Effects of Culture and Debate Experience on the Fundamental Attribution Error

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Reader, Thomas Hamilton

Reader, Brent Northup
I would like to thank the Psychology Department for four years of exciting and interesting psychology classes and for their generous understanding and valuable advice. Dr. Perkins deserves recognition for agreeing to be my thesis director even though she feared that I would be printing the final copies only minutes before the deadline. I am forever indebted to Professor Hamilton, who provided invaluable assistance analyzing and interpreting data. Dr. Molineux's comments about confusing language were equally helpful.

I owe a special thank you to Brent Northup for his input and encouragement when this thesis seemed overwhelming and for his allowing me to skip a forensics tournament to work on this project. In addition to his help on this thesis, Brent has been a wonderful forensics coach, professor, and listener.

The library deserves recognition for interlibrary loaning me many of my references. The debate coaches at Billings High, Bozeman High, C. M. Russell High, and Great Falls High let me experiment on their students and Shari Dean was also extremely helpful in administering the questionnaires to international students.

Finally, I would like to thank Cory Wagner and Heiko Coppola. Without our frequent complaining to each other, I'm not sure I could maintained even a facade of sanity.
Abstract

The tendency to make the fundamental attribution error was investigated in two experimental groups: high school debaters and international students. Despite their experience arguing assigned positions, the debaters committed the fundamental attribution error by estimating that an author believed an opinion he had been assigned to express. The international students did not commit this error. The subjects were equally confident in their assessments of the author’s opinion whether the essay position was assigned or chosen by the author. Implications of the fundamental attribution error are discussed.
Effects of Culture and Debate Experience on the Fundamental Attribution Error

A person's actions may or may not reflect that person's underlying attitudes and dispositions. The fundamental attribution error is defined as "the tendency for attributors to underestimate the impact of situational factors and to overestimate the role of dispositional factors in controlling behavior" (Ross, 1977). Although this definition may be more appropriately called the "observer bias" because it considers the bias from only the observer's point of view, it is a commonly accepted definition of the fundamental attribution error (Croxton & Morrow, 1984; Croxton & Miller, 1987).

Attribution theory began in 1958 when Fritz Heider proposed that people use "common-sense psychology" in their interpersonal relationships to make judgements about people (Heider, 1958, p. 5). Attribution theory studies "the rules the average individual uses in attempting to infer the causes of observed behavior" (Jones, Kanouse, Kelley, Nisbett, Valins, & Weiner, 1972, p. x). People use these inferences to "explain, predict, and try to control their social environments" (Harvey & Weary, 1981, p. 57).

According to Heider, when observers believe a person's actions are free and unrestrained, they will attribute those actions to the actor's underlying attitudes and dispositions; however, when the observers believe those actions have been
significantly influenced by environmental elements, the observers will not attribute the action to the actor. These "common-sense" judgements allow the naive psychologist to make predictions about how the person will act in the future (Kelley, 1967). Heider suggested that perceivers make these judgements by distinguishing personal forces from environmental forces to infer the intentions of the actor, from which they may derive the actor's disposition.

Jones & Davis (1965) built on Heider's personal/environmental differentiation and suggested the "action-attitude" paradigm of interpersonal attribution. To estimate an actor's intention (and thus, the actor's attitude), the observer watches the action and its effects. All of the effects are possible reasons that the actor acted as he or she did. These effects are analyzed in terms of the observer's estimation of the actor's ability and knowledge to determine which of the effects the actor intended. From this intention, the observer may attribute a corresponding disposition. For example, an observer infers that an actor's cheerful behavior is the result of the actor's intention to be cheerful which is caused by his or her corresponding cheerful disposition.

Jones & Davis (1965) used the term "actor-observer bias" to describe the divergent attributions made by actors (who tend to attribute causality to the environment) and observers (who tend to attribute causality to the disposition of the
Fundamental Attribution Error

actor). Jones & Davis (1965) further suggested that actors may be less likely to attribute causality to internal dispositions because of their extensive background knowledge of their own past actions. Because the actor knows that he or she has not always acted in this manner, these actions cannot be due to a stable disposition and therefore, must be due to the situation.

Heider and Jones & Davis initially proposed that these "naive psychologists" will recognize environmental forces and refrain from making internal attributions based on actions clearly constrained by those external forces. Gilbert, McNulty, Giuliano, & Benson (1992) proposed a three-stage process observers use to make dispositional inferences. First, the observer categorizes the behavior. Second, the observer characterizes the actor in trait terms. Finally, the observer corrects that trait inference with information about environmental causes. If there are obviously strong environmental influences on the behavior, Gilbert et al. (1992) argued that the observer would not make a dispositional attribution.

Although initial attribution theory predicted that observers would not make a dispositional attribution based on constrained behavior, research has proven otherwise (e.g., Jones & Harris, 1967; Jones, Worchel, Goethals, & Grumet, 1971; Miller, 1976; Jones, Rock, Shaver, Goethals, & Ward,
Observers may not be able to perform the final step in the attribution process, that of correcting the dispositional inference when strong environmental influences are present (Gilbert, Pelham, & Krull, 1988). This could be due to the fact that the attribution process is so automatic that observers tend to forget that it is an inference at all. Individuals don't realize that they are interpreting another's behavior and tend to view their attributions as objective descriptions (Gilbert et al., 1992).

Since the first study that indicated observers would attribute attitudes on the basis of an opinion the author had been instructed to express (Jones & Harris, 1967), many other researchers have replicated those results. Some researchers have found that observers do not use constrained behavior to make dispositional attributions (Jones, et al., 1971; Miller, Smith, & Uleman, 1981). Still, Quattrone (1982) called the fundamental attribution error "as robust and reliable a phenomenon as any in the literature on person perception" (p. 376).

Scientists have conducted little intercultural attribution research (Kim, 1986). There may be cultural differences in attributions between Americans and Hispanics (Kim, 1986, p. 43) and Americans and Japanese (Jellison & Green, 1981). Researchers have credited these cultural
differences to differing attitudes about authority and self expression and differences in locus of control.

Collectivistic cultures such as Japan, China, Korea, and India are more accepting of authority and more obedient to demands from an authority (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). Individuals from collectivistic cultures tend to follow rules and instructions more fully (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). These differences affect how individuals from these cultures view behavior constrained by an authority.

Individualistic cultures value self expression over harmony; collectivistic cultures value harmony and cooperation over self expression (Aoki & Dardess, 1981). Because of this, Americans are more direct and open in expressing their views (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987, p. 206). Collectivistic cultures do not condone open disagreement. In these cultures, individuals rely on more indirect comments to communicate disagreement. Therefore, these individuals are more attuned to subtle cues that a speaker is insincere. Additionally, collectivistic cultures also tend to exhibit a more external locus of control (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988).

Researchers have typically studied the fundamental attribution error by presenting observers with essays allegedly written by actors either free to express their own opinions or instructed to express a particular opinion (Croxton & Morrow, 1984). Some researchers have attempted to
increase the salience of the author’s environmental restraints by requiring that subjects themselves first write an essay defending an assigned position (e.g., Jones & Harris, 1967; Miller, Ashton, & Mishal, 1990), write an essay counter to their true attitude (Jones & Harris, 1967), imagine that they are writing a counter-attitudinal essay (Harvey & Weary, 1981), or receive information about the author’s true opinion and then read an essay contrary to that opinion (e.g., Miller, Ashton, & Mishal, 1990).

The bulk of this research has revealed that observers are willing to make an attitudinal attribution in line with the essay position even when it has been assigned and even when the subjects know that the author claims to hold a position opposite of that expressed in the essay. The present research attempts to explore just how fundamental the fundamental attribution error is. Heider (1958) acknowledged that this error may occur only "under certain conditions" (p. 96).

**Experiment 1**

The first experiment investigates hypotheses that two groups may be less likely to exhibit the observer bias.

**Hypothesis 1:** The observer bias can be reduced through high salience of the choice/no choice manipulation. As noted above, previous researchers have attempted to increase the salience of that variable in various ways, for example, by asking the subjects to write a single counter-attitudinal
essay. However, none have studied subjects with repeated experience arguing under no-choice conditions. Debaters have this repeated experience arguing under no-choice conditions. This experience and background knowledge should decrease the observer bias in debaters.

Hypothesis 2: The observer bias is unique to individualistic cultures. International students may be less likely to exhibit such a bias if their cultures put more emphasis on the impact environmental influences can have on behavior.

Method

Subjects

The 18 international students were attending a small, private, liberal arts college in the northwest. These students had lived in Japan, China, Argentina, Panama, England, and Korea and they ranged in age from 19 to 28. The debaters were 41 current and former debaters from four large high schools in the state. The debaters ranged in age from 14 to 18. The 42 control subjects, who were also attending those four high schools, ranged in age from 14 to 18. The operational definition for group is debater, international student, or control.

Procedure

The experimental apparatus consisted of written instructions and a short questionnaire (see Appendixes A-D).
The instructions indicated that the purpose of the questionnaire was "to determine if people can make valid judgements of another's personality and attitudes on the basis of very limited information." The subjects were told that other students were filling out similar questionnaires with different paragraphs written by the same author so that the experimenter could determine what kinds of written material provide the most valid impression of a person's personality and attitudes.

The questionnaire asked for basic demographic information first: age, sex, semesters of debate experience, experiences with different cultures, and college major. The subjects also indicated their own opinions on gun control. The subjects then read a short (approximately 200-word) essay on gun control and indicated on a 9-point scale what they thought the essay author's true opinion was (1 = anti-gun control to 9 = pro-gun control). This assessment of the author's true opinion is the operational definition of attribution. In all cases, the subjects were told that the essay was written by a college debater for an assignment from the debate coach.

The experimental manipulation consisted of varying the alleged instructions given to the essay's author, influencing the subjects' perceptions of the author's status. There were four conditions. In two of the conditions, the debate coach's assignment to the essay's author was to write a short essay
either defending or attacking gun control. The following essay was either pro-gun control or anti-gun control. In the other two conditions, the coach assigned the position to be defended and the essay's position was congruent with that assignment.

Thus, the four conditions consisted of the following instructions and essays: 1) "Write an essay either defending or attacking gun control" followed by a pro gun control essay; 2) "Write an essay either defending or attacking gun control" followed by an anti gun control essay; 3) "Write an essay defending gun control" followed by a pro gun control essay; and 4) "Write an essay attacking gun control" followed by an anti gun control essay. Therefore, the operational definition of perceived author status was Chose Pro, Assigned Pro, Chose Anti, Assigned Anti. The two essays were approximately the same length and utilized opposite positions on the same types of arguments.

Results

A 3 X 4 factorial design was used to determine main effects and interactions due to group and perceived status of the essay's author. The analysis of variance was conducted with the Statistics with Finesse computer program (Bolding, 1984). There was no difference in attribution as a function of group $F(2,87) = .07, p > .05$. Differences in attributions were discovered as a function of perceived status of the
essay's author $F(3,87) = 60.53, p < .01$. An interaction effect was observed between group and perceived status $F(6,87) = 2.26, p < .05$.

Insert Table 1 about here

A comparison of the means revealed that these results did not support the first hypothesis that debaters would be less likely to exhibit the observer bias due to their history of repeatedly arguing in no-choice conditions. Debaters were as likely as control subjects to commit the observer bias by judging that the author believed the position he had been assigned to defend.

An interpretation of the difference in attribution as a function of perceived status shows that the means for each group were: Chose Pro = 7.6, Assigned Pro = 6.67, Chose Anti = 2.21, Assigned Anti = 2.92. Whether the essay's author chose his position or it was assigned to him, the subjects attributed the expressed opinion to the author.

The comparison of the means revealed that the interaction effect was due to international students' scores in the assigned pro and assigned anti categories. These scores exhibited no observer bias while the corresponding scores for controls and debaters did exhibit the bias.
The international students' assessments of the author's true opinion when he was assigned an opinion to express were close to 5, which on the 9-point scale corresponds to "undecided." These results provide clear support for the hypothesis that international students would be less likely to attribute an attitude corresponding to a position the author was assigned to express.

Discussion

The discovery that subjects with prior histories of arguing in no choice conditions were not less likely to exhibit the observer bias was surprising. There are four possible explanations for this result. First, perhaps the repeated no-choice arguing did not raise the salience of the no-choice condition for the debaters; they, like the other subjects, focused on the behavior rather than its environmental influences.

Second, as Jones & Harris (1967) suggest, perhaps the debate experience did raise the salience of the no-choice manipulation but caused the subjects to more carefully scrutinize the essay for subtle clues that the author was sincere.
Or third, it is possible that debaters do not frequently defend positions in which they do not believe. Although at first glance it seems logical that to argue affirmative and negative on a topic would require arguing against your true opinion half of the time, this is not necessarily the case. It is not unusual for debaters to make the same arguments and use the same evidence on both sides of a debate topic by merely changing critical definitions and judging criteria.

Alexander & Knight (1971) did suggest a fourth possible explanation for why subjects may have attributed attitudes consistent with the essay’s position whether or not it was assigned. They proposed that subjects may have reasoned that the act of writing the essay changed the author’s opinion to be more in line with the essay’s position. Further research indicated that this was not the case in their experiment. There was no compelling data to support that the subjects used this reasoning process.

The second hypothesis, that international subjects would be less likely to exhibit the observer bias, was confirmed. This result is consistent with several other studies (see Myers, 1990).

Jellison & Green (1981) suggest that Americans may be more likely to attribute attitudes corresponding to behavior due to the influence of our pop psychology culture. This culture assures people that if they just try hard enough they
can accomplish anything. This type of thinking locates the cause of events in people rather than situations (Jellison & Green, 1981).

In this experiment, American subjects may have applied the cultural bias that people are in total control of the events in their lives, thereby discounting the environmental influence of the assigned position. International subjects, whose cultures encourage the recognition of environmental influences (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988), may have focused less attention on the actual behavior (the essay position) and more attention on the environmental constraints (the assignment).

An alternate explanation for the finding that international students attributed less extreme attitudes to the author when he had been assigned a position relates to cultural differences in authority. International students expected that the author would conform to the assignment regardless of his true opinion; therefore, the fact that the author expressed the assigned position provided little information about the author. American students, who value self expression over authority, did not expect the author to write an essay he disagreed with. Therefore, the fact that the author wrote the essay indicates to American students that he does not hold a radically different opinion (Gudykunst, 1988).
Heider (1958) suggested a third possible explanation for these cultural differences. Heider noted that an individual is more likely to attribute causality to the actor if the actor would receive a benefit for acting in accordance with environmental constraints rather than if the actor would be punished for disregarding those constraints. It is possible that international subjects and American subjects may differ in their interpretation of an assignment. One may view an assignment as an opportunity to receive a benefit, in this case, a good grade from the debate coach. The other group may regard the assignment as a chance to receive punishment, for example, a poor grade on the assignment.

Experiment 2

The second experiment investigated the subjects’ confidence in their judgements of the author’s true opinion. The hypothesis was that subjects would express less confidence in their estimates of the author’s true opinion when the author defended an assigned position than when the author chose which opinion to defend.

Method

The second experiment utilized the same subjects and questionnaires as the first. After estimating the author’s true opinion, which was analyzed in the first experiment, the subjects indicated how confident they were in their judgement of the author’s opinion. They did this by rating their
confidence on a 9-point scale (1 = extremely unconfident, 9 = extremely confident).

This confidence rating is the dependent variable for the second experiment. The two independent variables remain the same as in the first experiment: group (debaters, international students, and controls) and perceived status of the author (chose pro, assigned pro, chose anti, and assigned anti).

Results

The 3 X 4 factorial design was used to determine the main effect of perceived status of the author on subject confidence. The data analysis conducted on the Statistics with Finesse computer program (Bolding, 1984) revealed no difference in confidence as a function of perceived status of the author $F(3,89) = 1.93, p > .05$. The mean confidence rating under the choice conditions was 6.89 (SD = 1.45), compared to 6.33 (SD = 6.37) under the no-choice conditions. The hypothesis that subjects would be less confident in their ability to assess an author’s opinion when the essay position had been assigned was not supported.

Insert Table 3 about here
Discussion

The finding that there was no difference in confidence as a function of perceived status of the author was surprising. Apparently, the behavior "engulfs the field" (Heider, 1958, p. 54) and is more prominent from the observer's point of view than possible environmental influences.

However, the fact that the highest variances were found under no-choice conditions indicates that some subjects did recognize the possibility that the author may have merely been following instructions, rather than expressing his true opinion.

Because few researchers have examined subjects' confidence in their attributions, it is difficult to speculate why this occurred. The lack of contrary evidence could have contributed to the subjects' confidence. The essay was the only evidence about the author's opinion available to the subjects and it supported their attributions.

A second explanation for this finding involves the power of commitment to increase confidence in a decision. Just like the gambler who hesitantly places a bet on a horse and walks away confident that the horse will win (Cialdini, 1988), the subjects may have hesitantly circled a number on the questionnaire and, having committed to an answer, immediately felt more confident in their ability to judge the author's attitude.
General Discussion

The fundamental attribution error has enormous implications for clinical psychology, as well as for everyday life. Ramifications of attribution theory for clinical psychology include therapist attributions (Gilbert et al., 1992) and attribution therapy (Harvey & Weary, 1981; Colletti & Kopel, 1979). Other researchers have applied attribution theory to education (Dweck, 1975), conflict (Jones et al. 1972), interpersonal and intergroup relations (Heider, 1958; Jones et al. 1972), aggression (Alexander & Knight, 1971), and marital satisfaction (Fincham & Bradbury, 1992).

Attributions can have positive and negative effects on clinical psychology, education, conflict, interpersonal and intergroup relations, aggression, and marriage. Unfortunately, the current research does not confirm that repeated experience arguing under no-choice conditions will reduce the tendency to commit the observer bias. The finding that international students are less likely to commit the observer bias suggests that its effects are indeed cultural and that they could be reduced through practice or training.

Future research should focus on two areas. One area is individual differences in the tendency towards the observer bias. Some individuals may be predisposed to making either internal or external attributions; this may be related to locus of control (Harvey & Weary, 1981).
The second area on which future research should focus concerns education and training methods that may help decrease the bias. Colletti & Kopel (1979) and Dweck (1975) developed attribution retraining programs for the maintenance of therapy's behavioral changes and for improving elementary education. These programs could be examined, tested for effectiveness, and perhaps expanded beyond their current applications.
References


Appendix A

Age: _____
Sex: Male Female
Debate experience: (Number of semesters) _____
College major/Intended major: ____________________________
Have you lived in the U.S. all of your life? Yes No
(If no, in what other countries?) ________________________
Have your parents lived in the U.S. all of their lives? Yes No
(If no, in what other countries?) ________________________

Please circle the number corresponding to your opinion on the issue of gun control.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
anti-gun control undecided pro-gun control

Please read the following statement, written by a debater who was instructed to write an anti-gun control essay. The debate coach’s instructions were "Write a short essay attacking gun control."

Each year millions of Americans are the victims of violent crimes. It is a standard—but highly misinformed argument—that gun control would reduce violent crime and prevent accidental deaths. Clearly, this is not the case. Gun control would not reduce the number of guns available to criminals and therefore would not reduce crime. In fact, it would increase crime by preventing law-abiding citizens from defending themselves from criminals.

Additionally, polls indicate that Americans strongly oppose gun control. Apparently, Americans realize that most handguns are used for purposes other than to kill people. They are used for target shooting and collected by people who appreciate the design, workmanship, and historic qualities of guns.

Furthermore, the second amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees the individual’s right to keep and bear arms. Although the amendment mentions only the militia, at the time the constitution was written, the militia was composed of all able-bodied men. Obviously, the writers of the constitution intended this to be an individual right.

Yes, crime is a problem in the United States. But gun control is not the answer to this problem. Outlawing guns would not reduce crime, would be contrary to the wishes of most Americans, would deprive honest people of a pleasurable hobby, and would be unconstitutional.

Please circle the number corresponding to what you believe the author’s true opinion is.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
anti-gun control undecided pro-gun control

Please circle the number indicating how confident you are in your estimate of the author’s true opinion.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
extremely unconfident extremely confident
Fundamental Attribution Error

Appendix B

Age: _____
Sex: Male Female
Debate experience: (Number of semesters) _____
College major/Intended major: __________________________________
Have you lived in the U.S. all of your life? Yes No
(If no, in what other countries?) _________________________
Have your parents lived in the U.S. all of their lives? Yes No
(If no, in what other countries?) _________________________

Please circle the number corresponding to your opinion on the issue of gun control.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
anti-gun control undecided pro-gun control

Please read the following statement, written by a debater. The debate coach's instructions were "Write a short essay either defending or attacking gun control."

Each year millions of Americans are the victims of violent crimes. It is a standard—but highly misinformed argument—that gun control would reduce violent crime and prevent accidental deaths. Clearly, this is not the case. Gun control would not reduce the number of guns available to criminals and therefore would not reduce crime. In fact, it would increase crime by preventing law-abiding citizens from defending themselves from criminals.

Additionally, polls indicate that Americans strongly oppose gun control. Apparently, Americans realize that most handguns are used for purposes other than to kill people. They are used for target shooting and collected by people who appreciate the design, workmanship, and historic qualities of guns.

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Please circle the number corresponding to what you believe the author's true opinion is.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
anti-gun control undecided pro-gun control

Please circle the number indicating how confident you are in your estimate of the author's true opinion.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
extremely unconfident extremely confident
Appendix C

Age: _____
Sex: Male Female
Debate experience: (Number of semesters) _____
College major/Intended major: __________________________________
Have you lived in the U.S. all of your life? Yes No
(If no, in what other countries?) _________________________
Have your parents lived in the U.S. all of their lives? Yes No
(If no, in what other countries?) _________________________

Please circle the number corresponding to your opinion on the issue of gun control.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
anti-gun control undecided pro-gun control

Please read the following statement, written by a debater. The debate coach’s instructions were "Write a short essay either defending or attacking gun control."

Each year, thousands of Americans are killed by handguns. It is a standard—but highly misinformed argument—that gun control would not reduce violent crime or prevent accidental deaths. Clearly, this is not the case. Gun control would reduce the number of guns available to criminals, thereby reducing the amount of crime. Furthermore, law-abiding citizens rarely use guns to defend themselves from criminals. Countries with strong gun control laws are evidence of this. Britain and Japan both have strong gun control laws that have reduced their crime rates significantly.

Additionally, polls indicate that Americans strongly support gun control. Apparently, Americans realize that handguns have only one purpose—to kill people. They have no legitimate sporting purpose and whatever pleasure people derive from gun ownership is clearly outweighed by the deaths these guns cause.

Furthermore, the second amendment to the United States Constitution does not guarantee the right to keep and bear arms. Rather, it is intended to allow for the creation of state militias like our National Guard. The second amendment does not mention the rights of individuals.

Handgun deaths are a problem in the United States. Gun control is a necessary part of the answer to this problem. Outlawing guns would reduce crime, would be consistent with the wishes of most Americans, would not deprive honest people of a pleasurable hobby, and would be not be unconstitutional.

Please circle the number corresponding to what you believe the author’s true opinion is.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
anti-gun control undecided pro-gun control

Please circle the number indicating how confident you are in your estimate of the author’s true opinion.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
extremely unconfident extremely confident
Appendix D

Age: _____
Sex: Male Female
Debate experience: (Number of semesters) _____
College major/Intended major: ________________________________
Have you lived in the U.S. all of your life? Yes No
(If no, in what other countries?) _________________________
Have your parents lived in the U.S. all of their lives? Yes No
(If no, in what other countries?) _________________________

Please circle the number corresponding to your opinion on the issue of gun control.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
anti-gun control undecided pro-gun control

Please read the following statement, written by a debater who was instructed to write a pro gun control essay. The debate coach's instructions were "Write a short essay defending gun control."

Each year, thousands of Americans are killed by handguns. It is a standard—but highly misinformed argument—that gun control would not reduce violent crime or prevent accidental deaths. Clearly, this is not the case. Gun control would reduce the number of guns available to criminals, thereby reducing the amount of crime. Furthermore, law-abiding citizens rarely use guns to defend themselves from criminals. Countries with strong gun control laws are evidence of this. Britain and Japan both have strong gun control laws that have reduced their crime rates significantly.

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Furthermore, the second amendment to the United States Constitution does not guarantee the right to keep and bear arms. Rather, it is intended to allow for the creation of state militias like our National Guard. The second amendment does not mention the rights of individuals.

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Please circle the number corresponding to what you believe the author's true opinion is.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
anti-gun control undecided pro-gun control

Please circle the number indicating how confident you are in your estimate of the author's true opinion.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
extremely unconfident extremely confident
Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Fundamental Attribution Error as a Function of Group and Perceived Status of the Author

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Groups = Debaters, International Students, Controls
Status = Chose Pro, Assigned Pro, Chose Anti, Assigned Anti
Table 2

**Means and Standard Deviations in Author Attributions**

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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1 = anti gun control, 9 = pro gun control)
## Table 3

**Analysis of Variance of Confidence as a Function of Group and Perceived Status of the Author**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.1296</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.6340</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.4722</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>2.43</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status = Assigned Pro, Chose Pro, Assigned Anti, Chose Anti
Groups = Debaters, International Students, Controls