



# Examining a Dataset on Gun Shows in the US, 2011–2019

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RESEARCH



## ABSTRACT

Gun shows are public gatherings where licensed gun dealers and private gun owners use formal and informal venues to exchange information or sell and buy firearms, accessories, and ammunition. A major challenge is that gun shows, unlike established business locations, can be considered gray zones where regulatory loopholes facilitate the movement of legal firearms to illegal domains both domestically and internationally. Given this, they tend to feed into gun trafficking schemes. Despite this, gun shows are poorly monitored. Moreover, these events are not tracked by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and what little is known comes from academic studies, press releases, or outdated ATF reports. To address this gap, update information, and generate a better understanding of how gun shows connect with gun trafficking, we generated a gun show dataset in the US from 2011 to 2019. We compiled information on promoted gun shows from three main sources, The National Rifle Association Magazine and the websites Gun Show Trader and Shooting Illustrator. We completed our dataset by looking at other minor sources that promoted gun shows. Our dataset encompasses information of 20,691 gun shows and suggests that 71% of them occurred in states where background checks were not required during gun sales between private individuals. We argue that scholars and practitioners will find in this dataset an original tool to analyze gun shows and their impact on public security and public health.

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This paper presents and discusses a database on gun shows put together in the US between 2011 and 2019. The database shows that, over this time, at least 20,691 gun shows were promoted and advertised in that country, an average of 2,299 gun shows per year (See annex). While the gun shows took place all over the country, three out of every ten gun shows occurred in just five states—Texas, Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. The relevance of gun shows and their assessment is paramount as gun shows allow unlicensed dealers to display, buy, and sell firearms. As we argue in this paper, permissive laws, legal loopholes, and lack of oversight can turn gun shows into sources of crime in the US and beyond. Despite this, gun shows have been barely analyzed by the literature. To address this gap, we built the dataset and we now address its importance. The main objective is to allow researchers to use the presentation to examine temporal and spatial patterns of gun shows, and to study the relevance of gun shows in the dynamics of gun trafficking in the US and other countries.

## INTRODUCTION

For decades, there has been a robust, often acrimonious, conversation on the role that guns play in American society and politics. Politically, gun issues have polarized society and legislators in Congress, making it nearly impossible to pass any broad legislation on gun control since the 1990s (Spitzer 2020), although there seems to be some progress in 2022. Regardless, guns are often linked to crime and violence, as tens of thousands of individuals lose their lives in the US due to guns—a little fewer than 40,000 in 2019 alone (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2021). When compared to average rate of other developed nations, the United States presents a rate of gun deaths per every 100,000 people that is 11.4 times higher (Grinshteyn and Hemenway 2019). These deaths include homicide, suicides, and accidental shootings.

This situation is, to some degree, the result of the gun industry's campaigns to defend and expand gun rights and its links to the country's political system. These efforts and links have made the gun industry a powerful actor and lobby, lowering the probability of stemming the flow of guns in the US. The leading gun lobbying group (the National Rifle Association, NRA) spends about 3 million dollars per year influencing gun policy (BBC News 2020). At the same time, the NRA grades politicians from A to F in terms of their positions on gun-related policies (Bump 2018). This in turn persuades NRA members to vote either in favor or against a particular candidate, depending on the received grade. Whether persuaded by financial contributions or fear of the NRA's support towards rival candidates, policymakers often opt to vote in alignment with the gun lobby.

In recent decades, the gun industry in the US has grown considerably. Close to 4.5 million firearms were manufactured during 2008, and this figure grew to 9 million by 2019, the year with the latest available data (US Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives 2021). This growth in gun manufacturing and distribution has been driven by the production of rifles and high caliber pistols, weapons associated with higher levels of lethality (Smith et al. 2017). The volume of guns in civilian hands has also increased. Estimates indicate that while there were close to 192 million guns in civilian hands in 1994, this figure rose to 265 million by 2015 (Azrael et al. 2017). A 2018 study estimated that there were close to 393 million civilian-held legal and illicit firearms in the US, more than one firearm for every US citizen (Karp 2018). When compared to other countries, the US is the country with the highest rate of gun ownership per capita, 120 firearms per every 100 people (Karp 2018). The country with the second highest gun ownership per capita is Yemen with 52 gun per every 100 people (Karp 2018). In other words, the United States' level of gun ownership is more than twice as high as the country with the second highest rate.

Moreover, many guns are diverted to illegal markets and used in crimes not only in the US but also abroad. Within the country, it is estimated that over 440,000 non-fatal violent crimes involved the use of a gun, and 14,414 homicides were perpetrated with a firearm in 2019 (US Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Statistics 2019; US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2021). When compared to the average rate of other developed countries, the US presents a rate of gun homicides per every 100,000 people that is 25 times higher (Grinshteyn and Hemenway 2019). Gun theft is also common in the US with studies and reports indicating that 380,000 firearms are stolen every year from gun owners and

more than 6,000 from Federal Firearm Licensed FFL dealers (Hemenway et al. 2017; Parsons and Weigend 2017). The number of stolen firearms is staggering when compared to other nations. While roughly 380,000 firearms are stolen in the US every year, reports indicate that only 239 firearms were stolen in England and Wales in a single year, from April 2020 to March 2021 (Government of the United Kingdom 2021). Interstate gun trafficking is also common in the US. A recently published report found that from 2015 to 2019, 330,350 guns recovered after a crime had previously crossed state lines. What is more, close to 76% of those firearms originated in states with no background check requirements during private sales (Everytown for Gun Safety 2021). This supports previous studies that indicate that interstate gun trafficking flows from states with more permissive gun laws to those with stronger gun laws (Knight 2013).

Given the flow of US weapons into other countries' illegal markets, American guns are recovered in crimes perpetrated in destination countries. Data from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) indicates that 70 percent of guns recovered in Mexico, for example, originate in the US and gun shows are a frequent source of those weapons (US Government Accountability Office 2016). Also, a large percentage of firearms recovered in Central American and Caribbean countries can also be traced back to the US. In this regard, there are numerous ways by which these firearms are entering these countries. For example, according to a report from Insight Crime, US firearms are trafficking to Honduras in airplanes as well as hidden in cargoes of other legally imported goods such as clothes or toys (Dudley 2017). Firearms can also be trafficked inside appliances such as televisions (Insight Crime & Asociación Para una Sociedad más Justa 2017). Finally, not all US-sourced firearms are illegally smuggled to Central American and Caribbean countries; some are legally imported and later diverted to criminal networks within each nation (US Government Accountability Office 2022).

Guns not only travel south; they also also flow north. From 2013 to 2018, more than 10,900 US guns were recovered in crimes in Canada (US Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives 2020). In this regard, US guns are easily acquired in cities near the border and trafficked to Canada. Here, gun shows have played a role. In 2019, a man purchased US firearms at a gun show in Maine and later smuggled them to Canada. These weapons were used to perpetrate Canada's worst mass shooting in recent history (MacDougall 2021).

In the complicated landscape of US guns, gun shows may be a key in understanding their flow from legal domains to criminal networks. Thus, the objective of this study is to introduce a dataset on promoted gun shows in the US between 2011 and 2019, to present a brief descriptive analysis of the dataset, and to outline potential paths for further research. Information for the dataset came primarily from *The National Rifle Association Magazine* and the websites *Gun Show Trader* and *Shooting Illustrator*. We complemented the dataset by searching for gun shows promoted online. However, there is limited information on past gun shows and only a few cases were added from that source. For our descriptive analysis, we explored state level trends, including the frequency with which gun shows occurred in states that do not mandate background checks for private sales.

A more specific aim of this paper is to contribute to the relatively small but relevant literature on gun shows, and to add to the work of scholars interested in understanding gun acquisition patterns, interstate gun trafficking flows, the mechanics of gun diversion in the US and abroad, and the relationship between gun shows and gun violence.

This article is divided into four sections. Section one discusses the nature and character of gun shows, including their definition and their relevance when discussing the interlocking aspects of gun trafficking. Section two describes our methodology for building the dataset and provides the reader with information on the reach and length of the data. This section also presents a brief descriptive analysis of what the database reveals. Section three presents potential lines for future research. Our conclusions are in section four.

## 1) GUN SHOWS: THE VANISHING POINT

Gun shows are defined by the ATF as 'exhibitions or gatherings where firearms, gun parts, ammunition, gun accessories, and literature are displayed, bought, sold, traded, and discussed' (US Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Evaluation and Inspection Division 2007). Gun shows occur in numerous locations across the US such as convention centers, parking lots, or fairgrounds. These events create opportunities for Federally Firearm Licensed

dealers (FFL) to expand sales outside their business location within their state. However, while gun shows provide law abiding citizens the opportunity to acquire guns and accessories from diverse sellers, permissive laws, legal loopholes, and lack of oversight can turn these events into sources of crime guns (Parsons and Gerney 2015; Wintemute 2019). That is because at the same time that FFLs participate in gun shows, unlicensed dealers are also able to display, buy, and sell firearms in them, even though they are not legally registered as being ‘engaged in the business’—where being ‘engaged in the business’ means that a person is repeatedly purchasing and selling guns for profit (US Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives 2016). No license is required to make ‘occasional sales, exchanges, or purchase of firearms’ (US Code). This means that US unlicensed dealers identifying themselves as occasional sellers or collectors can do both: buy and sell firearms at gun shows. Nonetheless, unlicensed gun dealers who are not permitted to routinely engage in the business of selling guns repeatedly sell firearms without a license at gun shows.

In this regard, while some gun shows have a special area that works as a marketplace for private party gun sales, other shows offer attendees the possibility of carrying their own gun with ‘for sale’ signs affixed to the gun or to themselves. Thus, it is not a coincidence that foreign governmental entities such as Canada’s Criminal Intelligence Service have referred to American gun shows as a ‘serious threat’ (Wintemute 2007).

The consequence of this lax environment around weapons is that these shows provide opportunities for guns to be bought and sold, leaving little or no trace. They are also the vanishing point for thousands of guns that end up in criminal hands—in the US and abroad. A 2000 investigation conducted by the ATF found that 30 percent of firearms linked to gun trafficking were bought in gun shows (US Department of the Treasury Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives 2000).

Unlicensed dealers are not the only ones that can be implicated in selling guns linked to gun trafficking: FFL dealers have been investigated for gun trafficking schemes at gun shows. A 1999 report from the Departments of Justice and Treasury and ATF informed that 23 percent of subjects of investigation associated with gun shows were current FFL dealers (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms 1999). In 2009, New York City conducted an undercover investigation at gun shows in Nevada, Ohio, and Tennessee. They reported that, even though illegal, 94 percent of approached licensed dealers were willing to sell firearms to straw purchasers—individuals who are authorized to buy guns, but who acquire them on behalf of a third person (City of New York 2019).

Moreover, licensed gun dealers found to have broken the law seldom face any consequences. Unlicensed participants in gun shows would presumably be held even less accountable than FFLs. Unlicensed sellers, in fact, often violate requirements to obtain a federal firearm license before engaging in the business of selling guns, but only occasionally do they face any penalties. In March 2020, for example, three gun-show vendors in Texas pleaded guilty to engaging in the business without previously obtaining a federal license. They also admitted that many of those guns were sold to individuals that, under Federal law, should not be in possession a gun (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives 2020). Similarly, in October 2019, a Nevada gun show unlicensed dealer was charged with selling firearms multiple times (instead of occasional sales) despite not having a federal license. At least ten firearms sold at those gun shows were recovered as part of criminal investigation (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives 2019). In 2021, a man pleaded guilty and could face up to five years in prison (Downs 2021). Nonetheless, legal actions against this type of gun violations are rare.

Gaps in federal law also facilitate trafficking at gun shows. Under federal law, FFL dealers must conduct background checks on all buyers, regardless of whether sales occur at gun shows or not (see 27 C.F.R. § 478.100(c) of US law). This requirement, however, does not apply to unlicensed sellers. This means that, under federal law, individuals prohibited from purchasing a firearm can do so with no questions asked from unlicensed sellers at gun shows. A recent study indicates that less than 50 percent of private sellers make any effort to check the eligibility of potential buyers (Merrill-Francis et al. 2021).

There have been recent attempts to pass federal bills that would address this problem. In March 2021, the US House of Representatives passed H.R. 8, a bill that would expand the background check requirement to include private sales at gun shows and other locations (Brown 2021). However, efforts to pass this bill in the Senate have been futile (Benen 2021).

However, while Federal law sets standards on gun possession and acquisition as well as oversight of the gun industry, states can go beyond federal laws and adopt stricter measures. As of January 2021, sixteen states and the District of Columbia had gone beyond federal standards and passed laws that require background checks at the point of sale or a permit to purchase—which would require a background check—before any firearm transaction can occur at a gun show (Giffords 2021). Another six states passed similar requirements but only for handguns, leaving open the sale and purchase of long guns by unlicensed dealers with no questions asked. That still leaves 28 states where individuals prohibited by law from purchasing a firearm can acquire any type of gun from an unlicensed dealer at a gun show with no background check.

Despite the importance of gun shows in the flow of firearms in many different directions, surprisingly little is known about these events. A 1999 ATF report estimated that more than 4,000 gun shows take place every year. A 2007 report estimated that there were between 2,000 to 5,200 gun shows in the US every year (US Department of Justice. *The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives* 2007). It is hard to estimate how many are organized in other years since, given the dearth of data on them. That is, despite their ubiquity and importance to the gun industry, the ATF acknowledges that there are no official sources that compile data on gun shows, and organizers are not required to report these events to the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms 1999). Lack of resources and interest in the topic has hampered the ATF ability to conduct research (Center for American Progress 2020).

Even with a lack of official data, studies to understand the dynamics and impacts of gun shows have been conducted. A 2007 cross-sectional observational study compared 28 gun shows in Arizona, Nevada, Texas, and Florida—where background checks for unlicensed sellers were not required—to those occurring in California, a state with stricter gun regulations. The paper showed a relationship between the flow of guns and regulation. The study concluded, for example, that California's policies were associated with lower gun sales involving illegal straw purchases and with lower sales of assault weapons (Wintemute 2007).

A 2017 analysis compiled data from gun shows in Nevada and California from 2005 through 2013. The authors used a published list of gun shows and analyzed the association between these events and short-term increase in gun-related injuries in California. Results showed that those gun shows occurring in Nevada, with more lax gun regulations, were linked to higher levels of injury in California. In contrast, gun shows in California did not show a significant association with crime, suggesting a positive effect of California's stricter policies (Matthay et al. 2017). Other studies have analyzed and described cultures around gun shows (Burbick 2006).

A major concern with gun shows is how they can facilitate the flow of firearms to criminal networks. Another concern is how they can be venues for people prohibited (by state or federal law) from owning a gun to get access to a firearm. Similarly, gun shows can be sites for unlicensed vendors to sell stolen firearms or firearms reported as missing by their owners. This is relevant since gun shows offer sellers the opportunity to recycle those guns. This is not a minor concern in a country where gun theft is a problem. Based on FBI data, a Center for American Progress study estimated that between 2012 and 2015 nearly half a billion dollars' worth of guns were stolen from individuals nationwide, amounting to some 1.2 million guns (Parsons and Weigend 2017).

The relevance of the flow of guns from legal domains to criminal networks and the lack of research and information about this is what led us to compile a data base on gun shows in the US. The next section describes our methodology for building the dataset, discusses its limitations, and presents a brief descriptive analysis.

## 2) THE DATASET

As already mentioned, gun shows are not monitored or tracked by any government agency. Therefore, information on gun shows is challenging. Our dataset includes information on gun shows promoted and advertised in various media and scheduled to take place within US states between 2011 and 2019. It includes the outlet or web page where each gun show was promoted or advertised, the state and region where each gun show was scheduled, and the day, month, and year of the gun show. For most cases, the dataset also includes the name of the event and the name of the organization promoting the event. Finally, the dataset incorporates at least

one city where the gun show was promoted or advertised, keeping in mind that a single gun show can be promoted or advertised across multiple cities, adjacent and even far away. The dataset is presented as an appendix.

For compiling the dataset, we relied on three major sources. First, we compiled information about gun shows promoted and advertised on the *NRA Magazine* from 2011 to 2019. This information was gathered from the Houston Public Library. Another two major sources were the webpages *Gun Show Trader* and *Shooting Illustrator*, which promote and advertise gun shows annually. Finally, we completed data looking at other websites. A few gun shows were added directly from later sources. We removed repeated gun shows (duplicate promotions and advertisements in multiple sources).

The dataset includes 20,691 gun shows that promoted and advertised between 2011 and 2019, an average of 2,299 gun shows per year. The number of shows rose every year from 2011 to 2015, decreased slightly in 2016, and rose during 2017. That year had the highest number of promoted and advertised gun shows, with 2,704 scheduled events. There was a slight decrease in the number of promoted/advertised shows over the 2018–2019 period. While it is unclear what COVID-19 did to gun shows, news reports and Attorney General press releases evidenced that even during the most difficult months of the pandemic straw purchases of firearms continued in different gun shows across the US (Lauer 2021). This indicates that there is an enormous market for guns in the US, and that gun shows fulfill a market need, but that it is also difficult to know its characteristics.

Our dataset indicates that promoted and advertised gun shows are concentrated in a few states. Three out of every ten gun shows occurred in five states—Texas, Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. Texas alone has more gun shows than the combined 19 states with the lowest volume. In contrast, the five states with the lowest level of promoted/advertised gun shows were Rhode Island, Hawaii, New Jersey, Delaware, and Connecticut. From a public policy standpoint, it would be reasonable to pay attention to the states that concentrate the largest percentage of shows, if there is a genuine intention to control the flow of firearms to criminal networks while permitting legal and legitimate gun owners to possess guns.

The concentration of gun shows in a few states raises additional questions, which have to do with the nature of regulatory frameworks. To explore whether gun shows are more frequent in states that do not require background checks on private transactions, we compiled information from Giffords Law Center (2020). We grouped states into two categories according to background checks state laws. First, we grouped those states that do not require any form of background check during private gun sales. Second, we grouped states that require a background check on private sales at the point of transfer or mandate a permit to purchase before any transaction. These permits are a form of licensing that require a background check before being issued and occasionally require gun-related training. Six states passed background check legislation between 2011 and 2019. These are grouped into different categories across the years and even within specific years, dependent on the effective date of the legislation.

We found that gun shows are more frequent in states that do not require background checks during private transactions. Based on our figures, from 2011 to 2019, 71 percent of gun shows ( $n = 14,663$ ) occurred in states where background checks were not required during private transactions. This suggests that every week, at least 31 gun shows where background checks are not required for private sales take place. But the difficult political environment on guns makes passing regulations on private transactions difficult. Most opponents of gun regulations make the case that regulating gun shows can lead to a slippery slope—once gun shows are regulated, gun purchases and possession are next. There is no evidence for that claim, but they have made the argument successfully.

Our dataset is not without limitations. We count gun shows promoted or advertised in magazines and online sources, but we do not compile information on gun shows that were promoted/advertised only in small localities and to smaller or boutique audiences. Similarly, it is common that events promoted/advertised on websites are later deleted by their promoters and advertisers, making information tracing almost impossible. We also want to emphasize that the dataset encompasses promoted/advertised gun shows, but we could not verify if any were cancelled.

Another limitation is that not all shows are equal. While some might take place in flea markets or commercial discount stores and might bring just a few dozen interested buyers, others are held in convention centers and might attract thousands of people. They also differ in length. While some last a week, others might last a weekend or just a few hours. Thus, not all shows are equally important, their relevance varies, and our dataset does not make any distinction between them.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the dataset is an original tool—comprehensive of the reality of gun shows, and presents an opportunity for researchers to analyze gun shows and their impact on society through variables such as their characteristics, location, etc. The next section draws lines for research where the dataset might be useful.

### 3) FUTURE RESEARCH

The objective of the dataset is to allow researchers to use the information to analyze the temporal and spatial patterns of gun shows and to connect the data to other studies to shed light on the role of gun shows in the dynamics of gun trafficking in the US and other countries, among them Mexico. The connection between violence in that country and guns from the US has gained traction in the literature in recent years, given Mexico's high levels of gun violence. In this section, we present some discussions where the dataset can be useful. We focus on possible lines of research, such those that relate to patterns of gun acquisition, interstate gun trafficking flows, mechanics of gun diversion in the US, and the relationship between gun shows, criminal violence, suicide, and gun-related injuries.

Another relevant and fruitful debate where this dataset might help is in the discussion on the link between guns shows and violent crime. A crucial question to be answered is whether places with more gun shows tend to experience more homicide and violent crime. If a causal relationship can be established, a stronger argument for gun show regulations might be possible. Also, scholars might want to explore the probability that homicides, gun-related injuries, or violent crimes take place immediately after a gun show in a district or neighborhood. A cited study above shows that gun shows in Nevada and California between 2005 and 2017 had a link to short-term increases in gun-related injuries. The database will help to refute or confirm some of the conclusions of that study and to shed light on the existence of interstate gun trafficking flows from states with more permissive gun laws to those with stronger gun laws (Knight 2013).

The dataset is also useful to examine the link between gun shows and laws across the different states. For instance, between 2011 and 2019, 71% percent of gun shows occurred in states where background checks were not required during private transactions and most shows are concentrated in those states. But has that held over time? Is it possible to identify a trend along periods? Do places with more gun shows tend to cluster in time and space? Can a future be envisioned in which more states start mandating more background checks and fewer states become hotspots where gun shows will concentrate? What legislation would make a difference—e.g., background checks, raising the age of eligibility to purchase guns, etc.? These questions are more relevant today given congress' apparent willingness to pass legislation after the Uvalde, Texas, massacre in 2022.

Scholars will also be able to examine whether places with more gun shows tend to have higher levels of fear of crime. This is possible by using the dataset and the National Crime Victimization Survey. Likewise, by analysing both FBI Uniform Crime Reports and the dataset, scholars can map and examine if gun shows are more frequently organized in areas with high levels of gun theft.

Bringing Mexico back into the debate on the links between gun shows and violent crime is desirable and urgent. At least 70 percent of guns recovered in Mexico apparently originate in the US. However, the role of gun shows in facilitating the exportation of guns to Mexico, which is entirely illegal, remains unexplored. To address this gap, the dataset is helpful. For instance, scholars can explore if places with more gun shows are closer to the border than places with fewer events. This might not show causation, but it may show a correlation to be explored by other methods. Linking other databases can help establish the link. For example, using data from the Mexican Attorney General, scholars can examine the potential existence of a causal relationship between gun shows and homicides and violent crime across the border. Smart geo-positioning and mapping techniques may also help.

The dataset will also be useful to scholars interested in identifying the demographics of guns acquisition in the US. Previous studies have shown that gun ownership is concentrated and that gun owners are disproportionately male, white, older, and non-urban (Azrael et al. 2017). The dataset might help support this data by exploring if places with more gun shows are more racially heterogeneous and places with more gun shows are most organized in rural regions. It would be noteworthy to identify if places with more gun shows tend to have more NRA money supporting pro-gun candidates. Finally, more on the public health realm, the dataset can help answer the question of whether places with more gun shows tend to record more suicide and gun-related injuries.

The dataset is an important step in understanding guns shows and their impact on society. In this sense, the ATF should compile data on gun shows. Who are the main organizers? How many guns are sold per show? Who are the main sellers? Such data can shed light on the relevance of gun shows on overall gun trade. Similarly, NGOs should compile information on gun shows. These efforts can resemble those made by Gun Violence Archive, an NGO that collects information on different forms of gun violence.

## CONCLUSION

This work introduced a new dataset on gun shows scheduled in the US between 2011 and 2019. The dataset accounts for 20,691 shows promoted/advertised in three sources: *The National Rifle Association Magazine*, and the websites *Gun Show Trader* and *Shooting Illustrator*. According to the data, an average of 2,299 shows were held annually, a figure within the range reported by ATF (2,000 to 5,200 gun shows per year). It suggests that gun shows increased between 2011 and 2017, before a slight decrease in the 2018–2019 period. A first analysis of the dataset shows that 71 percent of gun shows (n = 14,663) occurred in states where background checks were not required for private transactions.

Notwithstanding, gun shows are poorly monitored and tracked by authorities. At the same time, there are few academic studies addressing these events and their impact. To fill this gap, we compiled our dataset, aiming to offer a useful tool to explore the temporal and spatial patterns around gun shows, and the role of gun shows in the interlocking dynamics of gun trafficking in the US and elsewhere. A final goal is to have scholars and activists use it for their own analysis.

## ADDITIONAL FILE

The additional file for this article can be found as follows:

- **Gun shows in the US 2011–2019.** Gun shows encompassed in this dataset include those promoted from 2011 to 2019. Information is broken down by region, state, location, and date of occurrence. The dataset includes at least one city where the gun show was promoted and, when available, the name of the organization promoting the gun show. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31389/jied.146.s1>

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- **Conception and design of study:** David Perez Esparza, Eugenio Weigend Vargas, Tony Payan, Carlos Pérez Ricart
- **Acquisition of data:** David Pérez Esparza
- **Analysis and/or interpretation of data:** Eugenio Weigend Vargas
- **Drafting the manuscript:** Eugenio Weigend Vargas, Tony Payan, and Carlos Pérez Ricart
- **Revising the manuscript critically for important intellectual content:** David Pérez Esparza, Eugenio Weigend Vargas, Tony Payan, and Carlos Pérez Ricart

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