

'A True Friend With Six Hearts'

Using Firearms to Cope with Psychological Threat

Nick Buttrick
University of Virginia



***New Directions
in the Social
Psychology
of Firearms***





Sara Medina-
DeVilliers



Wendy Wang



Tim Wilson



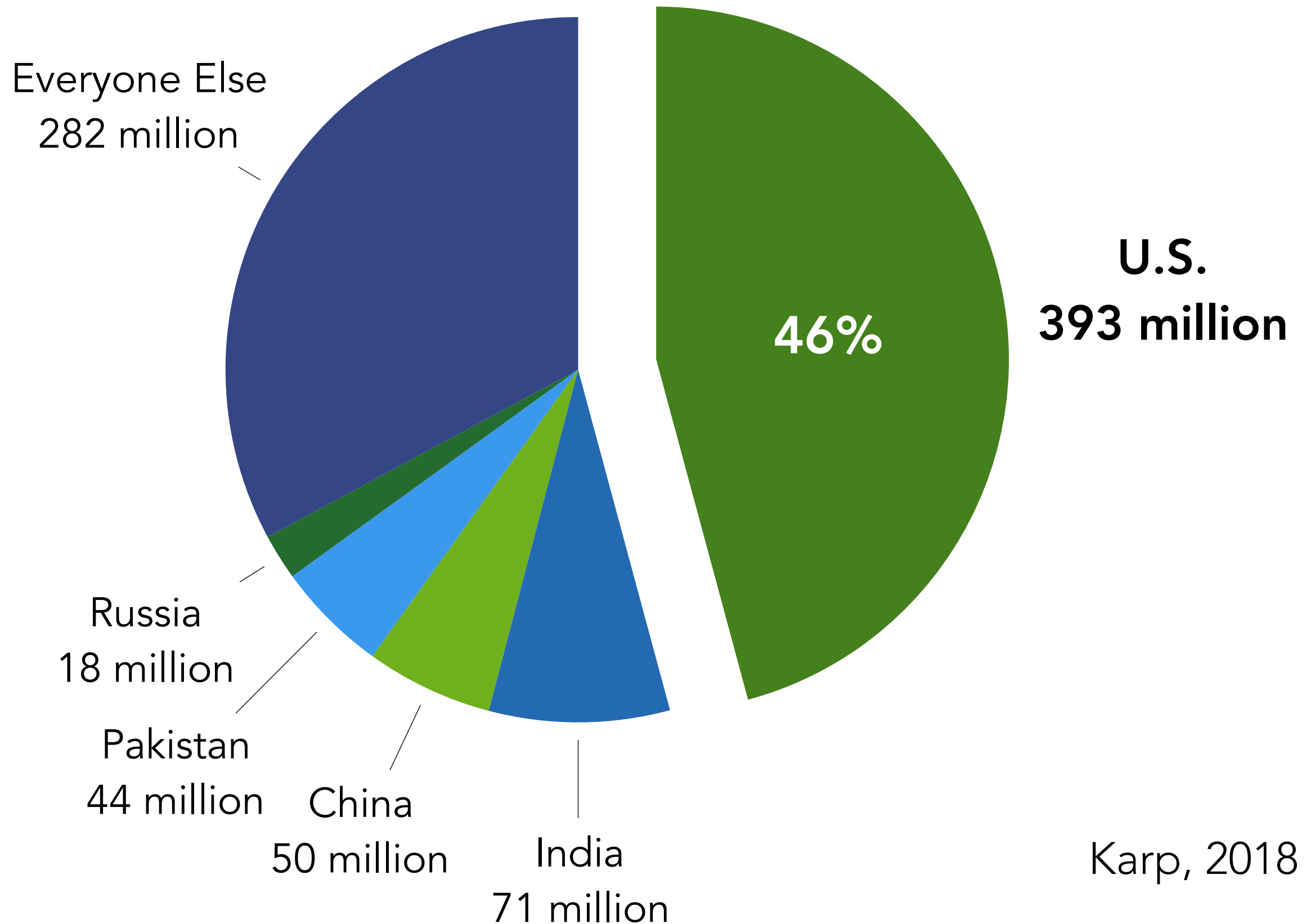
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Ana Rabogliatti
Brian Henriquez
Kincaid Youman
Campbell Edwards
Alex Hendel
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Caroline Luscko
Elyse Morris
Graham Gilliam
Jerome Romualdez
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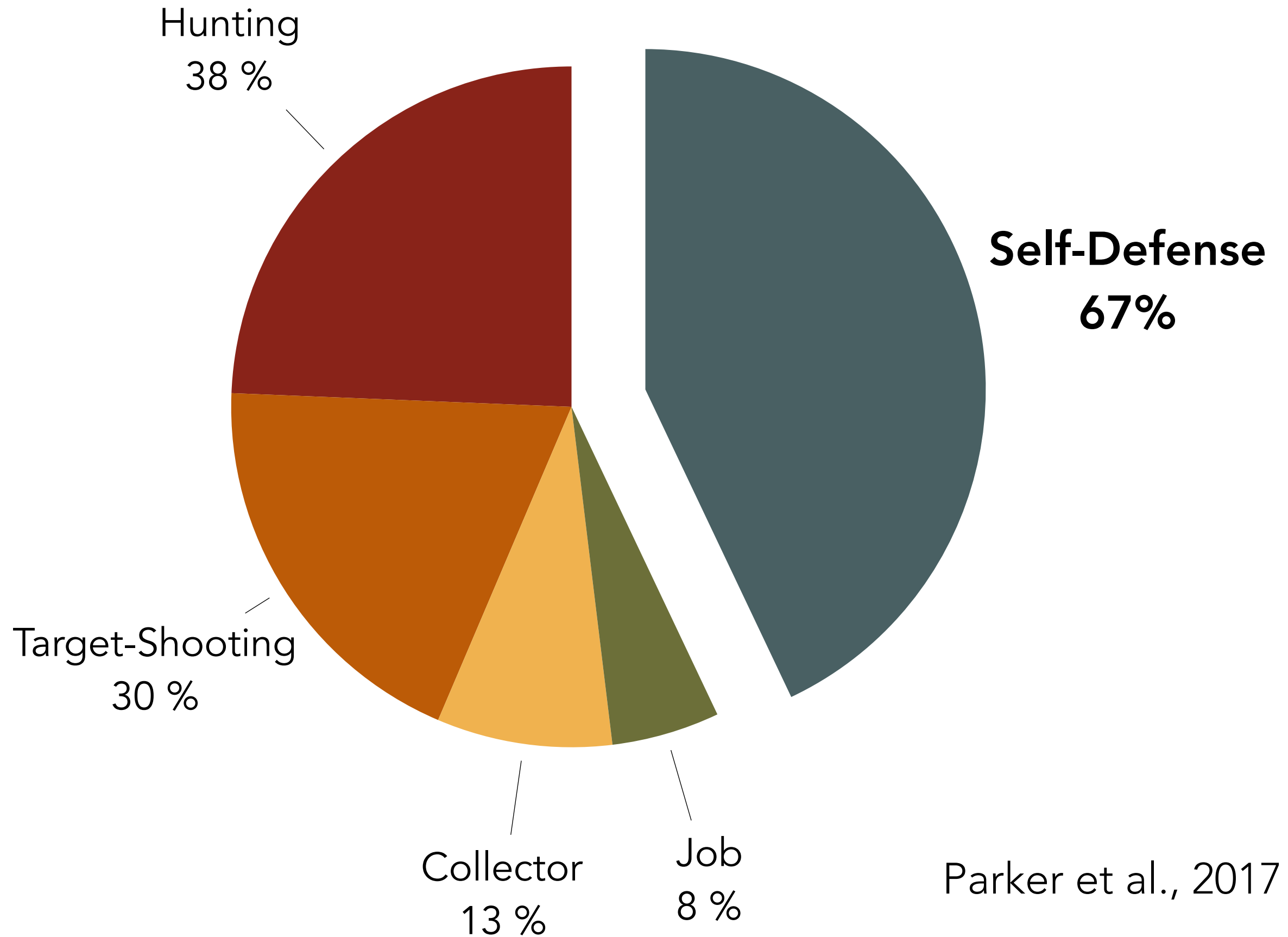


 **UVA ARTS & SCIENCES**
SOCIETY OF FELLOWS

Civilian-Owned Guns, Worldwide



Why Own a Gun?



Guns are Dangerous

- A gun in the house doubles the likelihood that a household member will be murdered violently, and triples the likelihood of death by suicide. Anglemeyer et al., 2014
- Increase in guns, increase in gun-related casualties; decrease in guns, decrease in gun-related casualties Jena & Olenski, 2018; Levine & McKnight, 2017
- Guns are used in self-defense in fewer than 1% of reported crimes Hemenway & Solnick, 2015; Planty & Truman, 2013
- In 'active shooter' situations, police recommend that people carrying firearms stay holstered Blair, Nichols, Burns, & Curnutt, 2013



State Gazette.

VOL. XI.

SEAT OF GOVERNMENT, AUSTIN, TEXAS, SATURDAY, MAY 5, 1860.

NO. 39.

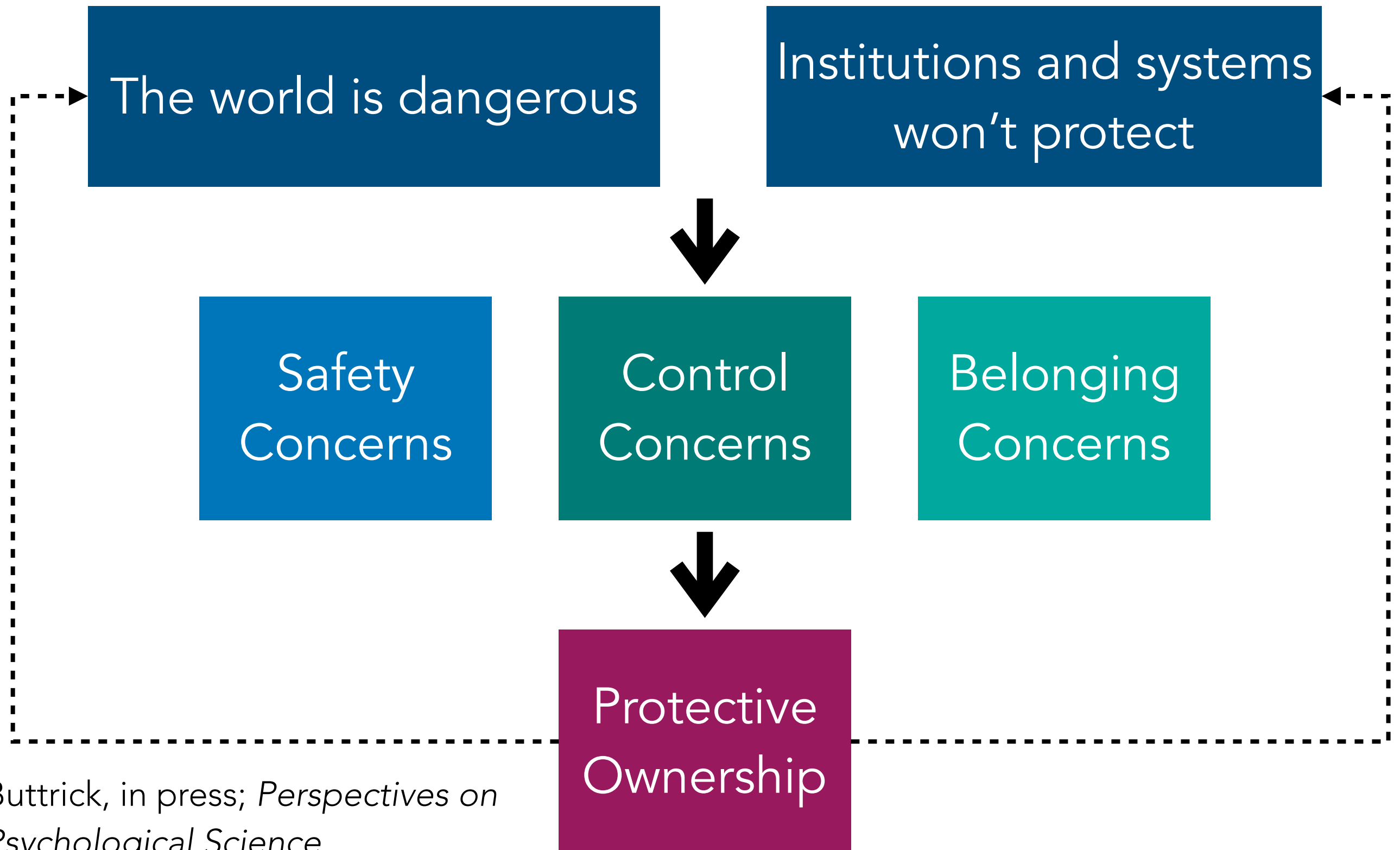
**COLT'S
PATENT FIRE ARMS**
Manufacturing Company.
Col. Sam. Colt, President.

 **PISTOLS, RIFLES,** 
CARBINES AND SHOT GUNS.
Great Reduction In Prices!
**Simple Reasons for Preferring Colt's
Arms to all others.**

10. If you buy a Colt's rifle or pistol, you feel certain that you have one true friend, with six hearts in his body, and can always be relied on.

10. If you buy a Colt's rifle or pistol, you feel certain that you have one true friend, with six hearts in his body, and can always be relied on.

The Coping Model of Protective Gun Ownership



A Paradigm



THREAT



SAFETY



—



CAVEAT!

$n = 43$

20 non-gun-owning; 23
gun-owning

Forces a simpler random
effects-structure

Data-cleaning is still
ongoing...

Non-Gun Owners

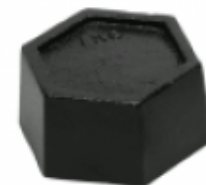
Gun Owners

More Calm

More Stressed

Inter-Beat Interval

Safety
Threat



800

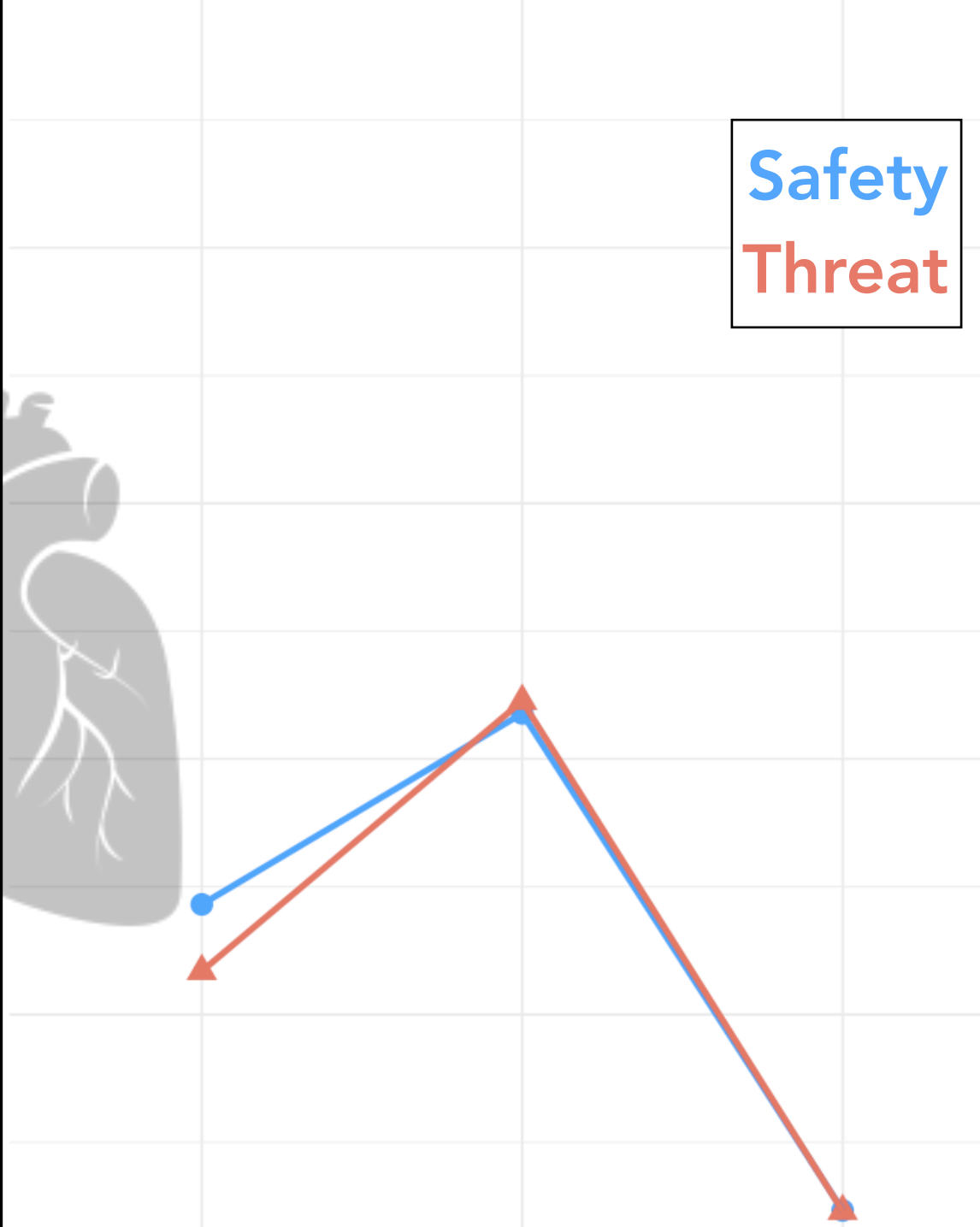
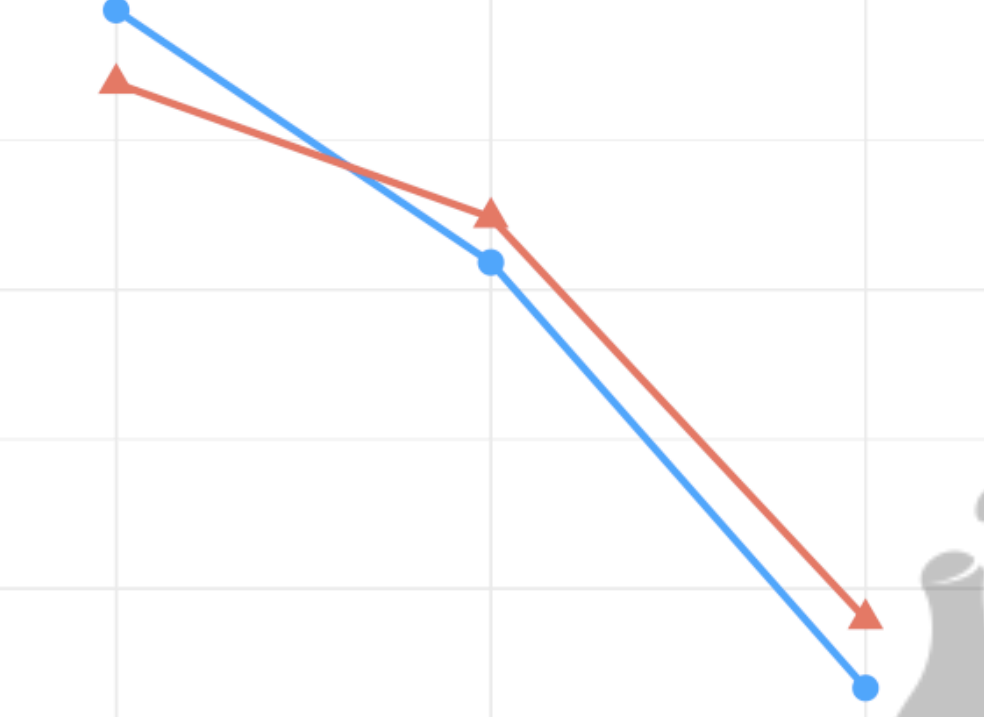
790

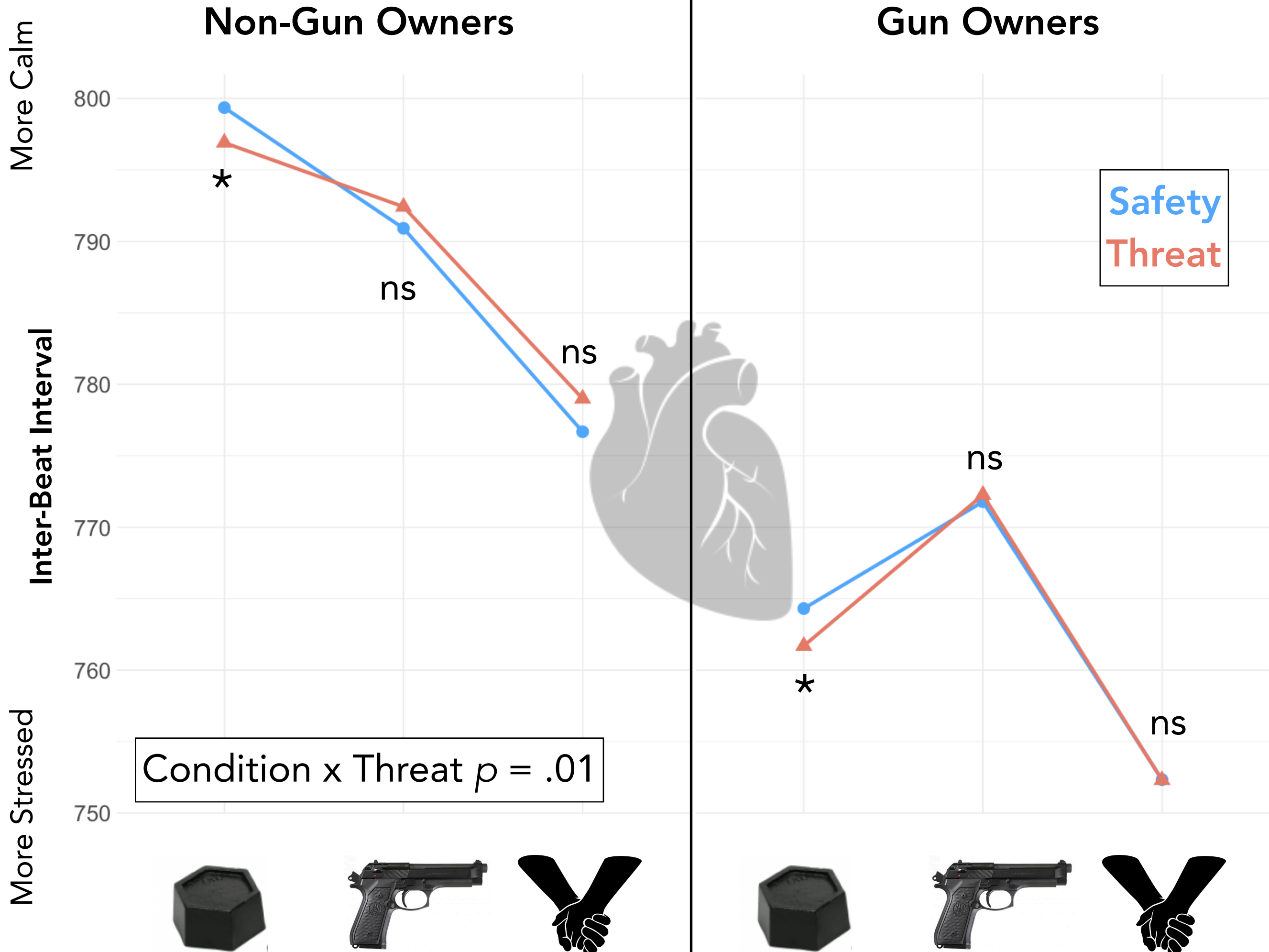
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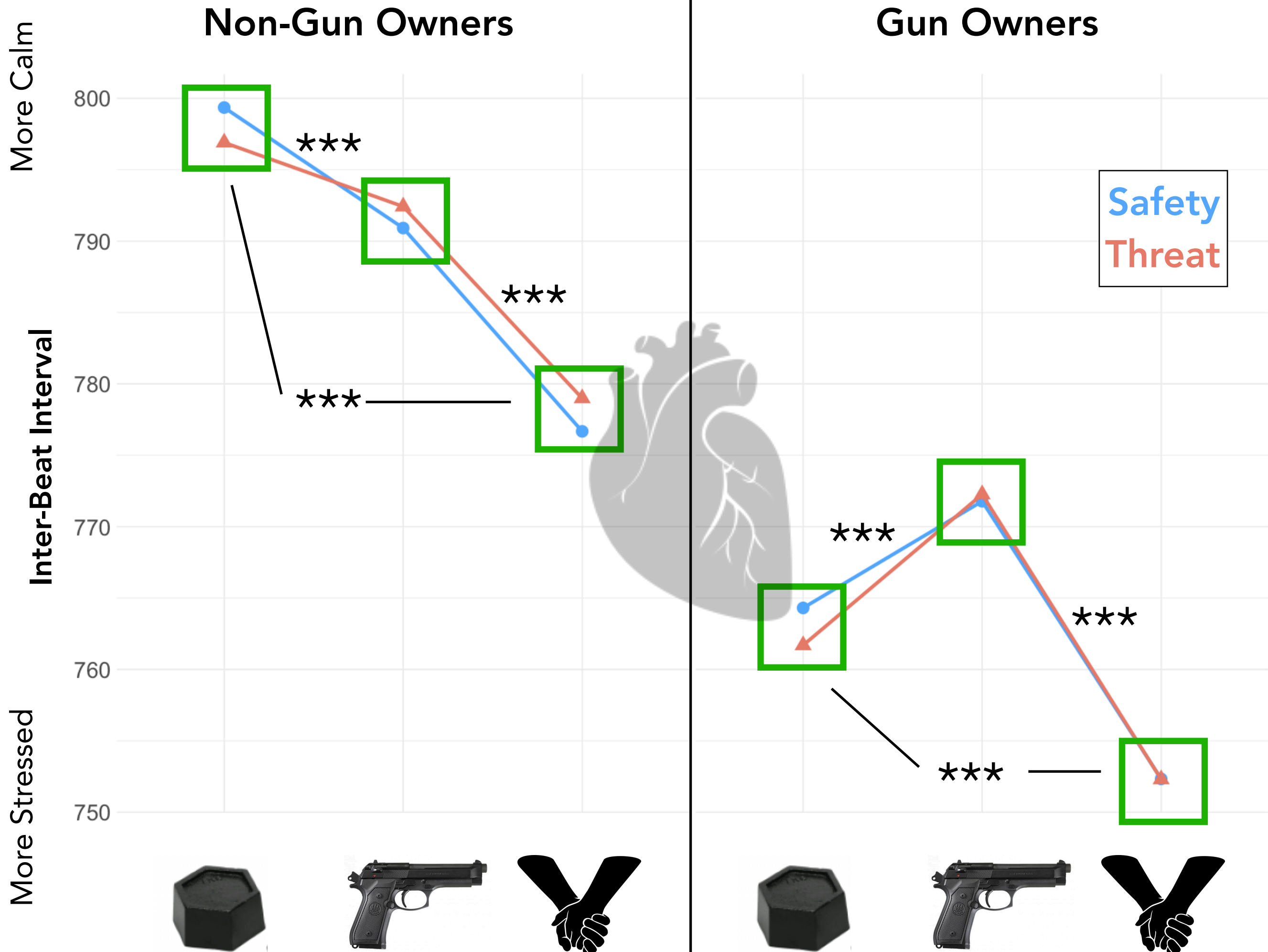
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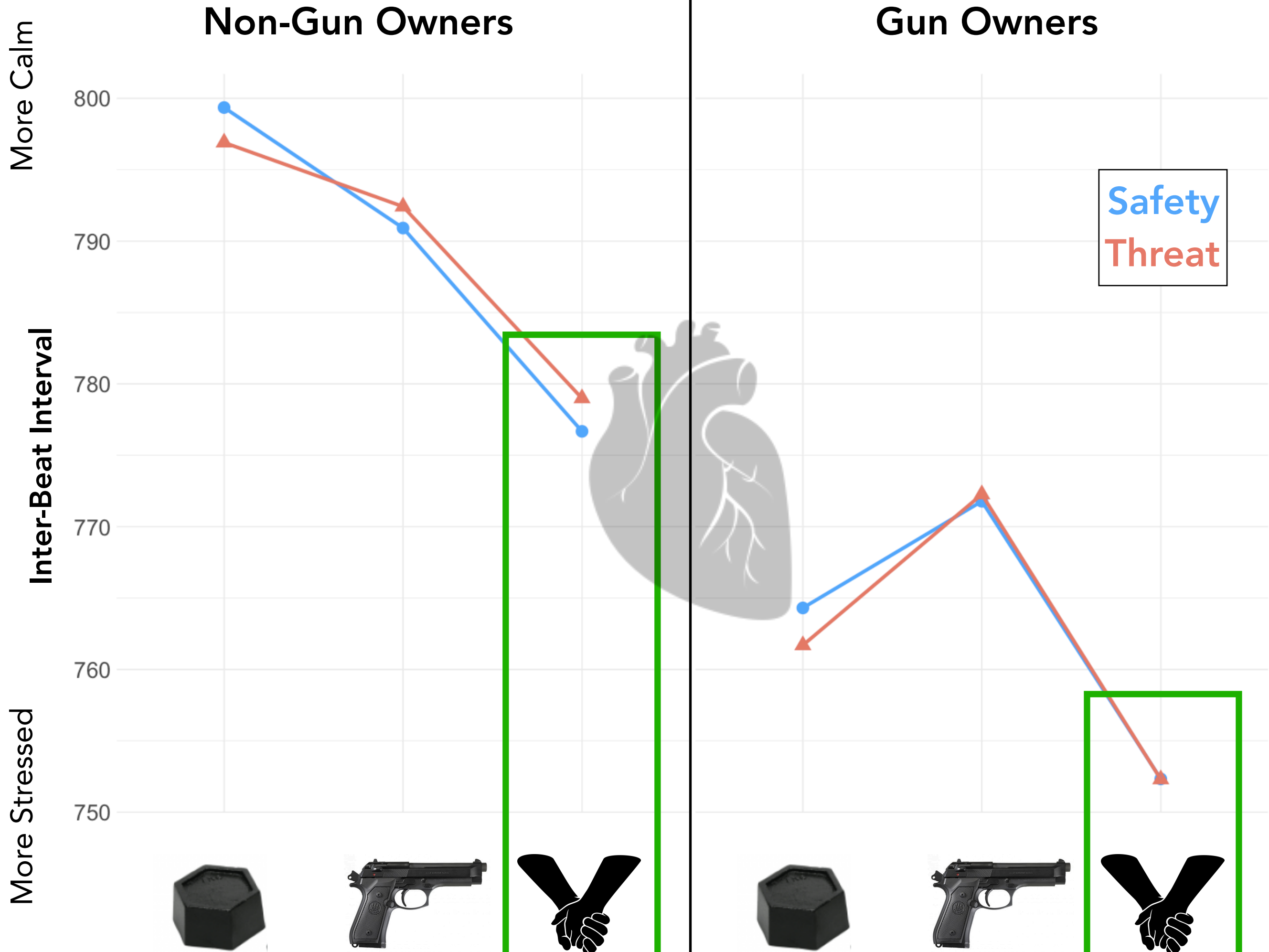
760

750









More Calm

Inter-Beat Interval

More Stressed

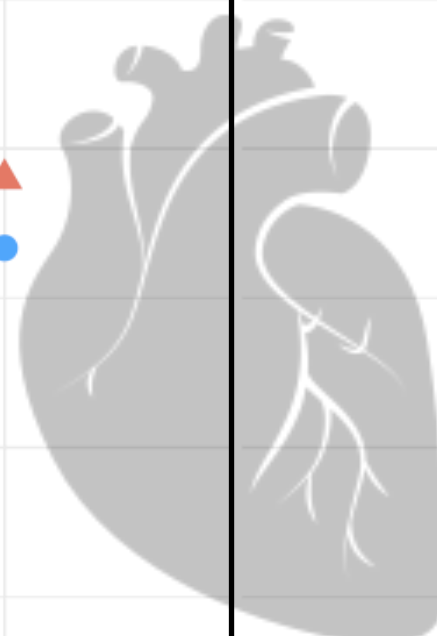
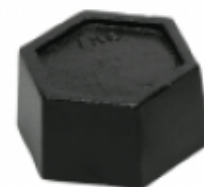
Non-Gun Owners

Gun Owners

Safety
Threat

Closeness to Friend

Less Close More Close



800

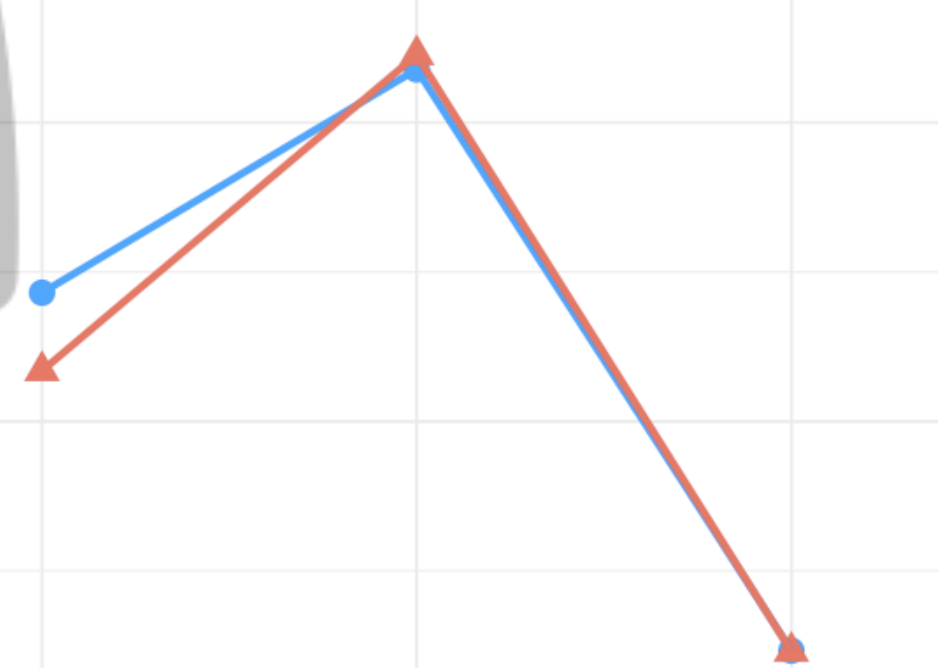
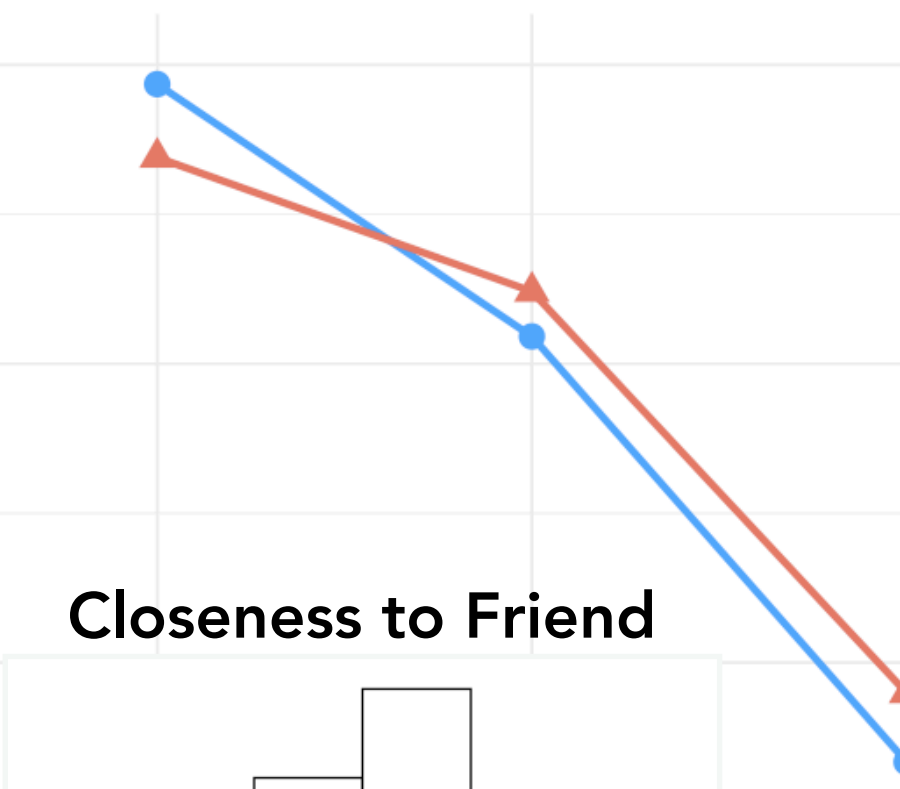
790

780

770

760

750



More Calm

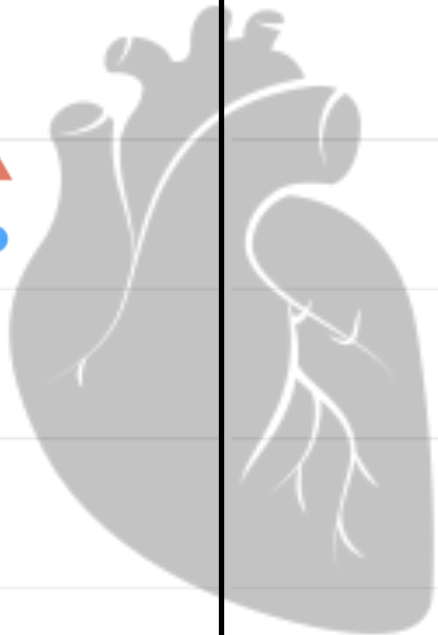
More Stressed

Inter-Beat Interval

Non-Gun Owners

Gun Owners

Safety
Threat

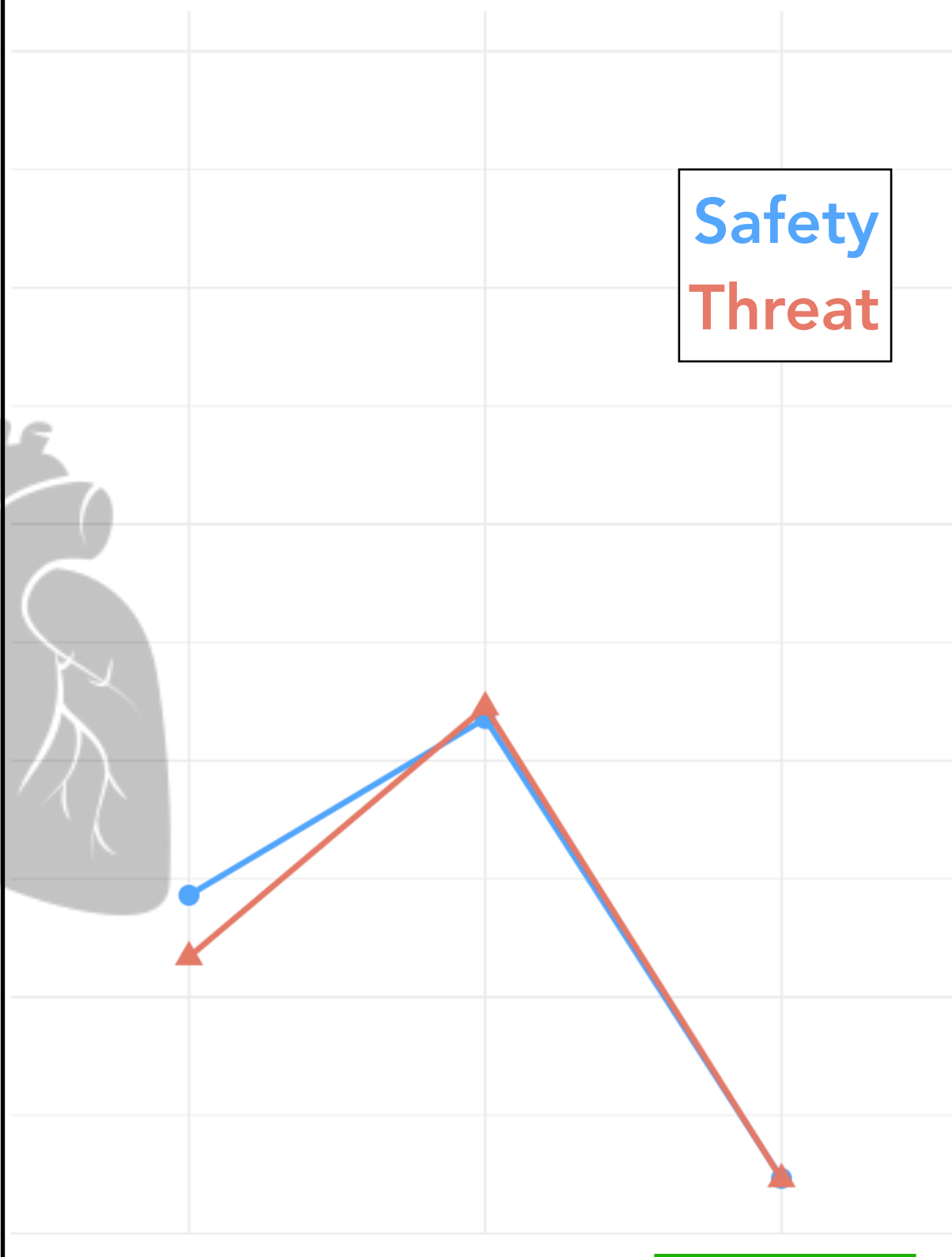
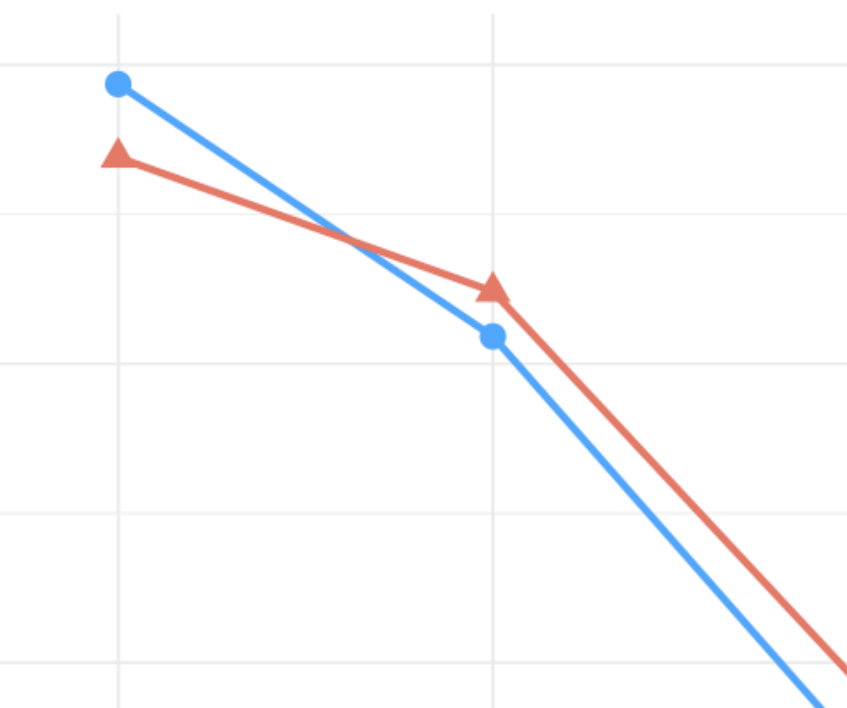
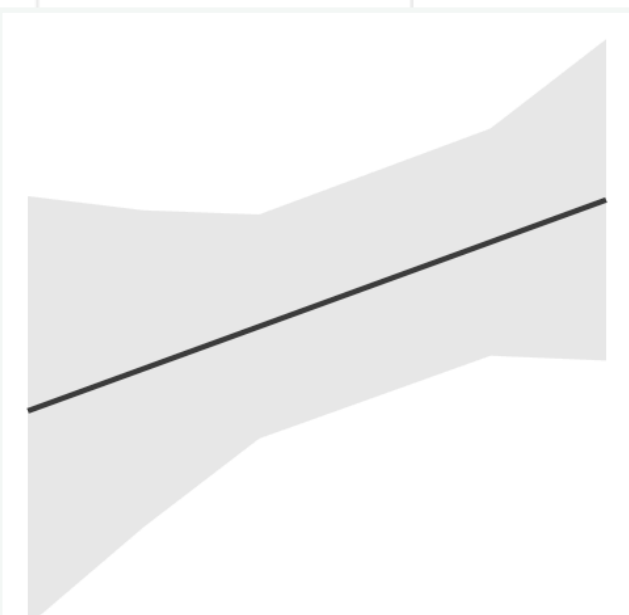


800
790
780
770
760
750

Less Close

More Close

Inter-Beat Interval



More Calm

Inter-Beat Interval

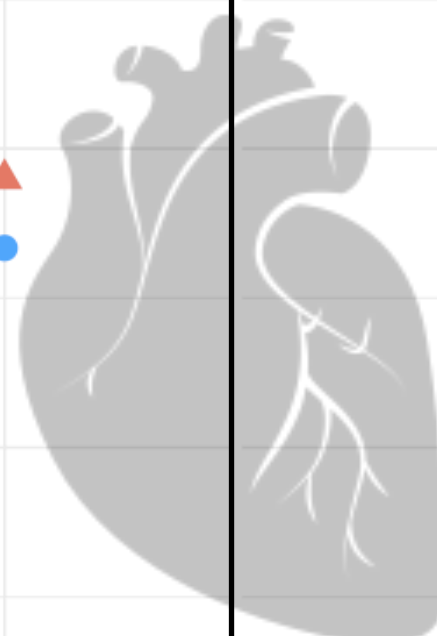
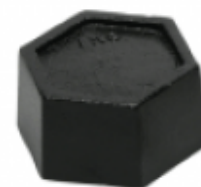
More Stressed

Non-Gun Owners

Gun Owners

Safety
Threat

Condition x Gun Ownership
 $p < .001$



800

790

780

770

760

750

Condition

Gun Ownership

Threat

Safety

Threat

Condition

Condition x Gun Ownership
 $p < .001$

More Calm

Inter-Beat Interval

More Stressed

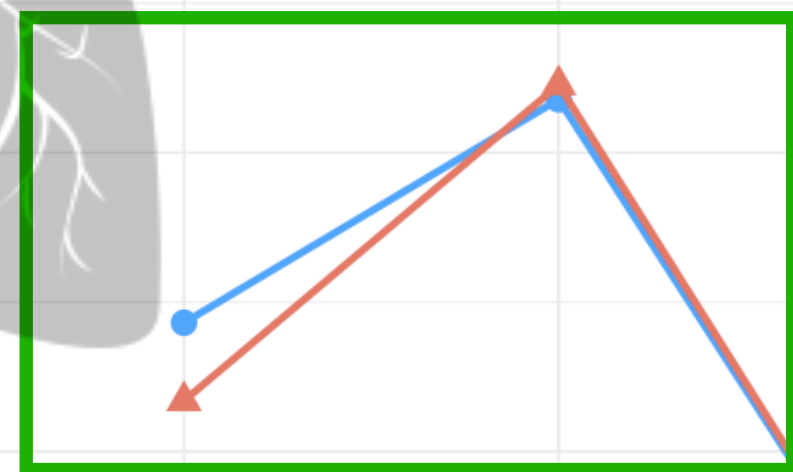
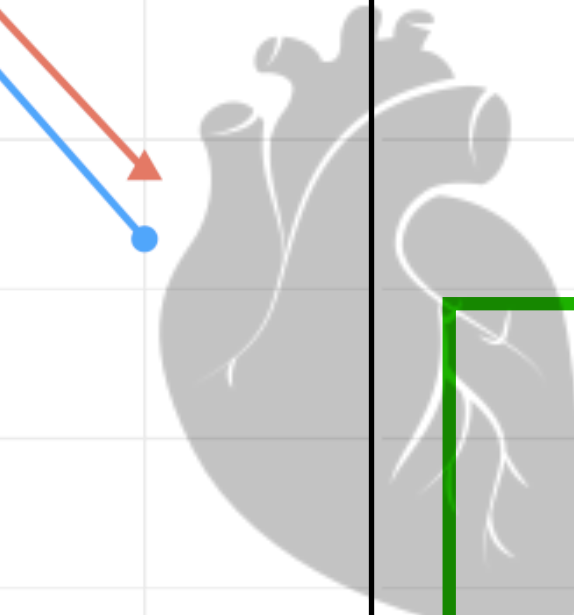
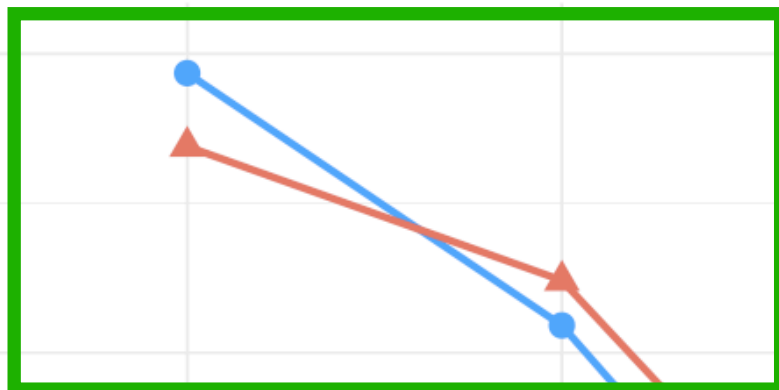
Non-Gun Owners

Gun Owners

Safety
Threat



800
790
780
770
760
750



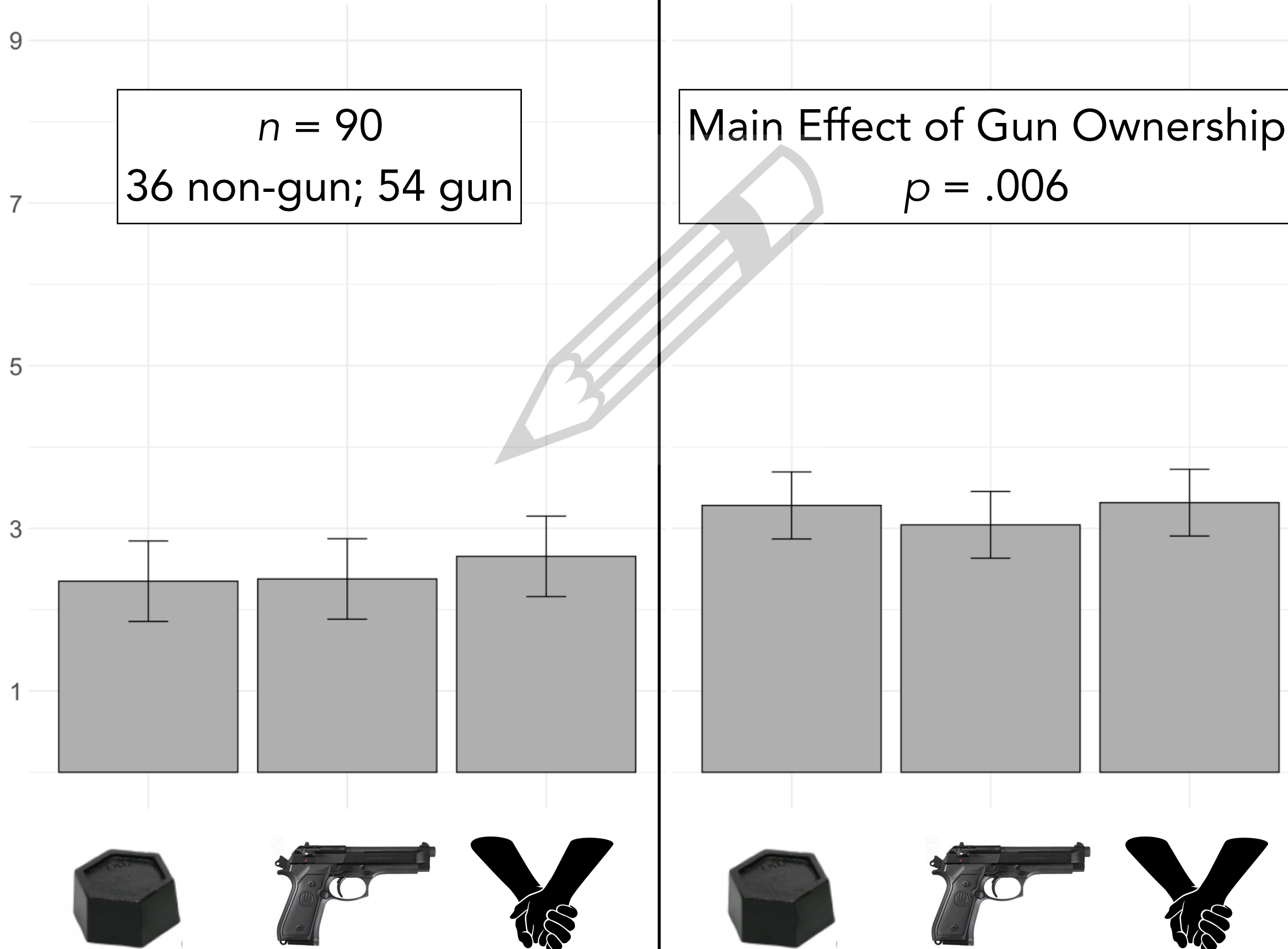
Worst Imaginable

Non-Gun Owners

Gun Owners

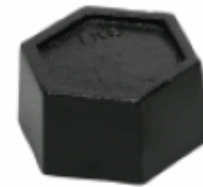
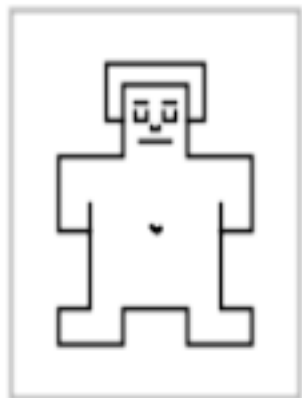
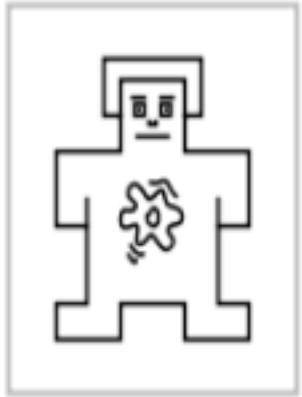
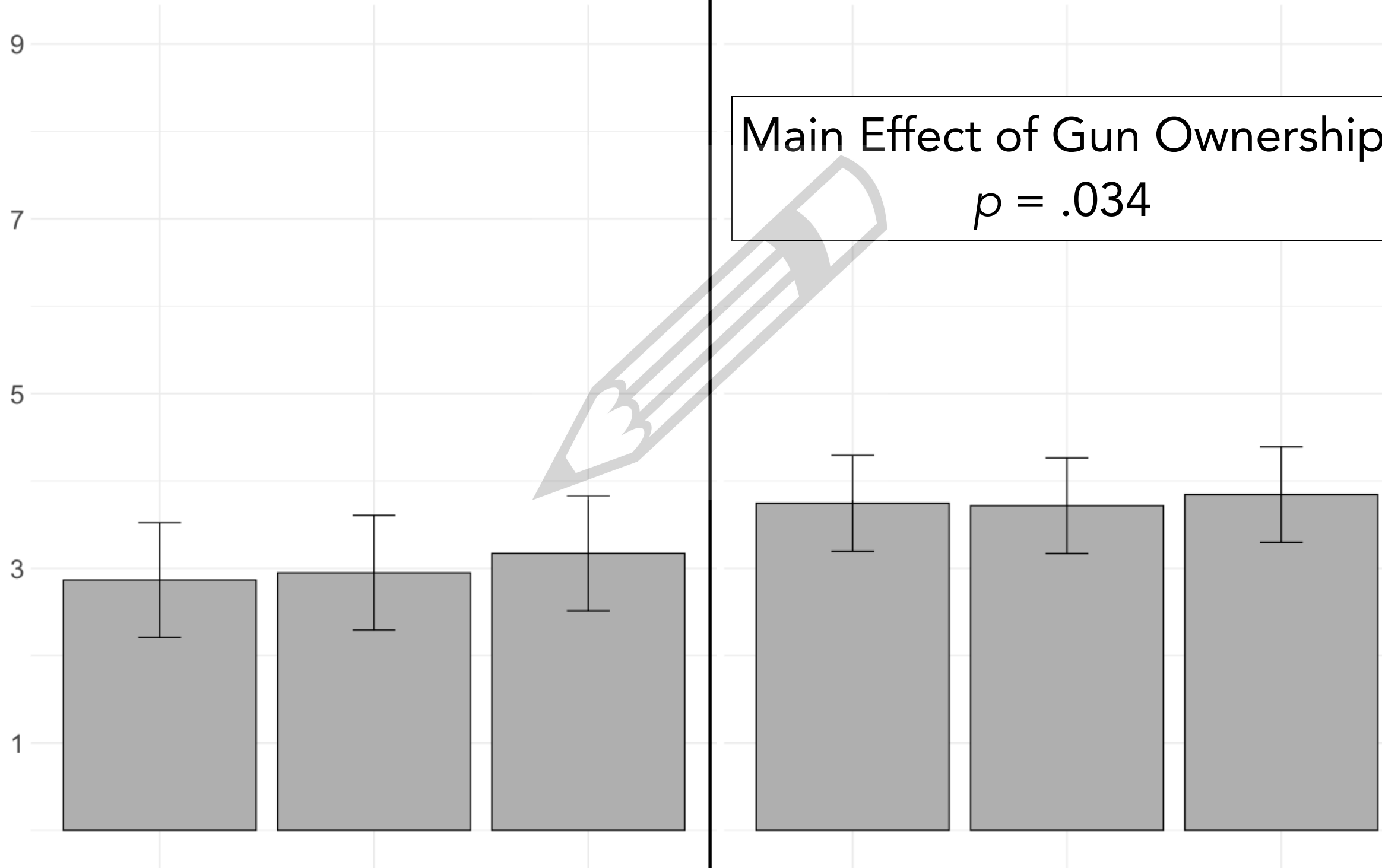
Pain

No Pain



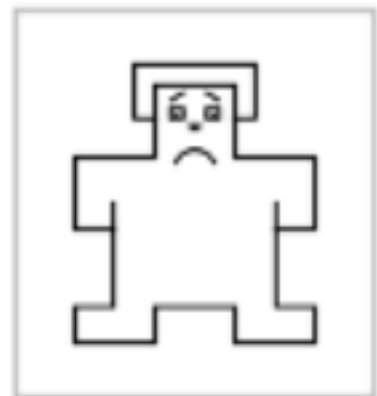
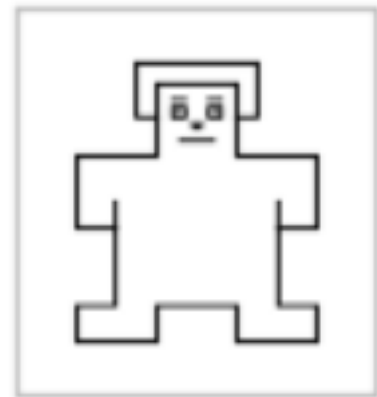
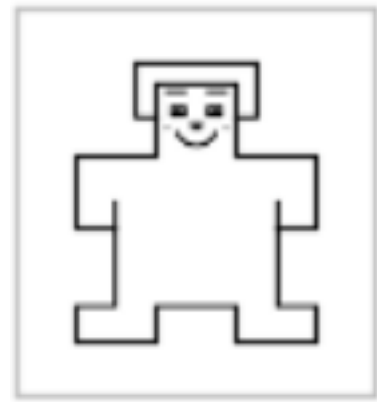
Non-Gun Owners

Gun Owners



Non-Gun Owners

Gun Owners



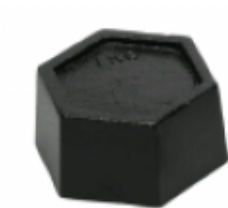
9

7

5

3

1



Main Effect of Gun Ownership
 $p = .043$



A Recap

- Participants from **gun-owning** households felt **less threatened when holding a gun** than when holding a metal weight
- Participants from **non-gun-owning** households, by contrast, felt **more threatened when holding a gun** than when holding a metal weight

Ongoing Projects

Using **big-data** to link threats to fundamental needs with gun sales, and tracing the history of the cultural complex to the antebellum South



Jes Mazen

Examining the **lived experience** of gun ownership, especially the bidirectional relationship between vigilance and gun-carrying behavior



Samantha
Heintzelman

"Since a 'sense of security' is inherently a psychological trait, it does no good to argue that the sense of security afforded by owning a gun is 'just an illusion.'" Wright, 1995, p. 65