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Uncovering Data on Hartford Firearms

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Faculty Advisor: Professor Sarah Raskin

Community Partners: CT Against Gun Violence & Hartford Communities that Care



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Introduction

- While hundreds of illegal firearms are confiscated in Hartford every year, there is a staggering lack of publicly-available information on these guns.
- This lack of data has posed a considerable challenge to policymakers, activists, and local organizations committed to reducing gun violence.
- Obtaining this sensitive information demands significant time and resources, a great obstacle to our community partners.
- Accordingly, our research sought to **provide data on types of recovered firearms, the recovery location, and the crime associated with the recovery.**

Community Partners

Founded in 1993, **CT Against Gun Violence** is committed to reducing gun violence through public education and legislative advocacy.

Established in 2005, **Hartford Communities that Care** is dedicated to partnering with community members to create a non-violent and drug free environment.

Research Questions

- What types of firearms are recovered?
- What criminal offense is associated with each weapon?
- What is the geographic distribution of the firearms recovered in Hartford?

Data Collection

As we sought data that was not publicly available, we **cultivated a network of contacts** with access to this information.

From the Major Crimes Unit of the Hartford PD, we received information on **639 guns recovered in Hartford between Jan. 1, 2018 and Oct. 26, 2019.**

Key Definition:

Recovered Firearm – A firearm confiscated by police following a crime or other associated incident, due to either illegal usage, ownership, or both.

Translating Raw Hartford Police Department Data

Neighborhood	Gun Type	Gun Model	Associated Crime
CPNEIGH	CPITEM	CPBRAND	CPUCR1CAT
NORTHEAST	TAURUS .45 CAL HNDGN	PT 24/7	04* - AGGRAVATED ASSAULT
ASYLUM HILL	M1 CARBINE RIFLE	.30 CAL	29* - FOUND PERSON/PROPERTY
BARRY SQUARE	REVOLVER S&W	MODEL 29-2	12* - WEAPONS OFFENSES

Cleaning Data: The data obtained from the Hartford PD (displayed above) was heavily coded and difficult to interpret. It was necessary to reorganize and clean the data.

Evaluating Results: We determined the **three data sets** most valuable to our community partners.

Visualizing Data: We then visually represented our data in a more accessible format than the original Excel sheets.

Connecticut Gun Laws

- ✓ Requires background checks for all gun sales
- ✓ Licensed open carry state – a valid permit is required to carry a handgun openly or concealed
- ✓ Limits high capacity ammunition magazines
- ✓ All assault weapons are illegal unless grandfathered in before July 1994
- ✓ Recently adopted red flag laws – removing guns from those deemed an imminent risk

Key Findings

While assault weapons dominate national discourse on gun reform, handguns constitute the vast majority of firearms removed from Hartford's streets.

Gun seizures are concentrated in the North East and South End neighborhoods.

Recovered firearms were rarely associated with high profile crimes (i.e. murder, kidnapping, suicide). Rather they were seized in less sensationalized circumstances.

Limitations & Future Research

- Our analysis was limited to guns recovered by the Hartford PD over a 22-month period.
- This data sample provides valuable insight but does not necessarily represent all firearms in circulation.
- Time and informational constraints narrowed the scope of our research, limiting the analysis of our findings.

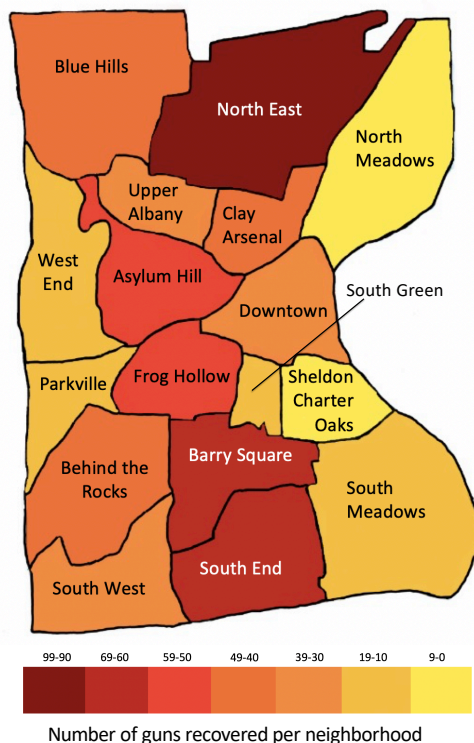
Directions for Further Research:

- Evaluating explanatory variables including crime and employment rates, income and educational disparities, and policing practices
- Identifying the origin state and initial point of contact of recovered firearms
- Tracing individual weapons that collectively comprise the iron pipeline

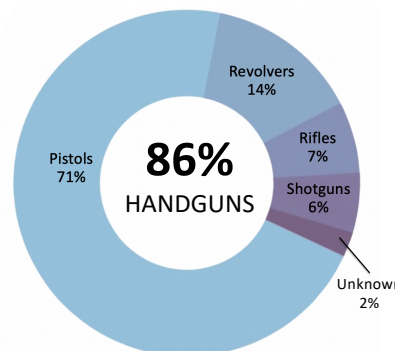
Acknowledgements

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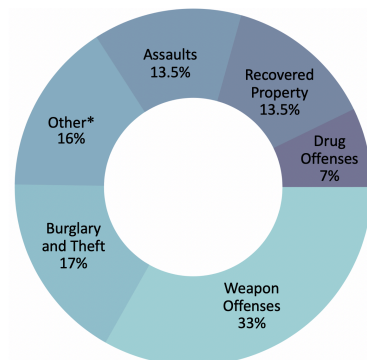
Neighborhood Distribution of Recovered Firearms



Type of Firearm Recovered



Crime Associated with Firearm Recovery



* Other includes kidnappings and suicides, among other crimes