking it away. Alright?" (Barack Obama). During Obama's administration, Crime rates witnessed a shocking increase, among them mass shootings. Based on the Washington post definition of mass shootings: as four or more people killed. The number of mass shootings reached forty-one during the eight years of Barack Obama's presidency. Even though Obama stated that he does not have any intention to infringe or harm the right for people to bear arms, but he noted that gun state laws are welcomed as long as they come consistent with the second amendment of the American constitution. The spread of mass shootings during this administration created a debate between gun proponents and opponents. With the backlash of the National Rifle Association accusing Obama of harming their freedom of possessing firearms after the Sandy Hook elementary school shootings.



## **1.9. Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to present a sort of background about the phenomenon of mass shootings. The chapter starts with presenting the inability of scholars and criminologists of reaching general consensus on the definition of mass shootings. In addition, we tried to identify the various types of mass killings and their differences. The historical overview on these incidents made a clear idea that mass shootings existed for long time but their frequency surfaced when their occurrence rose considerably. We used Grant Duwe's book *Mass Murder: A History*. Duwe is a university scholar, criminologist and research director at the Minnesota Department of Corrections. In which his study was based on mass murder in America, we compared the data he collected as well as the other chapter that he studied thoroughly mass public shootings in the United States. To establish the given chapter that presents an examination on the different trends of mass shootings, that characterized the patterns of shootings since the beginning of the twentieth century. Another element the chapter discussed is introducing the president Barack Obama and his political strategy as the first African American president. In order to facilitate the understanding of the policies he followed during his administration.

## **Chapter Two: The Debate over Gun Policy and Mass Shootings**

2.1. Introduction

2.2. Gun Policy in America

2.3. The Gun Debate in America

2.4. The Impact of Mass Shootings on Gun Politics

2.5. Causes of Mass Shootings

2.5.1. Mental Illness

2.5.2. Violent Video Games

2.5.3. Other Causes for Mass Shootings

2.6. Conclusion

## **2.1. Introduction**

The accessibility to guns in America is easier than other parts of the world due to the gun policy followed by the nation, and the existence of the second amendment that protects the right to bear arms. In the wake of several public tragedies and gun violence, mass shootings become a part of the public's consciousness than ever before; however, the debate over strict gun policy heated up when these incidents became more frequent and deadlier. On the other hand, the NRA perceives that any attempt for gun restriction law is a call for disarmament and breaking the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the American constitution.

Over the course of his presidency, Barack Obama was haggard by eight years that witnessed mass shootings of shocking proportions at Orlando, Florida, Newton, Connecticut, San Bernardino, California, and others. Due to the countless human loss caused by mass killers, opinions over gun policy varied according to people's political affiliation. While some supported the National Rifle Association policies and position, others supported the prevention of gun violence by restriction laws. The present chapter deals with the major political debate over gun policy concerning the increase of mass shootings. The chapter also investigates the impact of mass shootings on gun policy in addition to the role of gun policy in the increase of gun violence. The chapter aims to present the major aspects that shaped the political scene and the changes involved in the increase of gun violence in the USA.

## **2.2. Gun Policy in America**

Guns have a remarkable significance among the American people and a symbolic role culturally and economically. Americans appreciate the historical heritage of hunting, sport shooting, and collecting guns as a practice of freedom and preservation of the sense of security that arms provide. Some areas in America rely on hunting as an attraction for tourists.

Gun production is a big industry as it employs thousands of Americans to guarantee the success of the process of teaching gun owners the way to use firearms. They use the help of instructors and shooting ranges operators, Hunting equipment suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of firearms and ammunition (Gun). The Gun industry gained popularity and support from pro-gun rights; it encourages firearm possession and calls for protection of the Second Amendment.

It is known that no other country respects the individual freedom of owning firearms as the United States of America. Firearms are part of the individual identity and values of Americans. Gun possession for the American citizens holds a social, historical, and political significance. 'Gun culture' represents the attitudes, values, feelings, and behaviors of the American society towards gun ownership. Gun Culture in the United States denotes the protective positions of American people towards their freedom to bear weapons, as stated by the Second Amendment of the American constitution which grants the right to own guns. According to Glenn H. Utter and James L. True, gun culture includes people who view guns as a significant part of American life. It encompasses people who maintain the right to possess firearms and oppose government interference in this right, along with individuals who wish to restrict firearm ownership and use (H. Utter, and L. True. 67). Gun ownership for Americans is a natural right guaranteed by the second amendment; it is a way to exercise their freedom and to preserve their national heritage. With the increase of gun violence in American society, gun policy debate took the attention of the public between opponents and proponents for gun possession and gun violence from big-city murders to shootings has spurred discussion in Congress and state legislatures over proposals to limit Americans' access to firearms (Gramlich, and Schaeffer).

While firearms serve a variety of useful aims, they are a subject of misuse, whether accidental or intentional. Gun violence accounts for thirty thousand deaths per year in the United States and almost half a million deaths worldwide. It is disturbing that guns are used as tools for criminal assaults, suicide, robberies, or spousal abuse. Firearms are used to kill with small effort and from a distance. Hence, they perpetuate violence; their possession can make individuals violent by nature. Besides, it facilitates terrorizations of neighborhoods, assassinations of public officials, and perpetrations of one-man rampages in schools, workplaces, and theatres (J. Cook, and A. Goss).

Gun policy in America represents laws that are supposed to balance the right to bear arms and public interest in gun ownership with consideration to the public health and safety (R. Morral et al.). Gun regulations are usually enacted in response to a perceived threat starting from the 1934 National Firearms Act (NFA), which addresses violence associated with gangland crimes of the prohibition era. It also required that all ownership transfers of NFA firearms be conducted through a federal registry (Scarinci). In the case of the United States versus Miller, the court ruled and convicted two men who were charged with transporting barrel 12-gauge shotgun with a barrel less than 18 inches long. The Supreme Court remarked that the second amendment did not guarantee the possession of such kinds of firearms. The ratification of the Gun control act of 1968 came as a result of the assassinations of President John Kennedy, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The act banned interstate firearms transferring unless it is between licensed manufacturers, dealers, and importers. It also prohibited the sale of firearms to specific classes of individuals, including felons, minors, fugitives, drug addicts, and the mentally ill (Scarinci). The year 1981 marked the attempt of assassination of President Ronald Reagan; the former White House press secretary, James Brady, was shot in the head. As a result, an act was named after him is known as the Brady Handgun Violence Act of 1993, which insisted on the national

instant criminal background check system in which firearm dealers are obliged to use before selling guns.

A year later, the Assault Weapons Ban was enacted. It banned the use, possession, manufacture, and importation of nineteen types of firearms. The ban lasted for ten years, but it expired in 2004. The ban aimed to deter mass shootings using semi-automatic assault weapons. In 2008, the case of the District of Columbia versus Heller took the debate into the heart of the right to bear arms. Consequently, the majority's vote concluded that the Second Amendment preserves the individual right to own guns unconnected to the service in a militia. Also, the court condemned that the handgun bans as unconstitutional. However, the court stressed that the second amendment of the United States does have limits (Scarinci).

### **2.3. The Gun Debate in America**

The debate over gun control is one of the persisting debates in America. When it comes to gun control, the leading political parties took the opposites. Framing gun violence on gun ownership and easy access to firearms is one of the core arguments of gun control advocates. The discussions over gun policy increase each time a mass shooting takes place. The Political scene with its parties faces the complexity and the aftermath of mass shootings with the public opinion demanding measures while others blamed the current regulations of the existing gun laws.

Before the twentieth century, the gun discussions expressed the anxiety over groups possessing weapons. Yet, now the legal debate about guns changed over time. State legislation concentrated on keeping firearms out of reach of certain groups such as African Americans in the South, immigrant waves from eastern and southern Europe coming to the States from the North. However, today's attention to public and political debate shifted to question the individual's acts of violence since mass shootings became more frequent and

violent. The aim was to prevent individuals who are likely to commit mass murders from owning guns, while most of the states focused on providing concealed firearms for citizens who abide by the law for their safety and protection in case of sudden attacks.

Gun policy evolved and became more complex and politically toxic as gun violence increased after the school shootings of 1999 in Columbine, the shootings in Virginia Tech in 2007, the 2012 Aurora and Sandy Hook. Major debates surfaced. Yet, no action took place, for it presented a challenge because there was no consensus to pass gun control legislation. Consequently, the politics of gun control became so tangled, complex, and represented a political problem. As much as gun control is a state issue, it is also a federal one. Both state and federal levels of gun regulations haven't made conclusive actions about it. The clash between gun rights advocates and gun control supporters goes beyond access to firearms dilemma. Irreconcilable differences touch wide aspects of cultural and political problems. The U.S Constitution and the Bill of rights were designed to empower liberty, freedom, and fight against tyranny. It signified the honorable view that the American Revolution holds. Thus, any attempt to attack those principles could be a direct attack on the nation's founding and the U.S itself. The possibility of infringing the rights mentioned in the constitution represents an obstacle for gun control advocates. Hence, any legislation made need to guarantee that laws suggested do not overstep the right to bear arms ("The Historians' ").

Gun control advocates need to defend themselves against accusations of anti-Americanism if they seek to take measures against gun violence. This makes gun debate a discussion about the very meaning of the US. The gun debate continues to stir up different opinions since divisions still exist between gun rights opponents and proponents. Some believe that gun control laws lead to more governmental interference and authority over the ordinary citizen's life. Another view that disproved the latter, is that one of the government's duty is making sure the safety of its citizens as it is embodied in the American constitution. It

is reasonable to say that intrusions on constitutionally protected civil liberties are not in the government's favorite way to handle gun violence issue ("The Historians' ").

Political parties represent the heart of decision-making institutions. Their stance on gun laws legislation has a vital role in whether the bill passes the congress or dies immediately. As an area of American politics, gun politics is known by two opposing ideologies about gun ownership. Those who advocate an increase in gun control legislation and others who support gun rights support decreasing gun regulations ("Gun"). The views about gun policy changed over two decades, both the Democratic and Independent Republic parties invested in believing that America needs stricter gun laws during the 1990s. However, a gap grew between parties, and each party subscribed indifferent stance on the issue of gun policy (J. Cook, and A. Goss).

The Democratic Party, as one of the political parties, believes that bearing arms is part of the American tradition. Preserving the freedoms and liberties guaranteed by the constitution is one of their duties. Yet, the right to bear firearms is subject to reasonable regulation. Their focus on enforcing existing laws and strengthening the background check system. Whereas, the Republican party supports gun rights and encourages any law that expands the exercise of the right to own firearms. Republicans favor keeping the laws as they are and oppose any legislation that might result in gun restriction. For them, gun ownership is an individual responsibility to safely use and store firearms; People use weapons for self-defense to protect their homes and neighborhoods. The gap between these political parties persists on specific questions whether it is a must to ban assault weapons, and if reforms are an effective solution, or whether gun control provides undue power to the government and more authority (J. Cook, and A. Goss 180). The parties' division over gun policies keeps getting stronger over time, even among lawmakers, local legislatures, and the people (J. Cook, and A. Goss 183).



## **2.4. The Impact of Mass Shootings on Gun Politics**

Mass shootings represent a small fraction of gun death compared to other homicides. Yet, since they receive significant media attention, both the public and gun control advocates demanded legislation that can reduce this type of violence. In recent decades, mass shootings have been on the rise, and with each incident gun control bills are presented to the congress. According to a research paper conducted by Michael Luca, Deepak Malhotra, and Christopher Poliquin, *The Impact of Mass Shootings on Gun Policy*, it can be summed up in three main points. First, mass shootings induce large political responses in which a single incident can increase by 15% in the number of firearm bills within the state after mass shootings each year. Second, mass shootings account for a small portion of gun deaths, but their influence outsized relatively comparing to other types of gun violence deaths. Third, the party in power is a major contributor when it comes to gun legislation (Luca et al 03).

At the state level, policymakers decide on several policies from who can purchase and possess guns to how guns should be stored safely. The federal government, on the other hand, has limited authority and establishes a minimum level of gun control (Luca et al 06). After mass shootings, bills are enacted at the state level, but surprisingly enough, loosening gun laws at the state's level is not uncommon. Studies conducted by Luca and other scientists, suggested that states who endured mass shootings and also controlled by republican legislatures. The laws enacted in those states are aimed to lift gun restrictions as a way for citizens to defend themselves. Moreover, states with a democratic legislature witness no significant change when it comes to gun control laws even if they face possible mass shootings, or any type of gun violence. It proves that gun policy issue is very complicated; bills and laws enacted, whether to strengthen the right to bear arms, or to impose restrictive laws are passed through the party who holds power, influence, and support from gun rights advocates (Luca et al.08).

## **2.5. Causes of Mass Shootings**

Mass shootings existed for decades, but its occurrence was not frequent. Since the gun industry started to develop, gun availability increased and with it. Hence, gun violence became an issue. In the recent few years specifically during Obama's administration, mass shootings became the discussion of all the news. Grant Duwe and other scientists sought to discover the real reasons for the rising rates of mass shootings because each side chose reasons that saw fit for the issue, but a consensus over the real causes for such a phenomenon is nowhere to be found; the actual reason to blame is still not clear for mass shootings. The only common aspect of mass shootings is that each time a mass killer holds a gun and starts shooting on crowds. The situation turns into a political battle between political sides. For instance, Liberals start attributing these incidents to the decrying gun laws. Conservatives, on the other hand, shifts into blaming violent video games and movies. Others chose to blame mental health problems for the escalating rates of mass shootings. There are many reasons for mass shooting but the accuracy of those reasons is still not confirmed.

### **2.5.1. Mental Illness**

Mass shootings are usually linked with mental illness if a mass murderer goes into a rampage and causes the death of several victims. That is a form of random attack in public places. As shocking and terrifying a random act that causes loss of lives, society and families of the victims respond defensively by demanding an explanation for such incidents. Political leaders often invoke mental illness as the cause of mass violence (Mass). The media news along with the public usually blames mental illness and portrays it as the principal cause for mass shootings (Brunt, and Pescara-Kovach). The discussions in psychiatry and law about guns reflect the core issues of a mass shooting. It shifted the focus to mental illnesses. Eric Harris was the perpetrator of the Columbine high school shootings in 1999. He was later proved to have a combination of mental disorder, guns, and psychotropic medications that

contributed to his actions. Even though the Supreme Court affirmed the right to bear arms, it imposed restrictive laws on gun ownership for felons and the mentally ill in 2008 because of their unpredictable behaviors and the potential chances of violence in their condition (M. Metzl, and T. MacLeish).

Based on a study conducted by Knoll IV and D. Annas, *Mass Shootings and Mental Illness*, people with mental illness's crimes contributes to only three percent to the overall crime rates while crimes with firearms arms as mass shootings account for one percent in those troubling events. Also, suicide by firearms represents the majority of gun-related deaths each year (Knoll IV, M.D., and Annas, M.D 81). The high-profile mass shootings cause an uproar amongst people. Factors and motives of shooting are being discussed. Those debates usually end up with assumptions that the perpetrators for these mass murders must be mentally unstable. These ideas are easy for the media to report and for the public to accept; because anyone could start rampage shootings. Those claims are not proven with evidence, which makes them inaccurate because such incidents are a result of complex factors. Also, they fuel the political differences regarding firearms regulations. The absence of productive solutions that would prevent future mass shootings to keep the study of gun violence unsolved. Attempts to investigate the nature of mass killings can be more significant and constructive than psychiatric illness (Knoll IV, M.D., and Annas, M.D., M.P.H83). After the shootings in El Paso, Texas, and in Dayton, Ohio, The American Psychology Association (APA) president Rosie Phillips Davis stated that attributing mass shootings to mental illness is stigmatizing and baseless. She believes that the country faces such events as mass shootings because of the accessibility to weapons, as well as racism, intolerance, and bigotry which creates the perfect recipe for disaster (Phillips Davis).

Andrew Puhanic, an activist for pro-gun rights, denotes that gun control leaders and globalists use the excuse of easy access to guns as a reason for mass shootings; to push for

gun control legislation, and benefit from the emotion of a grieving nation especially after the mass shootings in the Aurora movie theatre. Puhanic sees that the problem is related to the poor health care system, lack of funding, and the glorification of violence in video games. Mass shootings for him have nothing to do with accessibility to guns. The low funding for health institutions, services, and programs that deal with mental illnesses can create a problem for people with mental illnesses, which represents a threat if they are not treated. Investing in the health care of mentally ill people will not serve the government's purposes in elections. The system lacks consideration for this category of people. Instead of spreading the idea that guns are the issue is more workable (Puhanic).

Another opinion that refuses the idea that mental illness is the cause of mass shootings is the Center for Disability Rights. According to Andrew Pulrang, mentally disabled people are more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators because one mentally ill shooter does not necessarily mean that they all are potential criminals. Blaming mental disorders for mass shootings can create prejudice against this category of individuals who need help. The attribution of mental illness and establishing policy restrictions for this group of people can hurt their basic human rights. It creates a crack between them and other normal people. Consequently, blending among peers and society is impossible. Due to the prejudices, the community holds against them as potential perpetrators for mass shootings (Pulrang).

According to Los Angeles Times Magazine, on research conducted by Grant Duwe and Michael Rocque, it exists in correlation between mental illness and mass shootings their research concluded that 59 % of the public mass shootings from 1900 to 2017 were committed by people who have been diagnosed with a mental disorder or showed signs of serious mental illness prior to their criminal acts. The results show that one-third of mass shooters received mental health care before their rampage, this suggests that most of the shooters did not seek or get the treatment they may have needed (Duwe and Rocque).

The United States has high rates of untreated serious mental illness compared to other western countries. The link between mass shootings and mental illness can be traced back to the earliest mass shootings such as the 1903 Gilbert Twigg who shot on a crowd in Winfield, Kanhe showed signs of paranoia. The shooting of 1949 committed by the famous Howard Unruh, studies proved that later he was diagnosed with paranoia and schizophrenia. The research results prove the existence of this link, but the fear of stigmatization of such disorders is the main concern. Developing the health care system may help reduce mass shootings if ill people receive medical attention to recover. Moreover, conflicting opinions about what causes mass shootings still exist, but what is proposed is that both mental illnesses and guns are both problems causing mass shootings (Duwe, and Rocque).

The need for supporting and funding the health care system is crucial to assist those who suffer from mental disorders. These disabilities are internal conditions resulted from the upbringing of each individual; it is usually constructed by having basic human desires met without exaggeration, such as poverty or too much wealth. The individuals, who are affected by their mental conditions, generally deal with those problems alone without attempting to hurt others. While those who engage in mass murders are fueled by anger, entitlement, and sociopathic tendencies. They do suffer from serious mental health issues and seek to project their pain on others. However, they are not the same as those with depression and anxiety disorder. The problem of mass shootings is not as simple as to be caused by mentally ill perpetrators. It is more complicated and related to the nation's funding with its cultural and social construction.

### **2.5.2. Violent Video Games**

The rising concerns about video game violence started after the columbine shootings. It involved teen shooters played a shooting computer game called 'Doom'. In 2011 a research led the Supreme Court to overturn California's ban on selling violent video games to minors.

Antonin Scalia disregarded the connection between games and aggression. Justice Scalia explained that studies do not prove that violent video games attribute aggression to minors (Snider). In the wake of mass shootings, the issue of violent video games attracted attention from both the public and policy communities. The focus on video games did not generate an actual result, such as legal measures or policies. A *study entitled Violent Video Games, Mass Shootings, and The Supreme Court: Lessons for the legal Community in The Wake of Recent free Speech Cases and Mass Shootings* by Christopher J. Ferguson proposed that links between mass shootings and video games are based on false correlation and biased opinions supported by cases of mass shootings that fit the narrative where teen killers cause damage by inflicting harm on people (J. Ferguson 561). For example, the shooters of the columbine shootings, Tucson, and other shootings were violent video game players. It is suggested that the majority of young males play violent video games occasionally. Therefore, relating to crime and young males in this age category is not hard (J. Ferguson 562).

The review conducted by the U. S Secret Service and the Department of Education indicated small signs that school shooters consumed high levels of video games or other media violence. Yet, cases of shootings like William Spengler and Douglas Harmon prove that not all perpetrators of shootings are young males. Consequently, the matter of violent video games is simply brushed off in such events. Another element to point out is that in most criminal reviews and researches exclude media impact and contribution. It suggests that claims linking mass shootings with violent video games are baseless and not evidently proved (J. Ferguson 562).

Fox & friends host Gretchen Carlson and Keith Ablow claimed the existence of a link between video games and mass shootings basing their ideas on a recent study conducted by Ohio State University professor Brad Bushman. It states that violent video games can increase aggression and decrease empathy for individuals. Keith Ablow fox news contributor

dismissed the role of firearms in these incidents. Carlson on the other hand sees that the problem is much more complicated than just gun legislation or video games (Johnson).

### **2.5.3. Other Causes for Mass Shootings**

The U.S presents five percent of the world's population, whereas 31 percent of mass shooters in the world. Reasons for such numbers are a combination of several factors. For instance, the desire of fame and attention leads shooters to cause stir. It is through outdoing their predecessors' mass shootings by trying to beat the headcount of the previous shooting, such as the Orlando mass shooting at the LGBT nightclub. Not only the shooter did have more victims but he also added controversy by committing his crime in the LGBT community area.

According to a study conducted by the Harvard school of public health, the occurrence of mass shootings tripled from 2011 to 2014. This led other researchers to believe in the idea that mass killings are contagious. That is to say, the copycat phenomenon exemplified in an incident in Virginia when a gunman shot two. While it was not seen as a mass shooting, the gunman claimed in fax he sent to ABC News that he was influenced by the Virginia Tech shooter. Moreover, the copycat phenomenon is stimulated by the availability of guns; rates showed that America has the highest percentage of gun ownership (Anderson).

Others put the upbringings of mass shooters as the cause, and blame their parents for it. Claiming that the care needed was not enough to steer those individuals from such harmful behaviors. The mother of the shooter Chris Harper mercer observed her son's developmental issues rather than providing help she bonded with him in guns' passion. Adam Lanza's mother who left twenty children dead at Sandy hook had similarities with Harper's mother. Both mothers were blamed for the actions of their sons, justifying that awareness in children's behaviors and the signs these people show can minimize the potential criminal acts they might fall into (Anderson).

From 2009 to 2015, the American nation went through about 50 or more mass murders during Barack Obama's term. Comparing to other presidencies' terms, Obama's term had an alarming rise in mass shootings. For instance, Reagan's term (1981-1989) eleven incidents took place; George W.H. Bush (1989-1993) twelve mass shootings occurred; Clinton's term (1993-2001) witnessed twenty-three incidents. The increase in mass shootings and mass murders is claimed to be six times during Obama's time. Obama suggested about 23-gun control bills as an effort to reduce gun violence mainly after the Sandy Hook shooting.

Nonetheless, efforts were futile and shootings took a much worse turn. It is what led people to believe that Obama may be the cause of shootings. Some blame the consumption of violent media as a source of inspiration for mass shootings perpetrators, due to studies that are linked watching violent television shows or films. As a possible trigger for aggressive ideas that would lead to mimic the actions of other people (Anderson). Grant Duwe, Carlson, and other researchers believe that mass shooter is a product of complex factors. They can be whether mental illnesses, gun law, media or psychiatric medications, or even a combination of historical and cultural elements. The common aspect is they result in creating violent individuals capable of committing heinous crimes.



## **2.6. Conclusion**

In the foregoing chapter, the attempt was to present the conflicting views and sides that discussed, or studied the phenomenon of mass shootings concerning gun policy. The politics of gun legislation is a vast and complicated area of politics; each political figure supports an opinion that he believes correct for gun reductions measure. The chapter starts with historical background about gun policy, to identify changing elements in legislations, and the differences between gun policy now and before. This chapter presents the gun debate as an essential part. Thanks to it the reader can recognize the opposing political opinions about mass shootings. Pro-gun rights (as in Republicans) see that the problem of mass shootings is not related to guns, but it is a matter of mental illness or other social issues. Whereas, gun control (such as the Democratic party) advocates the belief that assault weapons should not be accessible and that restrictions are the first step to reduce gun violence crimes.

Also, the chapter provides information about the impact of mass shootings on gun policy to detect changes after each incident. Lastly, we tried to present the reasons for mass shootings that most of the journal articles and scientists discussed. The complexity of events like mass shootings causes confusion and clash of opinions between legislatures, political leaders, and the public. The causes of shootings are not fixed, since the production of violent individuals can be the accumulation of several reasons like mental health, guns, media, violent video games, and so on.

## **Chapter three: The National Rifle Association's Impact on Mass Shootings and the Dispute with Obama Administration**

3.1. Introduction

3.2. Introducing the National Rifle Association

3.3. National Rifle Association Influence on Gun Policy

3.4. Barack Obama and the National Rifle Association

3.5. The Impact of Gun Debate on Mass Shootings

3.6. Conclusion

### **3.1. Introduction**

The National Rifle Association (NRA) as gun rights advocacy group has played an important role to the gun policy making. Its goal is to protect the Second Amendment's credibility and functionality from any possible infringing. The NRA and its supporters believe that gun rights are threatened and any threat to guns' ownership, it's actually threat to all individual rights and freedoms. Disarmed society cannot protect itself from tyrannical government. The frequency of gun violence has stirred people and gun control supporters to take necessary measure to the easy access to firearms. Mass shooting from 2009 to 2017 had a shocking increase that attracted everyone's attention from policy makers to the public opinion. Barack Obama since he was haggard by such events, he tried to pass gun restrictive laws to protect the people, for shootings such as Sandy Hook damaged the educational institutions' reputation as safe places for children to learn.

The National Rifle Association became hostile towards Obama's attempts for gun restrictive laws. The NRA accused Obama for trying to harm the freedoms mentioned in the Second Amendment. The NRA spokesmen believe that Obama is aiming for disarming the American people. The chapter aims to analyze the type of relationship between Obama and the gun lobby. In addition, the chapter provides a general overview on the influence of the NRA on policy making, and its impact on mass shootings. Moreover, this chapter seeks to identify the core issues behind the animosity between Barack Obama and the NRA. In addition to finding data that explains the shocking rates of mas shootings and gun violence in general.

### **3.2. Introducing the National Rifle Association**

The National Rifle Association is a large lobby group that seeks to defend gun rights for the American nation. The group was established after the American Civil War 1871. It was founded as quasi military organization to teach marksmanship, and improve Americans' skills with rifles (Melzer 35). The group was founded by two former union officers. They aimed to improve poor soldiers' shooting skills, and to educate new generation marksmanship skills. The NRA was concerned with training hunters to shoot and encouraging responsible gun ownership. The NRA had close ties with the U. S army as it was its major supplier (Melzer 36). In 1905 the NRA was able to purchase surplus military rifles and sell them to its members and shooters. The bill signed by the President Theodore Roosevelt facilitated the process of providing necessary shooting equipment. The government had cooperation with the institution and the state of New York aided the NRA financially to buy its first shooting range. Since its establishment, National Rifle Association focused on shooting competitions and national shooting matches (Melzer 36).

The NRA's interest in youth's shooting sports enabled the creations of rifle clubs in universities and military academies. Subsequently, the organization gained popularity and expanded its membership ("A Brief"). Series of gun violence crimes made sensational headlines such as Al Capone's gangsters, rural bank robberies, Bonnie and Clyde. Due to those events, the National Rifle Association supported the passage of Gun restrictive laws. Its president at that time Karl T Frederick expressed his desire to limit general practices of carrying weapons. Also, he thought that lawful ownership of guns with using licenses is better. National Firearm Act in 1934 and Gun Control Act in 1938, both regulations-imposed taxes and new legislation on machine guns' possession in addition to requirements for registration on sawn off shotguns and silencers (Sommerlad). These legislations banned some buyers and made gun dealers obliged to register with the government (Elving).

The Legislative Affairs Division was formed in 1934, which enabled the National Rifle Association to lobby indirectly through mailing out the necessary information and legislative facts to its supporters. During the 1960s, public figures were assassinated such as John F Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, and Robert F Kennedy. The accumulation of gang fights outbreak of riots and the rise of the Civil Rights Movement caused social unrest and political problems. People expressed worries about guns' availability and the necessity for some restrictive gun laws. One of the national rifle association members was murdered by agents from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms for possession of a large number of illegal weapons. This increased fear among NRA's members, as a result, the NRA decided that political defense is needed and formed the Institute for Legislative Action in 1975 (ILA) ("A Brief"). The newly established branch was headed by a lawyer named Harlon Carter; the ILA represented the groups' first lobby organ. Later conflicts within the NRA rose demanding more aggressive leadership led to the Cincinnati revolt which resulted in Harlan carter taking the executive vice president seat. This change in leadership, made the NRA adopt a more rigid view against gun control legislation (Elving).

From the second half of the twentieth century onward, the National Rifle Association became an effective political lobby, in addition to its campaigns against any gun regulation proposals. The NRA created a system of grading by the use of report cards, these cards work to classify congressmen's political stance and sympathy towards NRA's agenda on expanding gun rights and combating gun control advocates. The National Rifle Association reached five million members by the first of the Twenty-First Century. The association kept fighting against gun restrictive laws even in the wake of mass shootings through the country Newtown shootings of 2012, Sandy Hook 2013, and Orlando shootings of 2016 (Duignan).

### **3.3. National Rifle Association Influence on Gun Policy**

The National Rifle Association is a powerful gun rights organization founded by William Conant Church and George Wood Wingate. Since its formation, the NRA has expressed its interest in preserving the right to bear arms. NRA transformed from a small marksmanship organization to the most powerful gun advocating lobby group. Among its subsidiaries was the Institute for Legislative Action (ILA), which represents the living organ that links between NRA and gun policymakers. The National Rifle Association seeks to spread its ideological beliefs and agenda. NRA aims to get the public opinion support and membership, to realize its goals and keep the second amendment safe from any infringement. This group had an impact on gun policy throughout history, where it stood in the face of gun control supporters and stopped many guns control legislation from passing the congress (Musa 1).

The NRA expressed its interest in joining the world of gun politics. During the 1930s, it started participation through lobbying and defending the right to bear arms. Throughout time its power increased to become an influential lobbying organization. After the assassination of John Kennedy, people expressed fear for their lives and demanded gun restrictions; however, the lawmakers did not make procedures against the spread of violence. It was until the death of Martin Luther King; the government passed the Gun act of 1968. Years later, an attempt to kill Ronal Reagan ended up with his secretary shot and wounded Jim Brady. Consequently, the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention of 1993 was passed. (BBC NEWS 02:54).

Social and political problems such as drugs, hate crimes, theft, and armed robberies led Bill Clinton to enact the Federal Assault Weapons Ban in 1994. The ban forbade the manufacture of semiautomatics for civilians. However, the NRA opposed this legislation and

worked to stop its enacting again after it reached the sunset provision in 2004. One of the achievements that the NRA was able to realize was the Dickey amendments of 1998.

The amendment eliminates scientific research funds for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It came as a reaction to the publication of a study about violence funded by the CDC, which suggested that gun ownership increases risks for domestic violence (Duignan). The Dickey amendment obstructed the funding for research institution about gun violence. The decision is one of the historical successes of the National Rifle Association, in addition to the ongoing battle over destroying any attempt for gun restriction.

The efforts of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives to access an online database to track gun ownership were not victorious. It was fruitless thanks to the NRA's strong objection to search about guns. In 2008 the NRA challenged the federal handgun ban in the Supreme Court in the Landmark called Heller; the decision revived one of the NRA's principals that the right to have weapons is not just for militia but also for private individuals. The decision was the first in the United States where a legislation explained the second amendment protects the individual right to possess arms. The expiration of the 10-year assault Weapons Ban of 1994, allowed the NRA to combat and stop any attempt to enact the regulation anew. As a result, in 2010, the supreme court of Ohio ruled that Cleveland and other cities cannot pass stricter assault weapons laws. Thus, any attempt to impose any strict regulation on gun owners is illegal (Sommerlad).

Among the strategies the NRA uses to lobby is creating separate institutions to lobby on its behalf. After its establishment, the ILA became the lobbying organ with an influential role in stopping or passing many bills. Its influence has touched the outcome of state, local, and even national elections. President Bill Clinton admitted the historical role of the NRA on the historic takeover of the Republican Party on the U.S House of Representatives. In 2012 the ILA used its power to influence a bill that enables the government to punish doctors if

they ask patients if they own guns or discuss the matter of weapons with them (Musa2). In 2012 the ATF suggested a new border states gun regulation, the backlash of that proposal was exemplified in the NRA's filing lawsuit against that bill. Because of the institution's skilled lobbyist and financial power, the NRA achieved its aims (Musa 5). A year later, Barack Obama supported a ban on assault weapons and the procedure of background checks. As tools to reduce gun violence, however, the National Rifle Association interfered furiously and stoooped those bills. The organization established a campaign called to stop the gun ban and saw that incidents like the mass shootings of Sandy Hook are the result of bad management and the failing politics of Barack Obama (Sommerlad).

The National Rifle Association is strong and influential gun-rights advocacy. The group promotes and encourages public safety, shootings sports, safe hunting, and training law enforcement agencies. Its power lies in the maintenance plan that kept the organization standing for over 148 years with ammunition reaches quarter billion. To achieve its intended goals, it needs to have a lobbying base (ILA) and access to policymakers with the right connection and money. The NRA hires experienced lobbyists with access to policymakers; usually, they are former legislators or government officials. This way guarantees reaching the right people with connections and friendships required. Meaning the size of the lobbying group's membership with wealth contributes to establishing a powerful entity. NRA's magazines and newspapers have a role in promoting gun rights and getting support from the Republican party, who agrees with NRA on the matter of protecting the Second Amendment.

The establishment has been successfully lobbying in all governmental branches and federal agencies. Their stance on gun control is subject to controversy and meals for media discussions. The organization standards state that guns are freedoms granted by the Constitution, opinion supported by Republicans. While Others and the majority of Democrats



argue that guns are a constitutional right but, restrictions such as background checks can be beneficial to reduce violence (Musa 5).

### **3.4. Barack Obama and the National Rifle Association**

The National Rifle Association expressed its concerns about the presidential elections of 2008. Barack Obama, the Democratic candidate and previous state Senator of Illinois. His stance on gun politics represented a threat to pro-gun rights and the NRA because they thought gun rights would suffer under his presidential administration. During his days as senator, Obama articulated his support for a handgun ban and an all-out ban on weapons. The executive director of the gun lobby Wayne LaPierre noted his surprise to an election filled with gun ownership haters in the NRA's history (Garret).

The gun sales reached its highest record after Obama took office. People snatched firearms out of an alleged fear that Obama is aiming to crack down the right to possess firearms. Obama expressed in his presidential campaign that he has no intention of taking people's guns. He desired to implement a reasonable gun control measure. Obama wanted to implement a database that could trace guns used in crimes for law enforcement benefit, to catch suspicious gun dealer or any violence perpetrators. But announcing his support for the Assault weapons Ban renewal confirmed the doubts of the NRA and fed to its speculations about an attempt of disarming the public (MacAskill, and Pilkington).

The President Barack Obama expressed his sorrow and need to push for regulations measure over the mass shootings of First Fort Hood in 2009, Tucson Congressional event shooting of 2011. In the same year Obama's administration passed a legislation that strengthens gun reports on borders of the 1975 law. It requires gun dealers to report sale of multiple handguns from the same buyers on borders states of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas. The bill received backlash from the NRA as a lawsuit was filed to the

Federal Court claiming that its indirect step towards the gun control agenda of Obama's administration (Garret).

There was no significant political action by congress when mass shootings became frequent. But when the Sandy Hook Shooting 2012 took place, Obama could not handle more grievance and promised to take procedures that could tackle gun violence. The executive director of the National Rifle Association was furious about Obama's plans. He stated that it is the fight of the century, and his warning came true. Since Obama is aiming for banning guns neither for stopping crimes nor for protecting children (MacAskill, and Pilkington). Obama his statement acknowledged that passing gun legislation through Congress, may not be fruitful while the Republican party controls Congress (Garret).

The Republican National Committee head denounced that Obama's proposals were executive power grab. To realize his political agenda but would not represent solutions to problems. Obama resorted to taking actions that do not require congressional approval. Where he signed twenty-three executive orders; among those decisions were a new head of the ATF as key element in violence study it was left without president for six years. Along with establishing funds for scientific research about gun violence and video games to the CDC. Other orders were to implement more police forces in the streets and providing security for educational institutions. Obama revised and reinforced the ban on assault weapons, in addition to limiting magazine sizes and background checks on all gun sales (MacAskill, and Pilkington).

After Obama announced his plan, the NRA established a campaign Called Stand and Fight and posted an ad. The ad portrayed Obama as an elitist hypocrite and directed an attack on his daughters for having security guards. Mr. LaPierre, on the other hand, denied those claims saying that it did not involve his daughters. The ad represented the NRA stance on gun control proposals presented by the administration of the democratic president ( Grier). The

organization saw that Barack Obama disapproving the idea of planting armed guards in school premises was not justified. They believe that pushing for gun control is not the solution to gun violence. Whereas, Obama expressed his concerns on distributing armed forces in schools, which could jeopardize children to more danger with firearms around.

After Obama introduced gun control regulations, the lobby worked its powers to stop gun bills. As a result, the NRA managed to defeat the proposed law in Congress in 2013. The gun-rights advocates questioned the sincerity of Obama about protecting people from gun violence. And considered any legislative action proposes a threat to gun rights (Gun). President Barack Obama in 2015 stressed his frustration with the legislative process and the Congress decisions; after the mass shootings in San Bernardino that left fourteen deaths and several injuries. Leading Obama to sign a series of executive orders that expand background checks to cover firearms sold at gun shows. In addition to requiring states to provide data about people disqualified from purchasing firearms. Obama asked Congress to take further actions about gun policy legislation (Gun). Also, he scrutinized members of Congress for their constant support for the NRA approval to gain A ratings; to be more responsible and take children's safety in schools seriously. So that mass shootings such as the Sandy Hook, cannot happen again, where twenty children were killed (MacAskill, and Pilkington).

The Orlando Nightclub shooting took place in 2016. Claims suggest that the shooting was the deadliest in American history. It resulted in the death of forty-nine people by the hands of a gunman. This pushed gun control advocated and democratic lawmakers to introduce four legislative measures, such as a law that withholds gun sales to individuals on terrorism watch lists. The majority of the republican senates overturned all four suggested regulations. The National Rifle Association and opponents of those regulations claimed that there was no adequate protection for gun owners' rights (Gun). The National Rifle

Association held prejudice towards Barack Obama's attempts for gun laws to be a method to disarm the gun owners. His two terms proved the opposite expectation of the NRA's speculations. Through his two terms (2009-2017), Barack Obama sought to fight gun violence by establishing reasonable legislation. Starting from the first term Obama pushed local, state, and federal authorities to enforce gun control laws. Concurrent after the Republican party restored its control over the House of Representatives in the midterm elections of 2010. While in reality, Obama passed gun laws that expand the rights of gun owners. Obama shocked pro-gun rights critics when he mentioned the historical heritage of hunting and shooting in America. In February 2012, a law passed which allows people to carry legal weapons in national parks. A reversal measure replaced George W. Bush; the law allows Amtrak passengers to carry weapons in checked baggage (Grier).

In the second term, Obama promised to impose gun legislation to combat gun violence. He was affected by the Newtown mass shootings of 2012 and Charleston church shootings of 2015, and many other mass shootings during his presidency. Throughout his second term, the implementation of gun control was impossible due to the NRA efforts and influences to block every legislation from passing through Congress. On many occasions, President Barack Obama expressed his inability to reach a reasonable understanding between him with legislators and the pro-gun rights to solve the misunderstanding about the Second Amendment (Garrett).

The conflict between Obama and NRA is an opposition between a president who seeks to curb mass shootings through legislation. Obama did not back his gun control supporters with a set of gun control laws with no loopholes plans nor, did he campaign for the issue. As a result, he could not influence voters. Obama came up with a gun violence prevention agenda that challenged the views of gun rights, nevertheless, his efforts were not met because of the deeply rooted gun culture. Besides, NRA follows a somehow rigid perception that condemns

any gun restrictive regulation as taking gun rights. The defiance from the NRA gun rights advocacy was cultivated for the protection of gun rights over the decades. It formed its cultural identity towards gun ownership that justifies its legal and constitutional arguments. Its response to incidents such as Sandy Hook proves its denial and defiance for any attempt for enacting gun restrictions. Also, it managed to preserve the support of Republicans and gun rights supporters to realize its agenda. Obama's presidency raised many issues especially gun violence and the spread of mass shootings, which represented a shocking frequency and a rise in death numbers. Obama administration tried to take necessary measures with proposals suggested to Congress. However, they were in vain with the existence of a powerful gun lobby like the National Rifle Association.

### **3.5. The Impact of Gun Debate on Mass Shootings**

The National Rifle Association followed a tradition where a mass shooting emerges; its spokesmen remain silent for a few days. Later on, a statement is released expressing sorrow and condolences to the families of victims. After Obama took office, the political scene was filled with tensions and opposing sides coming into each other's throats. The Newtown mass shootings resulted in the death of twenty-six; the majority of the victims were children. The incident happened in the Sandy Hook Elementary school in 2012. Wayne LaPierre asserted that what beats a bad man with a gun is a good guy with a gun to respond. The executive director of the lobby scrutinized the spread of violent video games and media for nurturing a culture of violence. LaPierre also blamed Congress for lack of interest and funds to the health care spectrum (Merod). Obama expressed concerns and refused the suggestions made by LaPierre; to have police forces at schools. Obama saw that police forces in schools put children to more risks with guns around.

After the San Bernardino shooting on December 2, 2015, both media and political figures opened the gun debate again. Barack Obama, expressed in a post-shooting statement, the role of the powerful obstruction of the NRA in Congress, in addition to the inability to reach common ground. Chris W. Cox, executive director of the Institute for Legislative Actions, spoke in an op-ed USA Today's. Cox declared that Obama's domestic gun regulations put the safety of the country into more danger. He also said that even strict gun control in the country could not prevent perpetrators from committing their evil acts (Merod).

In a report made by Tim Dickinson, the National Rifle Association is held responsible for the increase in mass shootings. Tim believes that the organization benefits from mass shootings because each time a mass shooting emerges, gun sales witness a rise. Attributing violence to the Obama administration's political correctness rather than the gunman's easy access to assault weapons is incorrect. Gun laws play a role in obstructing criminals from going to spree killings. The semi-automatic weapons raise the chances to kill a large number of people. Their availability jeopardizes the public to shootings like the Orlando night club where forty-nine people died and the other fifty suffered from injuries. The lobby organ of the NRA has fought for permissive gun laws that turned Florida into what it is called Gun Shine State. Where permissive carry of assaults weapons is applied, and lenient gun laws are popular with the support of the NRA (Dickinson).

Another element that proves the role of the pro-gun group in a mass shooting is the unwavering efforts to block any gun regulations. The aims are directed to reverse the decision made by Judge Antonia Scalia, whom she ruled in 2008 that the Second Amendment guarantees the individual freedom of owning firearms. The decision made the process of implementing any gun restriction on individuals nearly impossible. In the wake of the massacre in San Bernardino, gun control advocates proposed legislative actions to the

Congress. But the National Rifle Association lobbied the bill as the senate has the majority of Republican. Thus, the majority vote in Congress declined the legislation (Dickinson). Probable criminals or domestic terrorists are permitted to purchase weapons in the United States where guns are accessible that in ten minutes any one can get a gun; mainly due to The National Rifle Association's efforts to preserve traditions of shootings and hunting regardless to the risks at hands (Woods).

The gun debate reached its peak during Obama's two terms in office. The discussion affected negatively on gun violence. The occurrence of mass shootings tripled from 2009 to 2017, according to what constitutes mass shootings. The opposing sides continued to blame each other for gun violence, which led to the inability to construct solutions. Consequently, mass shootings became deadlier with each incident. The NRA side refused to accept the role of accessibility of guns in mass killings. With the failing strategies of Obama to reduce NRA influence on gun politics. Contributes to making to the challenges to solve the ongoing gun debate impossible and to reach a reasonable solution to gun crimes in America. The phenomenon of mass shootings has caught the attention of many people to produce an effective solution for the issue and extract the causes for it. Nevertheless, the phenomenon is still hanged with no clear ideas for its aspects, as long as there is no consensus over factors involved in its appearance. Opposing political views keep stirring media with conflicting reactions and statements.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

Mass shootings during Obama's era were featured by being high-profile incidents where a rampage of mass killer causes the deaths of several people in short span of time. Obama urged the congress to pass gun restrictive laws in hope to reduce these events. Nevertheless, the existence of a powerful lobby organization called the National Rifle Association that had been dominating gun policy over 148 years made the gun regulation success difficult. Over his presidency, Obama received continuous criticism for his gun policy plan from the NRA. As result, gun debate took surprising turn thanks to both sides astonishing statements and challenging attitudes. The chapter presented general overview on the gun advocacy group with its influence; also, we tried to summarize the unpleasant relationship between Obama and gun lobby along with its effects on Mass shootings and gun violence in American. From 2009 to 2017 Obama administration presented one of the core issues of America which is mass shootings. Obama and NRA made headlines each time mass shootings occurs. To sum up gun debate during Obama administration was heating up with oppositions and support to curbing gun permissiveness in the USA.



## **General Conclusion**

This research presents an extensive study of mass shootings in correlation to gun policymaking. It investigates the impact of firearms availability and the lack of gun regulations on the increase of mass shootings in the United States during Obama's presidency. Mass shootings are incidents that usually occur in public settings, with the involvement of firearms. In the recent decade, shootings became more recurrent than before. High profile mass shootings represent a spicy topic for the media and a debatable topic for the political scene. The result of this type of gun violence is the disagreement in gun policy discussions about gun regulations along with the absence of the real causes of mass shootings.

The study finds that mass shootings appeared in different trends and waves throughout history. The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed low rates of mass shootings, but from 1960s onward shootings became common and deadlier. Changes in the social and cultural construction of the American nation reached its peak, and violence dominated the streets. Trends of mass shootings characterized those incidents, which are generally public or common in work places and schools. Obama's terms witnessed the highest rates between the past presidencies. The lack of fundamental agreement to define mass shootings confused to find a precise number of mass shootings. The research also found that Congress did not pass new gun regulation laws due to the influence of the National Rifle Association. The congress is divided by two major power Republicans and Democrats; whom they take different stances for the gun regulation matter. The republican party gained the favor of the NRA and became its supporters to push gun regulation bill. The relationship between the organization and Obama was featured by being a constant battle of statements and defiance to each other's perspectives. The involvement of the National association in the process of elections and legislations influences the results of each. The process of passing gun legislation represented a problem thanks to the National Rifle Association's power.

Barack Obama did not push for gun control bills in his first term in office. He focused on enforcing the existing laws. In the dawn of his second term, he promised to pass regulations to reduce the spread of high-profile mass shootings. The National Rifle Association blocked every possible legislation from passing through the congress, through its republican supporters whom they represent the majority in the senates. The research finds that gun debates introduce one of the complex issues in America where legislation may pose a threat to civil liberties that the Second Amendment grants.

The study at hand, suggests that the solutions to the problem at hand are nowhere because of the complexity it holds. The American historical heritage of firearms use creates a problematic for gun policy making. The gun culture is one of the fundamental aspects that most of Americans takes pride in. The National Rifle Association's unwavering commitment to defy any laws that restrict gun ownerships influences any political actions. The phenomenon of mass shootings remains one of the negative aspects of a free country like America. Ways to stop such evil events from emerging is a mystery since the reasons for mass shootings can be an accumulation of several factors, not mental illnesses. Thus, the problem of gun violence in America remains a nightmare that hunts the American people until new valid researches can suggest new approaches or viewpoints to study. The research lacks studying in depth NRA's strategies and policies used to achieve its goals, also the study of mass shootings can be done through different angles not just the political or scientific angles that we shed light upon in this research.

## Work Cited

"Barack Obama Biography". *The Biography.Com Website*, 2020, <https://www.biography.com/us-president/barack-obama>. Accessed 18 Mar 2020.

"A Brief History of the NRA". *National Rifle Association*, <https://home.nra.org/about-the-nra/>. Accessed 31 Aug 2020.

"General Methodology". *Gun Violence Archive*, <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/methodology>. Accessed 11 Feb 2020.

"Gun Control Topic Overview". 2018, <https://www.gale.com/open-access/gun-control>. Accessed 6 Sept 2020.

"Gun Politics in The United States". *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun\\_politics\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_politics_in_the_United_States). Accessed 19 July 2020.

"Mass Shooting". En.Wikipedia.Org, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass\\_shooting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass_shooting).

"Mass Shootings: Definitions And Trends". 2018, <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/mass-shootings.html>. Accessed 6 Feb 2020.

"Ramesh Sharma". Amok Wiki, [https://amok.fandom.com/wiki/Ramesh\\_Sharma](https://amok.fandom.com/wiki/Ramesh_Sharma). Accessed 18 Jan 2020.

20Culture%20War%20(%20PDFDrive.com%20).pdf. Accessed 23 Aug 2020.

Anderson, Dave. "10 Reasons U.S. Has So Many Mass Shootings". *List land*, <https://www.listland.com/10-reasons-u-s-many-mass-shootings/>. Accessed 29 Aug 2020.

BBC NEWS. *Gun Control and The NRA In America*. 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-36342320>. Accessed 4 Sept 2020.

C. Karlsson, Linda et al. *FAMILICIDE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW*. p. 01, [http://Familicide-A-systematic-literature-review\\_Original-submission.pdf](http://Familicide-A-systematic-literature-review_Original-submission.pdf) . Accessed 29 Feb 2020.

Crossette, Barbara. "Royal Family Of Nepal Is Shot Dead In Palace". *The New York Times*, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/06/02/world/royal-family-of-nepal-is-shot-dead-in-palace.html>. Accessed 20 Feb 2020.

Dan, Major. "September 27, 2001: The Zug Massacre (Mass Shooting at the Canton's Parliament In Switzerland)". *History & Headlines*, 2017, <https://www.historyandheadlines.com/september-27-2001-zug-massacre-mass-shooting-switzerlands-parliament/>. Accessed 21 Feb 2020.

Dickinson, Tim. "How the NRA Paved the Way for Mass Shootings". *Rolling Stone*, 2016, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/how-the-nra-paved-the-way-for-mass-shootings-58333/>. Accessed 7 Sept 2020.

Dillinger, Jessica. "The Deadliest Mass Shootings In History." *World Atlas*, May. 16, 2019, [worldatlas.com/articles/the-deadliest-mass-shootings-in-history.htm](http://worldatlas.com/articles/the-deadliest-mass-shootings-in-history.htm) 1. Accessed 20 Feb 2020.

Dillon, Luke. "MASS SHOOTINGS IN THE UNITED STATES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE TRENDS FROM 1982\_2012". George Mason University, 2013.

Duignan, Brian. "National Rifle Association of America". *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2019.

Duwe, Grant, and Michael Rocque. ": Actually, There Is A Clear Link Between Mass Shootings and Mental Illness". *Los Angeles Times*, 2018, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-duwe-rocque-mass-shootings-mental-illness-20180223-story.html>. Accessed 27 Aug 2020.

Duwe, Grant. "Mass Shootings Are Getting Deadlier, Not More Frequent". *Politico Magazine*, 2017, <http://Mass Shootings Are Getting Deadlier, Not More Frequent> . Accessed 31 Jan 2020.

Duwe, Grant. *Mass Murder In The United States A History*. 1st ed., McFarland & Company, 2007, <https://b-ok.cc/book/3322870/a35dc9>. Accessed 8 Feb 2020.

Elving, Ron. "The NRA Wasn't Always Against Gun Restriction". *Npr*, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/10/10/556578593/the-nra-wasnt-always-against-gun-restrictions>. Accessed 1 Sept 2020.

Follman, Mark. "What Exactly Is A Mass Shooting?". *Mother Jones*, 2012, <https://www.motherjones.com/crime-justice/2012/08/what-is-a-mass-shooting/> . Accessed 6 Feb 2020.

Fridel, Emma E. "Journal Of Interpersonal Violence". *Journal Of Interpersonal Violence*, 2017, p. 7. Doi:10.1177/0886260517739286 . Accessed 1 Mar 2020.

Garret, Ben. "President Barack Obama And Gun Rights". *Thought.Co*, 2019, <https://www.thoughtco.com/president-barack-obama-and-gun-rights-721329>. Accessed 5 Sept 2020.

GOLDSMITH, MICHAEL. "Farmer Kills 14 In Shooting Spree; His Mother, Sister Die". *AP News*, 1989, <https://apnews.com/25396571d604d41b333f8b44bfb57d99> . Accessed 21 Feb 2020.

Gramlich, John, and Katherine Schaeffer. "7 Facts About Guns in The U.S.". *Fact Tank*, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/10/22/facts-about-guns-in-united-states/>. Accessed 15 Mar 2020.

Grier, Peter. "NRA Defends Ad with Obama Daughters. Right or Wrong?". *The Christian Science Monitor*, 2013, <https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/Decoder/2013/0117/NRA-defends-ad-with-Obama-daughters.-Right-or-wrong>. Accessed 6 Sept 2020.

H. Utter, Glenn, and James L. True. *The Evolving Gun Culture in America*. p. 67, <https://booksc.xyz/book/9905477/404cf5>. Accessed 16 Mar 2020.

Hammack, Maria Esther. "A Brief History Of Mass Shootings". *Behind The Tower*, 2016, <http://behindthetower.org/a-brief-history-of-mass-shootings>. Accessed 1 Mar 2020.

Henriques, Jasmine. "Mass Shootings In America: A Historical Review". Global Research, 2013, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/mass-shootings-in-america-a-historical-review/5355990>. Accessed 14 Feb 2020.

J. Cook, Philip, and Kristin A. Goss. *The Gun Debate What Everyone Needs to Know*®. Oxford University Press, 2014, [http://The Gun Debate: What Everyone Needs to Know® \(pdfDrive.com\)](http://The Gun Debate: What Everyone Needs to Know® (pdfDrive.com)). Accessed 18 Aug 2020.

J. Ferguson, Christopher. *VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES, MASS SHOOTINGS, AND THE SUPREME COURT: LESSONS FOR THELEGAL COMMUNITY IN THE WAKE OF RECENTFREE SPEECH CASES AND MASS SHOOTINGS*. The Regents of The University of California,2014, pp.553,586, [https://watermark.silverchair.com/nclr\\_2014\\_17\\_4\\_553](https://watermark.silverchair.com/nclr_2014_17_4_553).Accessed 29 Aug 2020

Jenne, Jeremiah. "25 Years Ago Today: The Tian Mingjian Incident". Radian China, 2019, <https://radiichina.com/25-years-ago-today-the-tian-mingjian-incident/>.Accessed 20 Feb 2020.

Johnson, Timothy. "Fox & Friends Hypes Flawed Link Between Mass Shootings and Video Games". *Media Matters For America*, 2013, <https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-friends/fox-friends-hypes-flawed-link-between-mass-shootings-and-video-games>. Accessed 29 Aug 2020.

Kareem, Abdul. "Today In History: April 26, 2002: Eighteen Die In German School Shooting". Gulf News, 2017, <http://il 25, 2017 16:48> . Accessed 21 Feb 2020 .

Knighton, Tom. "History Of Mass Shootings In The United States". *Bearing Arms*, 2019, <https://bearingarms.com/tom-k/2019/03/31/history-of-mass-shootings-in-the-united-states/> . Accessed 22 Feb 2020.

Knoll IV, M.D., James L., and George D. Annas, M.D., M.P.H. *Mass Shootings and Mental Illness*. American Psychiatric Association Publishing, 2016, pp. 83,84,85, <https://www.psychiatryonline.org/doi/pdf/10.5555/appi.books.9781615371099>. Accessed 13 Aug 2020.

Lemieux, Frederic. "Six Undeniable Facts About Mass Shootings". THE NEW REPUBLIC, 2015, <https://newrepublic.com/article/125004/six-undeniable-facts-mass-shootings>. Accessed 4 Feb 2020.

Lord, Debbie. "Mass Shootings Definitions Can Vary". Atlanta Journal Constitution, 2017, <https://www.ajc.com/news/national/what-mass-shooting-definitions-can-vary/xXdAVuOJrxoeoW0i1Q92mM/>. Accessed 4 Feb 2020.

LORENZI, ROSSELLA. "Mass Shootings Have Long History Killing Or Trying To Kill A Mass Of People Is Neither A Modern Nor A Uniquely American Phenomenon". *Seeker*, 2012, <https://www.seeker.com/mass-shootings-have-long-history-1766324673.html>. Accessed 1 Mar 2020.

M. Metzl, Jonathan, and Kenneth T. MacLeish. "Mental Illness, Mass Shootings, And the Politics of American Firearms". 2014. *American Journal of Public Health (Ajph)*, doi: <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302242>. Accessed 27 Aug 2020.

Melzer, Scott. *Gun Crusaders: The NRA's Culture War*. New York University Press, 2009, pp. 35-43, [http://file:///C:/Users/Admin/AppData/Local/Temp/Gun%20Crusaders%20The%20NRA's%](http://file:///C:/Users/Admin/AppData/Local/Temp/Gun%20Crusaders%20The%20NRA's%20)

Merod, Anna. "How Has the NRA Has Responded to Mass Shootings Over Years". *NBC NEWS*, 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/orlando-nightclub-massacre/how-nra-has-responded-mass-shootings-over-years-n592551>. Accessed 7 Sept 2020.

Musa, Sam. "The Impact of NRA On the American Policy". *Journal of Political Sciences & Public Affairs*, vol 4, no. 4, 2016, pp. 1-6., doi:10.4172/2332-0761.1000222. Accessed 2 Sept 2020.

Peralta, Eyder. "A List Of The Deadliest Mass Shootings In Modern U.S. History". *The Two-Way*, 2016, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/06/12/481768384/a-list-of-the-deadliest-mass-shootings-in-u-s-history>. Accessed 2 Mar 2020.

Phillips Davis, Rosie. "Statement of APA President in Response to Mass Shootings in Texas, Ohio". *American Psychological Association*, 2019, <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2019/08/statement-shootings>. Accessed 28 Aug 2020.

Portero, Ashley. "Progressive Issues In The Early 1900S". *Classroom*, 2018, <https://classroom.synonym.com/progressive-issues-early-1900s-18101.html> . Accessed 29 Feb 2020.

Puhanic, Andrew. "The Real Cause of Mass Shootings and Why Gun Control Will Never Work". *Activist Post*, 2012, <https://www.activistpost.com/2012/08/the-real-cause-of-mass-shootings-and.html>. Accessed 29 Aug 2020.

R. Morral, Andrew et al. *The Science of Gun Policy A Critical Synthesis of Research Evidence on The Effects of Gun Policies in The United States*. RAND Corporation, 2018, p. v, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2000/RR2088/RAND\\_RR2088.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2000/RR2088/RAND_RR2088.pdf). Accessed 17 Aug 2020.

Rao, Aishwarya. "Top 20 Worst And Deadliest Mass Shootings Ever". *Listovative*, 2016, <https://listovative.com/top-20-worst-and-deadliest-mass-shootings-ever/> /. Accessed 22 Feb 2020.

Scarinci, Donald. "History of U.S. Gun Laws". *Observer*, 2016, <https://observer.com/2016/06/history-of-u-s-gun-laws/>. Accessed 18 Aug 2020.



Smart, Rosanna. "Mass Shootings: Definitions And Trends". *Rand Organization*, 2018, <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/mass-shootings.html>. Accessed 3 Feb 2020.

Sommerlad, Joe. "How Was the NRA Founded and How Did A Gun Lobby Become So Influential in American Politics?". *Independent*, 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/nra-national-rifle-association-history-gun-control-second-amendment-oliver-north-a8887286.html>. Accessed 1 Sept 2020.

Strait, Megan D. Enoch Brown: A Massacre Unmatched. 2010, <http://pabook2.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/Enoch.html>. Accessed 21 Feb 2020.

Van Brunt, Brian, and Lisa Pescara-Kovach. "Debunking the Myths: Mental Illness and Mass Shootings". *Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., Publishers*, 2019, <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/vio.2018.0016>. Accessed 27 Aug 2020.

Vulcan, Nicole. "What Are The Major Political & Cultural Issues Of The 1960S?". *The Classroom*, 2019, <https://www.theclassroom.com/major-political-cultural-issues-1960s-23221.html>. Accessed 1 Mar 2020.

Willingham, AJ. "Why Mass Shootings Are Defined By 'Modern' History". CNN, 2017, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/06/us/mass-shooting-vegas-modern-history-definition/index.html>. Accessed 4 Feb 2020.

Woods, Ian. "Something Has to Be Done About Mass Shootings...And The NRA". *The Red & Black*, 2015, [https://www.redandblack.com/views/something-has-to-be-done-about-mass-shootings-and-the-nra/article\\_a09d366c-a4a2-11e5-aead-8b7994e4a48e.html](https://www.redandblack.com/views/something-has-to-be-done-about-mass-shootings-and-the-nra/article_a09d366c-a4a2-11e5-aead-8b7994e4a48e.html). Accessed 7 Sept 2020.