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### **Gun Control and Abortion: Centrality and Committed Action Revisited and Expanded**

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Gun Control and Abortion: Centrality and Committed Action  
Revisited and Expanded

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GUN CONTROL AND ABORTION: CENTRALITY AND COMMITTED ACTION  
REVISITED AND EXPANDED

Introduction

As evidenced by the almost continuous debate at all levels of government, gun control and abortion policies are controversial. They have occasioned many disputes in Minnesota. These issues are what Schuman and Presser called "hot issues" as they arouse passionate attitudes. It appears overall opinion formation in both areas is fairly stable. With respect to gun regulation most Americans favor tougher restrictions but not complete bans. Americans are a bit ambivalent on abortion with most wanting to keep it safe and legal but many have moral questions about it.

A frequently given hypothesis for the inability of legislatures to pass stronger gun laws or to restrict rather than enlarge the ability to obtain legal abortions is that minorities feel stronger about their positions than does the majority. Therefore, it is contended, it is advisable for political decision-makers to heed the passionate or intense minority.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Schuman and Presser, in a series of reports, examined the intensity factor in the hot issue areas of abortion and gun control. Their research cast doubts about the

intensity difference between the pros and antis with respect to gun permits. They found it useful to distinguish between intensity and centrality. Intensity refers to subjective strength of feeling as reported by the respondent. Centrality refers to subjective importance as self-reported by the respondent. Their research indicated that centrality was a better measure of discrimination. Therefore, they suggested the use of the centrality measure combined with reports on relevant behavior.

The purpose of this research is to measure the views of Minnesota adults on gun regulation and abortion measures with respect to centrality and committed action. The research attempts to examine these issues one month before a presidential/state election and during a non-election period. The Schuman and Presser committed action measure was expanded and a question was added which sought to gauge communication efforts of gun and abortion related organizations (see appendix for question wording and overall frequency results).

### **Schuman and Presser's Results**

Table 1 indicates Schuman and Presser found little difference between pros and antis with respect to centrality. In 1978 respondents who favored gun permits had slightly higher levels of centrality. Their examination of committed action indicated antis had higher levels that were almost three times as large as those reported by pros. The implications of their findings were:

[TABLES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE]

If we trust these self-reports as approximately accurate, then politicians, editors, and others who take stands on the gun-permit issue will hear from GP opponents noticeably more often than from GP proponents, even though it is the latter who clearly dominate in the country. Moreover, beyond their willingness to write letters, GP opponents are even more conspicuous in donating money to their cause. This no doubt multiplies the effectiveness of their communication system, and it also doubtless plays an important role in election campaigns when financial support is given to one candidate rather than another. Even these results may underestimate the activity of antis, since we did not obtain frequency of letter writing or amounts of contribution. (Schuber and Presser, 240)

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Schuman and Presser's 1978 and 1979 abortion questions indicated those who favored the restrictive abortion positions held their attitudes with appreciably greater strength and were about three times as likely to engage in committed actions. The strength of the antis attitudes would be strengthened by their ability to articulate their views through organized actions.

[TABLES 3 AND 4 ABOUT HERE]

They noted: "What these findings seem to suggest-albeit without direct evidence-is an efficient lobby against gun control legislation, which is able to activate adherents whenever necessary, whereas those on the other side remain unable to come together for effective action."

### Methodology

The SCSU Survey is an ongoing survey research arm of the Social Science Research Institute in the College of Social Sciences at Saint Cloud State University. Members of the Political Science and

Sociology Departments are annually responsible for at least one omnibus, which is usually statewide, survey.

The results discussed in this paper are from two SCSU Surveys. The first is based on results from an instrument administered during October, 1988 and the second was administered April, 1990. After training, the interviews were conducted by SCSU political science and sociology students from the SCSU Survey Research Laboratory. Both surveys employed Random Digit Dialing with the samples prepared by Survey Sampling Inc. of Fairfield, Connecticut. Respondents were selected using the Trolldahl-Carter selection method. Very few substitutions were allowed. Each number was called up to five times over the period of a week and appointments were made as necessary. Most calls were made after 5:00 P.M. There were 801 completed interviews in the October, 1988 survey and 754 in the April, 1990 instrument. The surveys had 58 and 71 questions respectively. Each survey matched statewide census and other demographic data quite well although they were weighted for gender. The completion rate for each survey was approximately 65%.

### **Purpose**

Schuman and Presser's study was reexamined and expanded for several reasons. We wanted to see if the results were still applicable after 10-12 years, especially for Minnesota. Often, while discussing these issues the media and academic literature still emphasizes the importance of artis' intensity, particularly in regards to gun regulation. For example, two current American government texts pose the following:

[ A leading text's public opinion chapter asked students to put themselves in place of Congressperson Norman Shumway, a Republican member from California about to cast a vote on the Brady Amendment. The text shows a Gallup Poll indicating 91% nationwide support but much N.R.A. opposition. Norman Shumway and a majority (228-182) in the House voted against the Brady Amendment.]

Why? Elected public officials are sensitive not only to the percentage of the public that supports a particular measure, but also to the intensity of feeling. Many gun owners hold intense opinions....A weak majority will often lose when pitted against an intense minority. (Welch, et. al.)

Another text had a boxed feature in a public opinion chapter which presented the following;

A 1981 Gallup Poll indicates that 65% of the American people favor requiring a license to carry a handgun outside of the home. Suppose that you are a member of the House of Representatives and your constituencies feelings about handgun licensing are similar to those found in the Gallup Poll.... On the face of it, you could safely vote for stronger handgun controls. However, you know from experience that opponents to strict handgun control feel much more intensely about the issue than do supporters....which faction of your constituency should you side with: the overwhelming majority that cannot be called on to back you on election day or the small, intense minority that feel very strongly about the issue? That is the intensity problem for legislators (Harrigan, 87).

We also sought to expand the committed action question to include organization activity. Joining a group that is concerned about gun control or abortion is a form of committed action and organizations should have members in order to stimulate organized political activity. The committed action question was followed by a question seeking to measure organizations' political communication efforts. We were also interested in measuring the effect of the Supreme Court's 1988 Webster v. Reproductive Health Services decision. Media reports often indicated Americans who favored legalized abortion were becoming stronger in their feelings. Some speculate

the basis for this increased strength of feelings was pros could be passive when they had won, but the real possibility of seeing legal abortion restricted has activated them.

### SCSU SURVEY FINDINGS

The SCSU overall findings on gun control, abortion and on other questions in the surveys closely parallel equivalent state and national surveys. Minnesotans, like Americans nationwide, are almost evenly divided on the question of forbidding handguns. Over 90% favor a national seven day waiting period which is also reflected in national surveys. The minority who oppose all abortions appear to be decreasing.

### Gun Regulation Results

The gun regulation results match Schuman and Presser's findings. We chose to focus on the more restrictive handgun ban issue because of the small numbers that opposed the seven day waiting period. Waiting period results were basically similar to the handgun question. The 1988 survey found those who favored forbidding handguns (pros) were more likely to state this issue was more important to them when they voted than did antis by a 36% to 20% margin (16% difference). Almost two years later, in a nonelection year, both pros and antis had increased their views of the importance of the issue 43% to 28% (15% difference). These committed action differences are consistent with those found by Schuman and Presser even though their gun questions referred to police permits and not banning handguns. Their centrality questions



were more focussed on Congressional elections while our questions referred to voting in general.

[TABLES 5,6 & 7 ABOUT HERE]

Schuman and Presser found 7% of the pros and about 20% of the antis had engaged in committed action such as writing a letter or giving money. The 1988 SCSU results were similar as 7% of the pros claimed to have written a letter, given money or joined an organization compared to 17% of the antis. However two years later, in a nonelection period, the levels of committed action had risen to 13% and 25%. The abortion questions yielded comparable findings.

Neither Schuman and Presser or the SCSU Surveys measured the frequency of activities. It is interesting to note in 1988, 21% of the pros who engaged in committed action participated in multiple activities compared to 59% of the antis. Four percent of the pros joined an organization scattered among multiple organizations such as Handgun Control. Nine percent of the antis joined an organization with almost all naming the National Rifle Association. In April, 1990 the figures for multiple activities rose to 26% for those who favored banning handguns and 77% for those who opposed the ban.

Respondents who indicated organization membership were asked if they had received any communication from their gun regulation related organization. The question in 1988 was framed to solicit opinions about the next month's presidential and state elections. Those respondents in the April, 1990 who indicated they belonged to a gun related organization were asked to recall communications over the past several months about political issues or candidates. Due

to small numbers for this question the results must be interpreted cautiously. 62% of the eight pros who belonged to a pro gun regulation organization reported receiving communications in 1988 compared to 59% (n=17) in 1990. In 1988 54% of the antis (n=33) said they received communication (n=33) and this had increased to 63% in 1990 (n=61).

In a period of less than two years both sides increased their strength of feelings about this issue. Both sides increased their committed actions, especially organization membership. The basic thrust of the Schuman and Presser findings appear to be supported in Minnesota. The public policy victories of the antis is not due to greater centrality, but to their ability to enhance their political visibility due to higher levels of committed action. Their committed action is magnified by higher levels of organization membership. The pros are less likely to belong to an

[TABLE 8 ABOUT HERE]

organization and are dispersed among several groups. By a two to one margin antis are more likely to belong to an organization, almost all to the N.R.A. The antis are much more likely to engage in multiple activities. The N.R.A. may be increasing its efforts to activate its members into political action.

### Abortion Results

The SCSU Survey results correspond to the nationwide Schuman and Presser data. Minnesotans who wish to limit abortion think the issue is more important when they vote than do those who have more

[TABLES 9-12 ABOUT HERE]

permissive views. In 1988, 53% of Minnesotans who favored a more restrictive abortion policy said abortion was one of the most important or very important issues when they voted compared to 31% of the pros-a 22% difference. As was the case with the gun control issue, both sides increased their centrality in less than two years. The pros centrality rose to 45% and the antis to 77% ( 32% difference). The Webster decision may be having the effect of increasing the importance of the issue for both sides. However, instead of the latent majority being activated because of a perceived loss of the right, the antis who feel stronger about abortion may sense the possibility of winning, perhaps further galvanizing them into actions.

There is a difference between the gun and abortion issue with respect to multiple acts of participation by those who engage in committed action. Handgun antis not only engaged in higher levels of committed action over both years but had over a two to one margin in multiple activities. With respect abortion, 13% of the pros in 1988 and 26% of the antis engaged in committed action-a 12% difference. In 1990, the pros increased their committed action to 22% and the antis to 51%-a 29% difference. These findings must be tempered by the realization that the October, 1988 and April, 1990 questions were slightly different. Also, the 1990 survey is comparing two polar differences, those who said never and those who said personal choice. If the "never" category is eliminated the differences between the other three categories are reduced.

With regard to organization members who reported receiving communications from their group there are some confusing patterns. Between the two sides on the gun issues there were no significant differences in either survey and the levels of group contact was relatively stable. With respect to abortion, in 1988 there was a significant difference as those who favored the limiting position on abortion who were much more likely to report a recent contact from their group regarding the upcoming election-65% for the antis and 24% for the pros. Less than two years later it appears organizations representing members with more permissive views had substantially increased their contact activities. There appears to be a some decline in contact activity by organizations representing respondents with more restrictive views on abortion.

### Conclusions

basic thrust of s and p supported

organizaion aspect of contact activity which they didnt measure  
quote from their book which an effective national organization  
could channel subjective feelings into committed action

do organizations do more in off years to condition the environment  
than one month before the election when most people may have made  
up their minds in other words election year activity may actually  
represent a decrease

gain of votes for politicians on some gun issues-may lose committed  
action loss of votes and committed action on abortion?

## REFERENCES

Harrigan, John. 1987. Politics and the American Future 2<sup>nd</sup>. New York, New York: Random House.

Schuman, H. and S. Presser. 1981. Questions and Answers in Attitude Research. New York, New York.: Academic Press.

Welch, Susan et.al. 1988. American Government. 3<sup>rd</sup>. St. Paul: West Publishing Company.

Table 1

Schuman and Presser's Centrality of Opinion by Gun Permit Response

| Feb. 1976        | Pro-GP | Anti-GP | Aug.1978 | Pro-GP | Anti-GP | Marg. |
|------------------|--------|---------|----------|--------|---------|-------|
| one of most imp. | 3.1%   | 7.3%    |          | 5.4%   | 7.7%    | 6.3%  |
| very important   | 25.4   | 16.3    |          | 22.4   | 25.5    | 23.6  |
| somewhat imp.    | 41.0   | 44.4    |          | 38.7   | 28.4    | 34.5  |
| not too imp.     | 30.5   | 32.0    |          | 33.5   | 38.5    | 35.5  |
|                  | -----  | -----   |          | -----  | -----   | ----- |
|                  | 100    | 100     |          | 100    | 100     | 100   |
|                  | (393)  | (178)   |          | (313)  | (208)   |       |

$$x^2=9.91 \text{ df}=3$$

$$p<.02$$

$$x^2=6.3 \text{ df}=3$$

$$p<.10$$

Their gun question was: Would you favor a law which would require a person to obtain a police permit before he could buy a gun, or do you think such a law would interfere too much with the right of citizens to own guns?

Their centrality question was: How important is a candidate's position on permits for guns when you decide how to vote in a Congressional election--it is one of the most important factors you would consider, a very important factor, somewhat important, or not too important?

Table 2

Schuman and Presser's Self-Reported Behavior on the Gun Permit Issue-1978

| Behavior Reported     | Position on Gun Permits                 |             |
|-----------------------|---|-------------|
|                       | Pro-GP                                  | Anti-GP     |
| Written a letter      | 3.7%                                    | 6.5%        |
| Given money           | 1.7 } 7.1%                              | 7.7 } 20.4% |
| Both letter and money | 1.7                                     | 6.2         |
| Neither               | 92.9                                    | 79.6        |
|                       | -----                                   | -----       |
|                       | 100                                     | 100         |
|                       | (653)                                   | (417)       |
|                       | $x^2=46.4 \text{ df}=3, \text{ p}<.001$ |             |

Their committed action question was: Have you ever written a letter to a public official expressing your views on gun permits or given money to an organization concerned with this issue?

Table 3

Schuman and Presser's Centrality of Opinion by Position on Abortion

| March 1979       | Yes                | No    | July 1979 | Yes                | No    |
|------------------|--------------------|-------|-----------|--------------------|-------|
| one of most imp. | 3.6%               | 11.4% |           | 1.3%               | 11.5  |
| very important   | 17.6               | 37.3  |           | 16.8               | 43.6  |
| somewhat imp.    | 37.6               | 31.8  |           | 32.3               | 20.5  |
| not too imp.     | 41.2               | 19.4  |           | 49.7               | 24.4  |
|                  | -----              | ----- |           | -----              | ----- |
|                  | 100                | 100   |           | 100                | 100   |
|                  | (279)              | (201) |           | (155)              | (78)  |
|                  | $\chi^2=47.3$ df=3 |       |           | $\chi^2=35.9$ df=3 |       |
|                  | p<.001             |       |           | p<.001             |       |

Their March 1979 question was: Do you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if she is married and does not want any more children?

Their July 1979 question was: Do you feel a woman should allowed to have an abortion in the early months of pregnancy if she wants one?

Table 4

Schuman and Presser's Self-Reported Behavior on the Abortion Issue-July, 1979

| Behavior Reported     | Position on Legal Early Month Abortion |             |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|
|                       | Yes                                    | No          |
| Written a letter      | 1.5%                                   | 8.3%        |
| Given money           | 4.1 } 6.7%                             | 5.6 } 19.4% |
| Both letter and money | 1.1                                    | 5.6         |
| Neither               | 93.3                                   | 80.6        |
|                       | 100                                    | 100         |
|                       | (270)                                  | (144)       |
|                       | $\chi^2=19.5$ df=3, p<.001             |             |

Table 5

## SCSU Centrality of Opinion by Gun Permit Response

| Oct. 1988        | Forbid                | Not For. | Marg.   | 4/90                  | Not     | Marg.  |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------|---------|-----------------------|---------|--------|
|                  |                       |          |         | Forbid                | Forbid  |        |
| one of most imp. | 3%                    | 3%       | 3%      | 7%                    | 5%      | 6%     |
| very important   | 33}36%                | 17}}20   | 25 }28% | 36}43%                | 23 }28% | 30}36% |
| somewhat imp.    | 48                    | 47       | 48      | 44                    | 46      | 45     |
| not too imp.     | 16                    | 32       | 24      | 13                    | 26      | 19     |
|                  | -----                 | -----    | ---     | -----                 | -----   | -----  |
|                  | 100                   | 100      |         | 100                   | 100     | 100    |
|                  | (375)                 | (370)    | (745)   | (377)                 | (335)   | (711)  |
|                  | $\chi^2=40.2414$ df=3 |          |         | $\chi^2=26.4465$ df=3 |         |        |
|                  | p<.0000               |          |         | p<.0000               |         |        |

The question on forbidding guns is: Next, we would like you to share your views on a different topic. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that there should be a law forbidding the possessions of handguns except by police and other authorized persons? The gun question response for pros is a combination of strongly agree/agree and antis are disagree/strongly disagree on whether there should be a law forbidding the possession of handguns.

The centrality question is: When you vote, how important is a candidate's position on gun control?-Would you say it is one of the most important factors you would consider, a very important factor, somewhat important, or not too important?



Table 6

SCSU Self-Reported Behavior on the Gun Forbid Issue-Oct. 1988

| Behavior Reported<br>-----     | Position on Gun Permits |                     |                 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
|                                | Forbid<br>-----         | Not Forbid<br>----- | Margin<br>----- |
| Joined organization            | .5%                     | 5.0%                | 2.8%            |
| Organization & letter          | .5                      | 1.0                 | .8              |
| Organization & money           | 1.0                     | 2.0                 | 1.3             |
| Organ./letter/money            | 1.0                     | 1.0                 | 1.0             |
| Letter                         | 2.0                     | 2.0                 | 2.0             |
| Money                          | 2.0                     | 5.0                 | 3.7             |
| Letter & money                 | 0.0}7%                  | 1.0}17%             | .2              |
| Nothing/Don't know             | 93.0                    | 83.0                | 88.0            |
|                                | -----                   | -----               | -----           |
|                                | 100                     | 100                 |                 |
|                                | (381)                   | (373)               | (754)           |
| $\chi^2=26.0130$ df=7, p<.0005 |                         |                     |                 |

The committed action question is: Have you ever written a letter a letter to a public official expressing your views on gun ownership, joined an organization, or given money to an organization concerned with this issue? (IF YES)-What have you done?

Table 7

SCSU Self-Reported Behavior on the Gun Forbid Issue-April 1990

| Behavior Reported<br>-----     | Position on Gun Permits |                     |                 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
|                                | Forbid<br>-----         | Not Forbid<br>----- | Margin<br>----- |
| Joined organization            | 1.3%                    | 10.2%               | 5.6%            |
| Organization & letter          | 1.1                     | 2.2                 | 1.6             |
| Organization & money           | .0                      | 3.4                 | 1.6             |
| Organ./letter/money            | .8                      | 2.2                 | 1.5             |
| Letter                         | 5.3                     | 1.7                 | 3.6             |
| Money                          | 3.7}12.5%               | 3.9}25.3%           | 3.8             |
| Letter & money                 | 0.2                     | 1.6                 | .9              |
| Nothing/Don't know             | 87.5                    | 74.7                | 81.4            |
|                                | -----                   | -----               | -----           |
|                                | 100                     | 100                 |                 |
|                                | (367)                   | (338)               |                 |
| $\chi^2=54.5612$ df=7, p<.0000 |                         |                     |                 |

Table 8

SCSU Report of Gun Organization Contact by Gun Forbid Position

|                     | <u>Oct, 1988 Contact Report</u> |            | <u>April, 1990 Contact Report</u> |            |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
|                     | Forbid                          | Not Forbid | Forbid                            | Not Forbid |
| Received<br>Contact | 62%                             | 54%        | 59%                               | 63%        |
| No Contact          | 38                              | 46         | 41                                | 37         |
|                     | -----                           | -----      | -----                             | -----      |
|                     | 100                             | 100        | 100                               | 100        |
|                     | (8)                             | (33)       | (17)                              | (61)       |
|                     | $\chi^2=.00229$                 |            | $\chi^2=.0000$                    |            |
|                     | df=1 p <.96                     |            | df=1 p 1.000                      |            |

The 1988 question is: Within the past month have you received any communication from that organization containing information about next month's presidential or state elections? (organization members only) The 1990 question is: Within the past several months have you received any information from that organization containing information about political issues or candidates?

Table 9

## SCSU Centrality of Opinion by Abortion Response

| Oct. 1988        | Agree                | Disagree | Marg.   | 4/90<br>Choice         | Never   | Marg.  |
|------------------|----------------------|----------|---------|------------------------|---------|--------|
| one of most imp. | 6%                   | 12%      | 9%      | 17%                    | 34%     | 19%    |
| very important   | 25}31%               | 41}}53   | 34 }43% | 28}45%                 | 43 }77% | 31}50% |
| somewhat imp.    | 44                   | 36       | 40      | 35                     | 15      | 32     |
| not too imp.     | 25                   | 11       | 17      | 20                     | 8       | 18     |
|                  | -----                | -----    | ---     | -----                  | -----   | -----  |
|                  | 100                  | 100      |         | 100                    | 100     | 100    |
|                  | (321)                | (445)    |         | (329)                  | (61)    |        |
|                  | $\chi^2=.70635$ df=3 |          |         | $\chi^2=222.2622$ df=3 |         |        |
|                  | p<.0000              |          |         | p<.0001                |         |        |

1988 Abortion Question: Now, let's turn to some questions concerning abortion. Would you please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning women and abortions. A woman should be able to obtain a legal abortion for any reason?

1990 Abortion Question: Next, let's turn to some questions concerning abortion. Would you please tell me if you think Minnesota law should

never allow a woman to have an abortion

or, the law should permit abortion only in cases of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger

or, the law should allow a woman to have a legal abortion in circumstances other than rape, incest or danger to the woman's life but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established.

or, the law should allow a woman to have an abortion as a matter of personal choice.

See gun control discussion for centrality question.

For 1990 the tables are based on differences between those believe abortion should never be allowed and respondents who stated it should be a matter of personal choice.

Table 10

SCSU Self-Reported Behavior on Abortion Issue-Oct. 1988

| Behavior Reported<br>----- | Position-Abortion Any Reason   |        |        |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|--------|
|                            | Favor                          | Oppose | Margin |
| Joined organization        | 1.%                            | 3% %   | 2%     |
| Organization & letter      | 0                              | 2      | 1      |
| Organization & money       | 3                              | 2      | 3      |
| Organ./letter/money        | 3                              | 1      | 2      |
| Letter                     | 2                              | 8      | 5      |
| Money                      | 2                              | 9      | 6      |
| Letter & money             | 2}13%                          | 1}26%  | 1      |
| Nothing/Don't know         | 87                             | 74     | 80     |
|                            | -----                          | -----  | -----  |
|                            | 100                            | 100    |        |
|                            | (320)                          | (444)  |        |
|                            | $\chi^2=42.1985$ df=7, p<.0000 |        |        |

For committed action question see gun control discussion.

Table 11

SCSU Self-Reported Behavior on Abortion Issues-April, 1990

| Behavior Reported<br>----- | Position on Abortion           |       | Margin |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|--------|
|                            | Personal Choice                | Never |        |
| Joined organization        | 3.%                            | 8% %  | 4%     |
| Organization & letter      | 1                              | 3     | 2      |
| Organization & money       | 2                              | 8     | 3      |
| Organ./letter/money        | 4                              | 7     | 4      |
| Letter                     | 5                              | 13    | 6      |
| Money                      | 6                              | 12    | 7      |
| Letter & money             | 1}22%                          | 0}51% | 1      |
| Nothing/Don't know         | 78                             | 49    | 73     |
|                            | -----                          | ----- | -----  |
|                            | 100                            | 100   |        |
|                            | (328)                          | (61)  |        |
|                            | $\chi^2=26.6883$ df=7, p<.0004 |       |        |

Table 12

SCSU Report of Abortion Organization Contact by Abortion PositionOct, 1988 Contact Report      April, 1990 Contact Report

|                     | Favor All    | Oppose | Personal<br>Choice | Never |
|---------------------|--------------|--------|--------------------|-------|
| Received<br>Contact | 24%          | 65%    | 63%                | 46%   |
| No Contact          | 76           | 35%    | 37                 | 54    |
|                     | -----        | -----  | -----              | ----- |
|                     | 100          | 100    | 100                | 100   |
|                     | (23)         | (33)   | (39)               | (18)  |
|                     | $x^2=7.7659$ |        | $x^2=.79061$ df=1  |       |
| df=1, p <.0053      |              |        | df=1 p .3739       |       |

# APPENDIX

## Gun Control Questions and Frequencies

Unless otherwise noted, the first number before the question indicates the 1988 placement in the S.C.S.U. Survey interview schedule while the second number indicates the 1990 placement.

14 & 29) Next, we would like you to share your views on a different topic. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that there should be a law forbidding the possessions of handguns except by police and other authorized persons?

|                   | 1988          | 1990          |               |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| strongly agree    | 21%           | 25%           | 95            |
| agree             | <del>28</del> | <del>26</del> | <del>36</del> |
| disagree          | <del>33</del> | <del>31</del> | <del>36</del> |
| strongly disagree | <del>14</del> | <del>16</del> | <del>29</del> |
| don't know        | 4 N=793       | 2 N=740       | 16            |
|                   |               |               | 5             |

15 & 30) Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose a national seven day waiting period before a handgun can be purchased in order to give authorities time to check to see if the prospective owner has a criminal record or been in a mental institution?

|                 | 1988          | 1990          |               |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| strongly favor  | 60%           | 66%           | 68            |
| favor           | <del>30</del> | <del>29</del> | <del>36</del> |
| oppose          | <del>4</del>  | <del>2</del>  | <del>3</del>  |
| strongly oppose | <del>2</del>  | <del>2</del>  | <del>2</del>  |
| don't know      | 4 N=795       | 1 N=743       | 1             |

16 & 31) When you vote, how important is a candidate's position on gun control?-Would you say it is one of the most important factors you would consider, a very important factor, somewhat important, or not too important?

|                                     | 1988          | 1990          |               |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| most important                      | 3%            | 5%            |               |
| very important                      | <del>24</del> | <del>29</del> | <del>46</del> |
| somewhat important                  | <del>47</del> | <del>45</del> | <del>37</del> |
| not too important                   | <del>24</del> | <del>19</del> | <del>16</del> |
| don't know/don't vote added in 1990 | 2 N=794       | 2 N=744       | 1             |

17) (NOT IN ANALYSIS) Do you agree or disagree that stronger licensing requirements such as a national seven day waiting period in order to buy a handgun would lead to even more gun control laws?

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
|            | 1998 ONLY |
| agree      | 58%       |
| disagree   | 32        |
| don't know | 10 N=792  |

18 & 32) Have you ever written a letter a letter to a public official expressing your views on gun ownership, joined an organization, or given money to an organization concerned with this issue? (IF YES)-What have you done? 95

|                           | 1988  | 1990    |    |
|---------------------------|-------|---------|----|
| joined organization       | 3%    | 5%      |    |
| organization and letter   | 1     | 2       |    |
| organization and money    | 1     | 2       |    |
| organization/letter/money | 2     | 1       | 11 |
| letter only               | 2     | 3       |    |
| money only                | 3     | 4       |    |
| letter and money          | 1     | 1       |    |
| nothing                   | .87   | 81      | 79 |
| don't know                | N=794 | 1 N=733 |    |

19 & 33) (FOR THOSE WHO JOINED AN ORGANIZATION) Cold you please tell me the name of the group?

|                              |    | 1988    | 1990      |    |
|------------------------------|----|---------|-----------|----|
| combined anti-gun regulation | 4% | 81%     | 9% 85%    | 10 |
| combined pro-gun regulation  | 1  | 5       | 1 9       | 1  |
| don't know/none              | 95 | 14 N=46 | 90 6 N=81 |    |

20-1988) Within the past month have you received any communication from that organization containing information about next month's presidential or state elections? (organization members only)

34-1990) Within the past several months have you received any information from that organization containing information about political issues or candidates?

|                 |    | 1988   | 1990      |   |
|-----------------|----|--------|-----------|---|
| yes             | 3% | 52%    | 6% 59%    | 9 |
| no              | 2  | 43     | 4 37      |   |
| don't know/none | 95 | 5 N=45 | 90 4 N=82 |   |

#### Abortion Questions and Frequencies

21) 1988 Only--Next, let's turn to some questions concerning abortion. Would you please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning women and abortions.

agree

A women should be able to obtain a legal abortion for any reason----- 41%  
 (IF AGREE THE NEXT SIX QUESTIONS WERE SKIPPED)  
 (BECAUSE OF SKIP PATTERNS, AGREE RESPONSES WERE COMBINED WITH PERMISSIVE RESPONSES ON QUES. 22-27. DISAGREE ON QUESTION 22 COMBINED WITH LIMITING RESPONSES ON QUES. 23-27.

22) A woman should not be able to obtain a legal abortion for any reason.----- 23%  
 (IF AGREE THE NEXT FIVE QUESTIONS WERE SKIPPED)

23) A woman should be able to obtain a legal abortion if her health is seriously endangered by by the pregnancy----- 73%

agree

- 24) A woman should be able to obtain a legal abortion if she becomes pregnant as a result of rape or incest.----- 69%
- 25) A woman should be able to obtain a legal abortion if there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby.----- 80%
- 26) A woman should be able to obtain a legal abortion if the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children.----- 45%
- 27) A woman should be able to obtain a legal abortion if she is married and does not want any more children.----- 44%

35) 1990 ONLY- Next, let's turn to some questions concerning abortion. Would you please tell me if you think Minnesota law should

- never allow a woman to have an abortion  
or, the law should permit abortion only in cases of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger  
or, the law should allow a woman to have a legal abortion in circumstances other than rape, incest or danger to the woman's life but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established.  
or, the law should allow a woman to have an abortion as a matter of personal choice.

never-----  
rape,incest, life in danger-----  
other than rape, incest, life in danger-----  
personal choice-----  
don't know-----

|         |     |    |
|---------|-----|----|
|         | 119 | 95 |
| 9%      | 9   | 7  |
| 30      | 32  | 26 |
| 13      | 10  | 15 |
| 46      | 47  | 49 |
| 2 N=729 | 2   | 3  |

28 & 38) When you vote, how important is a candidate's position on abortion?-Would you say it is one of the most important factors you would consider, a very important factor, somewhat important, or not too important?

|                                     | 1988    | 1990    |        |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| most important                      | 9%      | 16%     | 10     |
| very important                      | 34      | 34      | 3233 9 |
| somewhat important                  | 39      | 32      | 35 37  |
| not too important                   | 17      | 16      | 30 35  |
| don't know/don't vote added in 1990 | 1 N=785 | 2 N=735 | 2      |
|                                     |         |         | 9 9    |



29 & 37) Have you ever written a letter a letter to a public official expressing your views on abortion, joined an organization, or given money to an organization concerned with this issue? (IF YES)-What have you done?

|                           | 1988     | 1990     |    |    |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----|----|
| joined organization       | 2%       | 3%       |    |    |
| organization and letter   | 1        | 2        |    |    |
| organization and money    | 3        | 2        |    |    |
| organization/letter/money | 2        | 3        |    |    |
| letter only               | 5        | 7        |    |    |
| money only                | 6        | 7        |    |    |
| letter and money          | 1        | 1        |    |    |
| nothing                   | 80 N=781 | 75 N=724 | 74 | 76 |
| don't know                |          |          |    |    |

30 & 38) (FOR THOSE WHO JOINED AN ORGANIZATION) Could you please tell me the name of the group?

|                        | 1988 |         | 1990 |         |
|------------------------|------|---------|------|---------|
| combined anti-abortion | 4%   | 45%     | 7%   | 39%     |
| combined pro-abortion  | 3    | 35      | 4    | 48      |
| don't know/none        | 93%  | 20 N=56 | 89%  | 13 N=76 |

31-1988) Within the past month have you received any communication from that organization containing information about next month's presidential or state elections?

39-1990) Within the past several months have you received any information from that organization containing information about political issues or candidates?

|                 | 1988 |        | 1990 |        |
|-----------------|------|--------|------|--------|
| yes             | 3%   | 45%    | 6%   | 53%    |
| no              | 4    | 49     | 5    | 43     |
| don't know/none | 93   | 6 N=60 | 89%  | 4 N=81 |