**COURT OF DATA ON GUN CONTROL - February,7, 2023**

**2023 Data 101 – March 2, 2023 (presentations and discussion in class)**

**DATA & SOCIETY CHALLENGE**

You are assigned to one of two positions on gun control and you have to find all data you can to support it.

Google it. Research it. Make sure it is not “fake news”.

This is NOT a programming assignment, you do not need to run R, plot data yourself (although you can if you want to). I You need to find reputable sources on the web, which support your position. Reputable – means among many other things, non-partisan. Avoid obviously pro-gun lobbies like NRA, and obviously anti-gun lobbies like liberal media. Or at least treat their information with grain of salt. It is not “fake data” which is your enemy here, but so called “cherry-picking” – selecting information which is supportive to their position and ignoring data which is not consistent with it.

Basically find the right sources, make screenshots of most convincing plots, add your interpretation and build an argument supporting your position. Be ready to present in class and help our discussion.

Only **data-driven arguments** should be included. No anecdotal evidence, and too bad if you yourself disagree with the position assigned to you. Data can cover USA or other countries, can consider different gun laws in different countries and their historical impact (increase/decrease of crime).

Just imagine that you work for a lobbyist who pays a lot of money to go and argue for one of the two positions: Your presentation should reflect positions you are taking. You need to be prepared for tough questioning!

**POSITIONS:**

**AGAINST:** You are going to argue using \*data\* not emotions or anecdotes that American society does not need any more gun control measures than it currently has. You will make a point that more guns mean actually less crime, since weapons in hands of law abiding citizens are excellent deterrent against crime. You can for example find historical data on the web to back it up - and show that concealed weapons help to stop criminals.

**FOR**: You are going to argue using \*data\*, not \*emotions\* or anecdotes that we have too many guns in US already and that we definitely need more gun control laws. Less guns is less crime. For example, you may argue by showing data from other countries which have strict gun laws.

**What position you take**: You have no choice 😊

If your last name starts **from A to L** (including L) you will argue **AGAINST.**

If Your name starts with **M to Z** you will argue **FOR.** You need to submit power point slides (there is really no upper limit, but at least 10) with data and sources of this data (URL) + why do your trust them? + interpretation to support your position.

Prepare 15 minute presentation with perhaps no more than 10-15 slides and be ready to be a discussant in class on Thursday, March 2nd. We will let you know if you were selected couple of days before!

Remember Data, data and data – all arguments you make should be data driven. And you should address the quality of data you use. Why do you trust it? Is there anything missing? Is cherry-picking taking place? Be self-critical, since your opponents will be critical of you. Be prepared.

Include references to web sites that you included and justify why you trust them.

Avoid slides with text only – make screenshots of plots which you find specially convincing**. Remember VISUALS are key** – talk over visuals, rather than have audience read your slides.

Always think that you may be presenting and be asked to defend your position using your presentation in front of the class! Put your best effort.

Please address the following questions:

1. Is your data to be trusted?

2.  Is there cherry-picking present? Is there bias, like partisan bias - whose web site are you quoting, whose publication?

3.  Is data statistically  significant (sample size?)

4. May we be fooled by data? - for example it is possible that hidden variables are ignored?