

The National Rifle Association

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Abstract

This research paper takes a close look at the National Rifle Association (NRA) under a qualitative research approach format. The paper considers the motivation of those who become members of the NRA in a qualitative manner which essentially looks at human behavior with regards to social, cultural and political settings. [CITATION Exp12 \l 1033]. The research question that will be answered is “What is the motivation of those who become members of the NRA?” Some facts that will be considered are: in an effort to better understand what happens inside the NRA and to offer its members a difference perspective this paper takes a closer look at the NRA’s organizational make-up; takes a closer look, to a degree, at the NRA’s stated mission in order to better understand the organization’s existence; consider whether the NRA is still supporting its original mission; investigates the organizations budget; considers its support from congress by identifying some organizational ties to congress; identifies some congressional members who are currently supported by the NRA or who supports the NRA; [CITATION FAN13 \l 1033] exploring the NRA’s concern about the Nation’s constitution; looks at the NRA’s concern about using the constitution to make money; and finally this paper considers the actual tie between the NRA and the 2nd Amendment of the United States Constitution.

[CITATION Dic13 \l 1033] This research is expected to shed a little light upon the real concerns and focus of the organization. Nearly every year lately, there is a mass shooting carried out within the United States and each year the NRA fights any type of gun control regulation, including regulation which appears to focus purely upon personnel protection and safety.

Regardless of the recommended regulation or law, the NRA has consistently fought against any change in the status quo citing all such recommendations as an attempt to take away the 2nd

Amendment rights of all American citizens. [CITATION Spi16 \l 1033] The research in this proposal will be completed using the ethnographic research method.

The Research Problem

The paper considers the motivation of those who become members of the NRA in a qualitative manner which essentially looks at human behavior with regards to social, cultural and political settings. [CITATION Exp12 \l 1033]. The research question that will be answered is “What is the motivation of those who become members of the NRA?”

The NRA is an organization that today enjoys extensive support among many within the United States. Nonetheless, despite the widespread support enjoyed by the NRA, questions and concerns still exist regarding the organization. The NRA currently enjoys a very extensive membership when compared to other such organizations of the United States as outlined by Fang (2013) who mentions that the NRA is composed of some four million members.

The NRA is considered to be a member organization with the expressed mission of providing opportunities through knowledge and diversity for professionals in the various fields of rehabilitation.[CITATION FAN13 \l 1033] Though there is not much verbiage expressed here this statement truly says a lot. As the comment above states that the NRA will provide opportunities through knowledge and diversity however, for this to be true one would suspect that the NRA is providing such opportunities based upon knowledge and diversity. Clearly, knowledge is very important and without it an individual remains stagnant with respect to growth. Also, diversity is something upon which this country was founded and the country continues to grow rapidly based upon its diverse background. Fang (2013) goes on to note that there are seven core values associated with the NRA which supposedly provide foundation for the NRA as an organization and they are:

- all people
- professions in rehabilitation
- visionary leadership
- responsible resource management
- advocacy
- personal and professional enrichment
- relationships built on trust and integrity

Review of Literature

NRA Mission

The National Rifle Association (NRA) was formed in in the mid 1920's under the name of the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) with the mission of assisting those with disabilities. The original mission of the National Rehabilitation Association which is now the National Rifle Association, both names consisting of the acronym NRA, and according to a statement by the article authors in this case "The nature and character of NRA's program, past and present, are consistent with the broadly stated purposes of the association. Since the NRA's inception during the mid-nineteen twenties, the organizational framework of the association has changed in order to facilitate and support the specialized interests and needs of its members. For example, NRA first existed on solely a national level. NRA conferences served as a forum for bringing together primarily national leaders interested in advancing the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities." [CITATION Tou95 \p 22 \l 1033] As we see based upon the above quotation, the NRA has morphed its organizational structure on more than one occasion. Tourigny & Sales (1995) note that changes were made to facilitate and support the interests of the organization. At this point in the NRA history, one could ask the questions, "Exactly what were then and are now the NRA's interests? What was the reason for abandoning the name National Rehabilitation Association (NRA)? Is the NRA truly interested in helping those with disabilities or does this cause simply not generate enough money? Or, is the major concern here about generating funds

and the issues of guns tied to the second amendment does a better job at generating funds than the issue of disabilities? As well, the authors Tourigny & Sales (1995) also note that the NRA only existed at the national level but this is not true today. Later in this research paper, during the discussion regarding the NRA organizational structure, we will see that the NRA has now morphed into an organization that focuses on the local level and collects funding from some “4 million members” [CITATION FAN13 \p 5 \l 1033] as pointed out in the article entitled “The NRA’s Real Mission.” Did the NRA, meaning the National Rifle Association and not the National Rehabilitation Association, determine that they were able to raise more money if the organization were a local one and not a national one? Nonetheless, the ultimate mission of the National Rifle Association according to Fang is “The National Rifle Association claims to be a group representing “4 million members” who simply love the Second Amendment. In reality, it is composed of a half-dozen legal entities, some designed to run undisclosed attack ads in political campaigns, others to lobby and collect tens of millions of dollars in undisclosed, tax-deductible sums.” [CITATION FAN13 \p 5 \l 1033] Further review concerning the NRA’s mission revealed by the author states “Seen in this light, the NRA’s aggressive campaign for concealed-carry laws—even as it pushes liability insurance for concealed-carry users—reveals it, at heart, to be a trade group whose sole mission is to boost sales for the industry that largely funds it. The same is true of the Trump administration’s immediate moves to increase hunting spaces on public lands and to allow the use of lead ammunition there.” [CITATION ZOR \p 15 \l 1033] Based upon the above comment by Zornick (2017) one could believe that the NRA has found a great ally in Trump, the current President. Even though there have been numerous deaths in the recent past, due to gun violence, in this case the NRA is pushing for concealed-carry laws while also working with insurance companies regarding liability insurance for concealed-carry users. While all of

this is taking place, America suffers the worst massacre of American citizens on American soil in the history of this country in the Las Vegas shooting incident where some 50 plus Americans died. “Over the roar of the guitar, the gunfire erupted. At first the country-music fans at the Route 91 Harvest Festival in Las Vegas thought the loudspeakers were malfunctioning or that the pyrotechnics had gone awry. But as the bodies crumpled, the crowd began to grasp the horror that was unfolding.” [CITATION Ell17 \l 1033] In this situation, scores of people were either killed or injured during this terrible and very unfortunate event that was taking place. It is very possible that many of these concert goers were likely card carrying, NRA members who were going about their daily duties, handling their duties as responsible American citizens. It is very likely that many of them had the responsibility of ensuring that their NRA dues were paid in a timely manner. These people, both those who were card carrying NRA members as well as those who are not, both expects the NRA to use their great power and influence in a responsible manner which would mean doing the type of sensible things required to ensure that all Americans are kept safe and free from such gun violence. Yet, while this event was going on the NRA was engaged in fulfilling an agenda that would result in more guns being on the street and available to possible deranged personnel who could likely carry out such a horrible incident.

“The challenge in bringing change is that the debate over gun rights isn't really about guns at all. It's about what they represent: cherished freedoms, a reverence for independence. The guns are a rejection of political correctness that creeps into everything. Even the most incremental move to constrain deadly weaponry seems to many Americans to cut against their rights. In the blood-soaked scene on the Vegas Strip, those deeply held beliefs collide with our collective horror. The question now, as the

victims try to make sense of slaughter on a military scale, is where do we draw the line?”
(Elliott, et al., 2017)

NRA Purpose

The purpose of the NRA according to the author Fang (2013) is not necessarily to represent the four million people who are members of the association and believe the organization is simply supporting their 2nd Amendment right, which it is doing to a degree but, moreover it appears that the NRA seems to use the influence granted by some four million members to attack those who may oppose even some reasonable facet of the NRA's agenda, run attack ads against those who oppose the agenda, collect millions in undisclosed funding on a tax deductible basis and it supports the political campaigns of those who support the NRA while opposing others. Based upon Fang (2013) it appears that the four million members who support the NRA seem to do so blindly, following the organization even though thousands are killed by the guns that are on the streets of the nation because of the NRA's agenda. [CITATION FAN13 \l 1033]

The NRA has a Board of Directors that is made up of some 30 members. This board consists of members such as the President, President-Elect, Treasurer and the immediate past President. Six of the board members are reposted as being chosen by the actual membership, seven board members are selected by Regional representatives, nine board members are selected by Divisional members, and four board members are selected by council members. The Board of Directors have the primary responsibility of:

1. Developing and adopting a program of objectives for the purposes of fulfilling the constitution
2. Preparing and adopting policies to govern fiscal responsibilities; and

3. Appoints the Executive Director of the association

The author Eichenwald (2015) defines the purpose of the second amendment as some people see it:

“In the United States, the people have the right to keep and bear arms. And let’s then acknowledge that the childish interpretation of that constitutional amendment—that Americans have the right to whatever accessory they can put on, in or over a gun for the sole purpose of making it more deadly—is a dangerous falsehood.” [CITATION Eic15 \p 36 \l 1033]

Per the author in this case, many people seem to believe that any type of gun control measure is an infringement on the second amendment. In Eichenwald’s article, he suggests that a great divide exists between those who support the second amendment and those who support the second amendment along with enactment of badly needed gun control measures designed to keep Americans safe. In fact, Eichenwald states “Therein lies the chasm between those seeking constitutionally impossible forms of gun control and their political opponents, who view every proposal regulating weaponry as the first step toward dictatorship.” [CITATION Eic15 \p 36 \l 1033] The author in this case suggests that most Americans seem to be somewhere between constitutionality and dictatorship. Now, when the heavy weight and influence of the NRA is added to the equation with its support in the congress and in the White House and with the NRA’s loads of money to run ads for or against candidates, those regular citizens that are caught in the middle as the author suggests, do not stand a chance for the enactment of sensible gun control measures. [CITATION Eic15 \l 1033]

NRA Organizational Structure

The National Rifle Association (NRA) is, on the surface, is basically organized in Chapters, Regions, and Divisions. Again, on the surface, this seems to be quite straight forward and it is not until we look below the surface that we get a glimpse of the true workings of the NRA. The NRA is a very complex organization that in its present form, runs this country in many areas, based upon its influence within the United States Congress and its influence all the way to the White House. [CITATION Tou95 \l 1033]

The organizational design of the NRA exists to facilitate the accomplishment of the association's very broadly stated mission. Since the NRA's inception, as noted earlier, there have been numerous changes in the nature and character of its organizational framework. The changes that the NRA underwent supposedly helps it address its mission in a more effective manner and provides support more appropriately especially for specialized interests as well as its members. [CITATION FAN13 \l 1033]

The NRA is organized as follows:

The NRA is structured in a manner such that whereby members oversee the association, as least that is true on paper. The members of the NRA, just as in other like organizations, have the power because of their vote. Each member of the NRA is in fact a chapter member somewhere, and this is dependent upon where they may have joined the organization. Being a member of the organization gives them the right to vote for various offices throughout the organization, as well as to even seek various offices throughout the organization, in accordance with the NRA rules and regulations. When members join the organization, they are eligible to vote in regional elections, Divisional events, and National events. [CITATION Tou95 \l 1033]

The NRA organization is broken out into various regions, chapters and divisions.

The NRA's Constitution has established regions as part of the organizations structure to allow maximum participation within the organization. The Board of Directors is responsible for establishing the various regions as well as the boundaries associated with the organizations structure. Currently the constitution allows for the establishment of seven regions across the country. Per the NRA Constitution, NRA Regions are required to hold biannual conferences to elect their Regional Representative who will serve on the Board of Directors. As well, each Region is required to elect a regional representative who will serve on the nominating committee of the Board of Directors. Should a region fail to elect members appropriately then the Board of Directors is responsible for filling the position or carrying out the duties. [CITATION Tou95 \l 1033]

As well, the NRA's structure consists of Chapters. Based upon this author, chapters were authorized in the 1950s. The purpose and function of the Chapter in the NRA's structure is to function in the same manner as that of the National Level. Each Chapter's constitution is designed based upon that of the National Rehabilitation Association's constitutions for that Chapter's area of responsibility. [CITATION Tou95 \l 1033]

Finally, there is that part of the NRA's structure identified as the Division. The Division is organized around the special needs of an organization or the special needs of a member. Many times, various organizations may have needs that must be met by organizing a special group for fulfilment of the various tasks. These various groups, once organized, would then fall under the leadership structure at the Division level. Once these Divisions are formed they in turn elect one person to serve on the Board of Directors. Based upon the current structure, there are nine representatives currently serving on the Board of Directors in the following capacities:

[CITATION Tou95 \l 1033]

- National Association of Independent Living
- National Rehabilitation Association of Job Placement Development
- National Association of Multi-Cultural Rehabilitation Concerns
- National Association of Rehabilitation Instructors
- National Association of Rehabilitation Secretaries
- National Association of Service Providers in Private Rehabilitation
- National Rehabilitation Administration Association
- National Rehabilitation Counseling Association Vocational Evaluation
- Work Adjustment Association

When considering the three major structural components of the NRA we see that they are the Region, the Chapter and the Division. During the 1940s when expansion began in the NRA as a unit, the first subunit to be established was the Region.

The Region was established to allow for wider areas of participation, which would allow for the possibility of increasing the membership. Also, in support of organizational expansion, there were no requirements for joining the NRA organization and all members were free to participate in all Regional meetings. To facilitate greater participation, the NRA authorized the establishment of the Chapter as a part of its organizational structure during the year 1950.

Ultimately these new subunits were established to complete the NRA's objectives at the local level, as a way of addressing the various special needs and the various individual member needs that arose. These needs most times required the use of and input from different professionals to address the issues which arose so therefore the NRA decided to establish the Division.

The very first professional requirement for the Division was identified as the Rehabilitation Counseling Division which today is called the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA). Since the NRCA Division was established and added to the Division level as a Divisional Organization in 1957, there have been eight other Divisional units added. It is under the purview of the Board of Directors to add additional Division level subunits to the

Organization. All Divisional units are required to operate within the confines of the organizations Constitution and By-Laws, to include any Divisions newly established by the Board of Directors. Divisions are only allowed to present their views on any matters as appropriate to the Board of Assembly but they cannot address any issues associated with NRA policy. [CITATION Tou95 \l 1033] Each Division is responsible for establishing member qualifications for their memberships, for determining elected officers, setting dues amounts and making appropriate changes to their constitution and By-Laws. Even though Divisions are responsible for making changes to their Constitution and By-Laws, the Board of Directors is the final authority for any changes enacted and must review and approve all changes. A few years ago, during 1976, the Council of Division Presidents (CDP) was allowed to participate with the NRA Board and given a seat on the Board. The CDP serves in an advisory role on the Board and has responsibility for all Divisional interests should they have impact at the National level. Since the CDP is a council it only serves in an advisory role and consists of the president, past-president, president-elect and the NRAs Board Representative from each Division.

[CITATION Tou95 \l 1033]

NRA Budget

Unfortunately, the actual NRA budget figures are not released to the public. In this respect, regarding the budget, the NRA certainly appears to be a secretive organization by not allowing public access to view their actual budget figures. If this were allowed, a very short, quick review of these numbers would quickly reveal those who are NRA supporters, both major and minor with respect to dollars contributed and give a clue regarding the total amount of dollars contributed to the NRA in total. According to Fang (2013):

“The Violence Policy Center has estimated that since 2005, gun manufacturers have contributed up to \$38.9 million to the NRA. Those numbers, however, are based on the publicly listed sponsorship levels in NRA fundraising pamphlets. The real figures could be much bigger: the NRA doesn’t disclose any donor information, even though it spends millions of dollars on federal elections. And like other industry fronts, the NRA is quick to present its policy positions as principled, idealistic commitments.” [CITATION FAN13 \l 1033]

It is quite hard to determine the exact amount of funding that has been provided to the NRA over the years due to the organization’s policy regarding not releasing actual figures. The NRA continually insists that the organization is in fact, “not a trade organization” [CITATION Dic13 \l 1033] and therefore based upon this answer the NRA would not be considered as being affiliated with any of its vendors or contributors. This article by Dickinson (2013) contends that the assertion by the NRA stating that they are not a trade organization, is not true. Despite this information the NRA has been able to move, under present circumstances, more than \$52 million dollars for a single company over several years into various divisional areas, whether to fight a candidate’s election or re-election or to apply the funds to some other cause. Regardless, for the NRA to spend these funds for another entity, undisclosed, is a method of secrecy. This information was captured from one of the NRA’s previous disclosures. [CITATION Dic13 \l 1033]

In the article by Dickinson, the author suggests that the NRA is receiving funds from the sale of both arms and ammunition, directly. This being true certainly ties the NRA to the sale and trade of both arms and ammunition which suggests that the NRA is currently enjoying improper privileges regarding their governmental designation. The author in this case identifies a program

known as “Round-Up” which allows the NRA to receive dollars directly from the sale of guns and ammunition through another arms seller. In this case the organization identified as Midway USA works in conjunction with the NRA to increase arms and ammunition sales while receiving a particular dollar amount through the sales. The article reports that through this method the NRA received more than \$8 million dollars from midway customers. This money was then provided to the Legislative Action division which is responsible for lobbying congressional members on various activities. [CITATION Dic13 \l 1033]

Upon embarking upon the discussion regarding the dollars that flow into the NRA and asking the question regarding what they actually go to support, one could ask: “Whom does the gun lobby really represent? The National Rifle Association claims to be a group representing “4 million members” who simply love the Second Amendment.” [CITATION FAN13 \p 5 \l 1033] For any group that boasts a membership of some four million members, it is very likely that our Congress is very likely to listen to the advice and recommendations of this organization whoever they may be. Therefore, it is very important to be attentive about what is said. When considering the dues alone for four million individuals it is very substantial and could go a very long way with additional funding that is generated. In the article by Dickinson regarding NRA membership dues he states, “Their interests, not the interest of the \$35-a-year member, rule the roost.” [CITATION Dic13 \l 1033] When we consider the fact that based upon membership alone, the NRA will generate some \$140 million dollars annually. These funds could go a very long way in the fight against a candidate, for instance. When discussing funding for the NRA and we consider an annual membership revenue along with millions upon millions upon millions of dollars from other gun related sources, we see how the power and influence enjoyed by the NRA grows exponentially. When an organization possesses this type of power it is very important that

the membership keep such a monster in check, ensuring that the organization does things that are sensible. If this does not happen we end up with something like the NRA. We end up with a monster of an organization that possesses extraordinary sums of money and wields lots of power and influence within our government while the organizations subjects or members simply blindly follow the advice of the organization and not the organization following the will of the people, its members. Earlier when the question was asked, whom does the gun lobby represent? The answer should be the members of the organization but this is proving not to be true. The author Fang states that:

“The National Rifle Association claims to be a group representing “4 million members” who simply love the Second Amendment. In reality, it is composed of a half-dozen legal entities, some designed to run undisclosed attack ads in political campaigns, others to lobby and collect tens of millions of dollars in undisclosed, tax-deductible sums.”

[CITATION FAN13 \l 1033]

One of the major strengths maintained by the NRA is the great amount of funds of which it has access. Unfortunately, it does not appear that NRA members have much say in the way funds are spent within the organization. Orfalea (2017) in his article entitled Self-Inflicted Carnage also suggests that many NRA members do not agree with the organizations lobbying efforts many times, as poles show and he states:

“It's both surprising and instructive to discover that most gun owners themselves are not comfortable with loose gun laws. Gun-violence expert Matt Valentine suggests that even rank-and-file NRA members are not particularly enthused by the extremist measures its lobbyists promote (“The NRA Wants Policies that Most Gun Owners Don't,” Washington Post, July 18). Polls show that even in conservative states like Texas and Utah, most

residents oppose open-carry and guns on college campuses. Clearly, the millions of dollars that gun manufacturers—many of them foreign-based—pump into NRA lobbying efforts have successfully bought Congressional votes. It's bribery of the most craven sort.” [CITATION Orf17 \p 19 \l 1033]

The thing that is very clear for anyone planning to go up against the NRA is the fact that they must be prepared to spend extreme sums of money on any given cause. The author Dickinson states that “In the 2012 election cycle, the NRA spent more than \$24 million in both regulated and dark money. Compare that to just \$3,000 in campaign spending by the Brady Campaign.” [CITATION Dic13 \p 1 \l 1033] In this illustration we see that even an organization like the Brady Campaign was unable spend enough funds to defeat a lobbying effort implemented by the NRA. Spending some \$24 million dollars on a single issue and only being opposed by \$3000 is quite a significant difference. There are many comparable organizations like the NRA within our great country.

The NRA is an organization with very deep pockets and it is prepared to spend exorbitant sums of money in support of their cause as we see in the above case involving the Brady Campaign where the NRA spent some \$23, 997,000 more dollars than the Brady Campaign. It is not clear whether the Brady Campaign had the money and decided not to spend or it did not have the money to spend in support of the campaign, the point is they lost and the NRA won. This is exactly what is happening with nearly every issue related to gun control in this country. Again, as noted by the author, Fang (2013), the typical NRA member pays their membership dues and in many cases, is a proud card-carrying member of the NRA not realizing that the NRA does not necessarily represent them but it instead represents the NRA lobby, which could be any number or large organizations. Though the collection of more than \$140 million in revenue from

membership dues is a lot of money, this is somewhat of a small amount when considering other donors such as “ExxonMobil, GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer, UPS and AT&T, remain members and sponsors.” [CITATION FAN13 \p 5 \l 1033] even following the Travon Martin incident. During the year 2010 organizations such as these contributed over \$70 million dollars alone and one author states “the NRA relies on tens of millions in grants and gifts -- increasingly linked to the gun industry. Such funds totaled \$71 million in 2010 and have been growing twice as fast as membership dues.” [CITATION Dic13 \p 1 \l 1033]

The NRA can utilize its coffers to bully various congressmen and women to vote in the manner desired or the organization suggests that it will campaign against them in order to remove them from office. In this manner, the NRA can obtain favorable votes from legislators not only at the national level but also at the state and local levels as well. Understanding this concern, one must ask, “Is this the way in which our forefathers intended for our government to work?” There are numerous examples of the NRA using their very strong lobby to encourage a legislator to vote in a desired manner. [CITATION FAN13 \l 1033]

There was a case highlighted in an article by Spies (2016) where an eight-year-old girl was killed through use of a firearm by an eleven-year-old boy named Benjamin. In this case that happened in the state of Tennessee, the legislature attempted to enact a law that would help to prevent such an incident from ever happening again, called Makayla’s Law. In this case it was learned later that Benjamin had come over to Makayla’s house and asked to see her new puppies to which she said no. Benjamin then became angry and went back home, retrieved a 12-gauge shotgun, aimed it at Makayla’s window and fired hitting her in the chest. Makayla would later die from the gunshot wound and Benjamin would later be convicted and remanded to a children’s detention center until the age 19 years. To help prevent future incidents such as this the state attempted to

institute something known as Makayla's Law which would penalize an individual for negligent storage of a firearm. There were other cases to which the state referred, there was widespread media attention and the law seemed sure to pass. Unfortunately, people involved with passing this law had forgotten about the long arm of the NRA. For a bill that enjoyed widespread support, both democrat and republican. The author states

“Laws that tighten gun restrictions have little hope of making it through the Tennessee Legislature, but the bill dubbed "Makayla's Law" seemed poised to be an exception. After all, the National Rifle Association touts responsible gun ownership as a core principle. On its website, the NRA states, "In a home where guns are kept, the degree of safety a child has rests squarely on the parents and gun owner.”[CITATION Spi16 \p 35 \l 1033]

Even after enjoying all of this support the bill would fail in the ninth hour because the NRA opposed the bill. The author stated, “With Makayla's story still on Tennesseans' minds, the NRA flew in a lobbyist from its Virginia headquarters to squash the legislation.” [CITATION Spi16 \p 36 \l 1033] Though the NRA lobbyist was able to convince Tennesseans to kill “Makala's Law” the real reason he was present was to persuade Tennessee legislators to further loosen gun restrictions. The NRA Lobbyist had a desire to legislators to loosen gun restrictions and allow for open carry of weapons on college campuses. This is but one example that demonstrates the power and the very wide influence of the NRA. This shows how the NRA is opposed to any attempt to create and enact sensible laws in support of gun safety. [CITATION Spi16 \l 1033] There were three Harvard Professors who did a study to determine if laws were being enacted in support of gun control and safety. Just prior to the mass shooting in the Orlando night club, three Harvard Business School professors issued a study which revealed some very striking information. These professors highlighted the fact that events such as mass shootings do lead to

change in this country. The professors noted that there were no cases of gun violence that led to the enactment of new laws in a Democratic led legislature while on the other hand there were new laws enacted during a Republican led legislature. On the surface, this is shocking to believe that such events actually led to the establishment of new laws, something that we all desired, right? The author in this case highlights the fact that gun laws were actually loosened by some 75% following a mass shooting event during a Republican controlled legislature. Though I realize that this is truly amazing that following a mass shooting in this country, Republicans would loosen gun restrictions but that is what is happening in this country. These professors go on to note that a political system that functions in this manner is truly broken. In this article the author compares this to getting burned on a hot stove and instead of removing your hand, you press harder on the hot stove. Just as that makes no sense to do, that is exactly what is happening in this country right now regarding gun safety and gun control yet it makes absolutely no sense. The NRA has been determined to be working for industry. Even though the NRA is a 501(c)(4) registered organization it appears to be supporting the rest of industry, especially the gun industry. Following the decision regarding Citizens United the NRA appears to engage directly in political advocacy. The NRA seems to engage directly in defeating various candidates on the national stage, engaging in running ads and the like. As the author states it in this case, the NRA can act like a super PAC and do not have to disclose any names associated with the donations they receive. According to the author, this must do with the designation they were given as a 501(c)(4) organization, allowing it to advertise to donors and to get involved in the political process as well. This includes lobbying and actually campaigning politically and this would all fall under the auspices as a Division of the NRA. Rules require that this organization engage in “social welfare” activities only. This issue is surely one of legal concern because under this

program the NRA is allowed to engage in too many questionable activities. According to the author the NRA is positioned to cooperate with such as shooting clubs, youth education groups or even magazines, all which are great organizations to support the passing of dark money. As a PAC, the NRA is functioning very strong. It was determined that the organization spent some \$16 million dollars in support of national level political races during the 2012 year. As well, the Lobbying organization associated with the NRA spent an additional \$7.4 million dollars as received from private sources. With the NRA spending such dollars this makes the organization one of the top dark money organizations in the country. This author also notes that there was a bit of collusion at play whereby the NRA worked along with a number of right-wing powerhouses while also receiving funding in the form of a grant from Carl Rove's group identified as GPS. Again, the NRA is suspected to not be simply working for various industry partners but is also working on the national stage. [CITATION Dic13 \l 1033]

Conclusion

The NRA is a very clever organization that appears to have grown exponentially now boasting some four million members throughout the United States. The NRA is an organization that has been around for many years but for many years it was an organization that did not garner very much attention. Formed during the 1940s, it began as the National Rehabilitation Association and now it has changed into something totally different with the organization from its conception now contained as a Division within this giant of an organization. As stated above, the NRA boasts a membership of over four million and though with respect to revenues this may not appear as much but this adds some \$140 million dollars to the coffers of the NRA. An organization with a budget of over \$140 million dollars can do much within society but this is not all of the revenue that is taken in by this organization.[CITATION FAN13 \l 1033] In

addition to the \$140 million received in membership dues, the NRA also has partners that contribute millions upon millions to the organization as well. Other organizations such as Pfizer, AT&T, Exxon Mobile and others contribute funds to the organization as well. Additionally, some believe that the NRA is also receiving dark money in support of their causes as well. Unfortunately, it is quite impossible to get a true picture regarding the funds received and the cash out as well. This is one of the secrets of the organization as they do not disclose budget information and other areas. It appears that the NRA seems to have something to hide from the rest of America. [CITATION Dic13 \l 1033] Some authors even believe that though there are numerous members in the organization, it does not appear that members have very much say about what the organization does. It appears now that the organization has taken on a mind of its own with respect to gun regulation and safety and it appears to be against every nature of gun regulation and safety even though that is not what their membership desires. One source author discusses the fact that many NRA members were polled following an election and many of them desired to see good common-sense gun safety regulations enacted. However, this is not what the NRA desires and it is certainly not part of the NRA agenda.[CITATION Orf17 \l 1033] In many ways, it appears that a monster has been created and it seems to be functioning not based upon what the people desire but instead based upon what the monster wants.

Method

To answer the proposed research question, I would use the qualitative analysis research approach and to be more specific I would primarily utilize the ethnographic research approach. The ethnographic research approach is type of qualitative method. In the qualitative research approach, as previously stated, looks at human behavior from the standpoint of operation within a social, cultural and political setting. In this case, research would take a closer look at the

social, cultural and the political setting with respect to the NRA member to determine what can be gleaned from who the NRA member truly is and ultimately determine who it is that joins the NRA and why.

With regards to ethnography, it happens to have quite a bit in common with the case study to include the fact that interviews are utilized and conducted as well as available documents are used. Utilizing the ethnographic approach, the researcher tends to look at a case in a more encompassing manner, in its entirety. When utilizing the ethnographic approach, the researcher tends to utilize a less structured research approach when most appropriate. When we consider the ethnographic approach, we realize that the researcher, in this case, tends to live within the space of the research subject in order to get a very good understanding regarding the research subject, what drives them and allow for better research input. This prolonged field activity, though it is a bit of an inconvenience to the researcher should allow for more thorough research.

[CITATION Exp12 \l 1033]

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