

Increased gun control increases civilian safety research paper examples

[Law](#), [Security](#)



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Introduction

Regarding the contentious issue such as gun control, several advocacy groups representing their side of the claim on the matters of public safety and gun control have weighted on mixed public opinions. There are large majorities that support policies to control the manufacturing and sale of firearms to insinuate safety of the greater public from criminals acquiring firearms. However, pro-gun advocates are extending their opinion on the grounds of each individual's self-protection of life and properties. Some individuals have praised the effectiveness of gun control in reducing crime rates in the United States. These individuals believe that gun control legislations may accomplish the desired results, and may result in strategic consequences that may improve the security situations. On the other hand, other individuals and groups have cited gun control as unproductive method, which can play a role in exacerbating the criminal activities in the country.

These individuals use contemporary issues, such as school shootings, to reflect the manner in which accessibility to guns may reduce civilian security. These two opposing views have interests scholars, general population, and politicians among others. The study focuses on the, encompassing argument that “ increased gun control save lives more than owning guns for protection” with the aim of supporting the statement; the opposing views as well as their rebuttal will be considered. Lastly, counter arguments will be presented to emphasize the claim on the issue being discussed.

Background

The Congress have long debated on the constitutionality of the federal rules pertaining to firearms and ammunition control considering the number of advocacy groups arguing for and against the total control of guns. Every nation has a varying perspective when it comes to gun control. In the United States, it is regarded as a high-profile issue due to the encompassing number of violent crimes involving the irresponsible use of firearms in the country. Malcolm (2013) stated in his article “ historians agree that from the late middle-ages to 1954, interpersonal crimes have declined because the Bill of Rights guarantees that the people could have firearms” (179). It suggests that rights of the people to own firearms have protected them from imminent crimes. The contemporary nature of today’s society has constituted a different perspective on gun ownership as significant number of crimes even involving juveniles have resulted to loss of lives. Collier (2013) stated, “ With even more guns in circulation, it becomes even

more reasonable to suspect or fear that someone else has one-and to shoot first" (82). This statement was based from the case of George Zimmerman who shot the unarmed Trayvon Martin in Florida in 2012. The former presumed that the latter possess a firearm and the fear of being shot first triggered the former to shoot first. This is evidence pertaining to public assumptions on the volume of circulating firearms in the United States. Given that the people knows how easy it is to own a firearm, they would assume that everyone has one and at the onset of a slight conflict would push either of them to pull a trigger. Furthermore, the United States encompasses a nation of thirty million mentally disturbed gun owners such as Dylan Klebold who took several lives on a killing spree. Collier (2013) added, " Occasional gun massacres are exactly what one would expect when millions of people with mild personality disorders are liberally supplied with lethal firearms" (83).

The United States is not the only country on the hot seat in terms of gun control issue. In an article by Ross, (2003) Mexico City was mentioned to be among the problematic places in the world when it comes to gun control. Tepito is considered as among the hottest places in Mexico for drugs and firearms. One could easily get a handgun to a bazooka through a middleman in the city, " His catalogues lists Glocks, a Barretta 9 mm and . 357 magnum in a 3, 000 peso range (US\$300), but Flaco has a line of discount handguns too- armas calientes (hot guns) that have been recently used in the commission of a crime" (Ross 18). Therefore, the wide circulation of firearms can be attributed to several crimes due to its ease of access and availability. Furthermore, policies insinuating limits to the number and type of firearms

that one can be owned still encompass risks of irresponsible firing as observed among the Mexican population “ Mexico’s constitution proclaims the rights of the citizens to bear arms, but only of a caliber inferior to those weapons declared to be exclusively for the use of military” (Ross 19). The association of wide circulation of firearms with high crime rates led to the debates whether gun control had to be imposed.

Young and Hemenway (1996) stated, “ Historically, such debates have been initiated by proponents of gun control following large increases in violent crime (e. g., in the 1930s and 1990s), attempted or completed assassinations of presidents (such as in 1936, 1964, 1981), or the assassinations of other politically prominent individuals (such as Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968” (634). Evidently, the lack of strong legislation on gun control emerged as among the reasons that assassinations of prominent individuals took place. Although survey trends stipulated a significant decline in long firearms ownership since 1959 (Young and Hemenway 635), the reality and encompassing events says different. Ironically, despite the imposition of gun control prior to the assassinations of Kennedy and Luther King Jr., there were still significant findings suggesting that more and more people are still able to own guns due to the appeals made by organizations lobbying for the legality of gun ownership. NRA (National Rifles Association) in particular has largely influenced the Republicans in the U. S. Congress to take steps repealing gun restrictions including assault rifles, “ A large and increasing percentage of Americans think that the NRA has too much influence” (Young and Hemenway 637). Such influence affect legislative decisions pertaining to gun control and

defeats the justification of control in favor of public safety. The apparent lack of gun control translates to a significant number of people murdered in the United States, which brings about the issue of public safety. Wintemute, Braga and Kennedy (2010) wrote “ In 2007, a total of 12, 632 people in the United States were murdered with firearms, and it is estimated that another 48, 676 were treated in hospitals for gunshot wounds received in assaults” (508). These numbers continue to rise despite the efforts of restricting gun ownership because the ease of access was still not addressed. The problems stems from the two system of retail gun commerce in the country that includes licensed gun retailers and private-party gun sellers (Wintemute, Braga and Kennedy 508). However, legislative statues only regulate the former and the lack of specific legislation pertaining to gun sales from private parties exacerbates the risks for irresponsible gun owners to gain access to the firearms market. The result of this system according to Wintemute, Braga, and Kennedy (2010) is that “ some 85% of all guns used in crimes and then recovered by law-enforcement agencies have been sold at least once by private parties” (508).

Counter Argument

In contradiction to the notions that gun control would significantly increase public safety, a large number of concerned vigilant citizens argues that restricting the people from owning guns would only impose greater risk. Given the recent incidents of mass shooting in the United States, the prevailing legislations have still failed in making necessary intervention. Critiques of the federal gun control acts believe that the insinuation of the

current policies is because of panic and does not merely concerns long-term and well-thought emphasis on safety. Stenning (1995) wrote, “ With the evidence at hand, the conclusion that the current clamor for tougher gun control laws is the product of a moral panic” (185). Therefore, the prevailing legislative acts do not possess the strength or the purpose of imposing control due to public safety concerns, but rather actions stemming from moral conscience.

Moreover, guns can serve as a deterrence the will dissuade people from behaving radically because knowing that guns are evidentiary tools that will lead the user to imminent incarceration. Therefore, criminals would hesitate to fire their guns knowing the fact that their deadly weapon at some point will also turn against them. This encompasses a notion of deterrence in owning firearms because knowing the capabilities of the law enforcement in ballistic examinations would eventually make gun owners or even criminals to think twice before pointing their guns to people. Having gun control policy would only increase the chance for criminals to implicate danger towards other people because of the assumptions that the victim is defenseless. In addition, non-firearm involved crimes are likely to become prevalent such as burglary, suicide, physical assault, and murder because the victims have no means of defending themselves from dangers.

Lott (2002) addressed the same question of whether gun ban actually reduces the prevalence of crime citing the countries the highest homicide cases actually have prevailing gun bans. This encompasses an argument that while people have the right to protect their own lives and that of their loved ones, imposing gun control only suppresses the people’s rights for

protection. Furthermore, calls for gun control undermines the fact that it only results to increase in crime rate as Lott (2002) have stated, " Too often calls for " reasonable" gun control or " sensible" gun-safety laws ignore that such legislation can actually result in increased crime. Guns are used defensively about 2 million times a year, according to national surveys" (11a). In addition, the society's most vulnerable citizens such as the elderly, children, and other law-abiding citizens are impeded of their rights to self-defense. The studies conducted to prove the have no significant data that supports the claim that federal legislations are actually helping in reducing crime. In fact, provisions of gun control legislations stipulating safe storage, background checks and one-gun-a-month rule results to higher crime probability.

Thinking about imposing gun control should first look at the situations in gun-free zones in Europe and Australia where higher instances of gun related crimes occur " In the four years after the U. K. banned handguns in 1996, gun crime rose by an astounding 40%. Since Australia's 1996 laws banning most guns and making it a crime to use a gun defensively, armed robberies rose by 51%, unarmed robberies by 37%, assaults by 24% and kidnappings by 43%. While murders fell by 3%, manslaughter rose by 16%" (Lott 11a). These statistics reflects the very real consequences of impeding the rights of the citizens to defend themselves. Furthermore, even the law-enforcers in the countries such as United Kingdom (Lott 11a) complains that stricter gun laws did not help in preventing criminals in gaining access to firearms and it rather paved the way for crimes to go rampant due to the notion that the people are defenseless.

Counter Arguments

Based on the pro-gun perspective, it is apparent that gun control only increases the probability of crime victimization and undermines civilian security. However, such rational cannot be upheld to the impediment of gun control policies particularly because social structure attributed to the use of firearms and the purpose it serves to every individual vary from culture to culture. Braman, Kahan and Grimmelmann (2005) cited the socio-cultural arguments in the "Great American Gun Debate" (Kate and Kleck as cited in 284). "Control supporters (who are disproportionately urban, eastern, Catholic or Jewish, female, and African American) despise firearms, which to them symbolize the perpetuation of illicit social hierarchies, the elevation of force over reason, and collective indifference to the well-being of strangers" (Braman, Kahan and Grimmelmann 284). Socio-cultural structure constitutes the variation of reasons as to why crimes increase or decrease in a certain country. The conceptual evidences linking gun ban to the increase of crime rate in one country cannot be applied to another because of the differences in cultural and social perception about citizen safety.

Braman, Kahan and Grimmelmann (2005) points out that cultural cognition constitutes the theoretical variance in risk perceptions along with the competing clusters of social values reflecting how the society should be organized. It may be necessary for England and Australia to implement gun ban because these countries might have historical backgrounds of crime involving irresponsible gun use. However, the increase on other type of crimes cannot be attributed to the imposition of gun ban because several factors might have been involved during the occurrences of the crime. Gun

control encompasses a level of necessity distinct to socio-cultural structure, which Braman, Kahan and Grimmelmann (2005) denotes “ The power of opposing cultural orientations to generate opposing sets of factual beliefs can be linked to a series of interconnected cognitive and social mechanisms” (289). Therefore, arguments contradicting gun control on the grounds of inter-region comparison hold no merit in justifying repeal of gun control policies.

In the United States, the advent of gun control debates brought up the reasonable assumptions on the perpetual rights of the American people to protect themselves from imminent risk and by that it means everyone including the insane. It can be recalled that the most horrific tragedies in the country’s history involves mass killings performed by mentally disturbed with a gun. Virginia tech in 2007, a student walks into the campus armed with Glock 9 mm, semi-automatic pistols, and a Walther P 22 scoured the entire school with bullets and soon after, the national television is on an obscene spectacle of news reports stating scores of injuries and 32 deaths (Rubin 5). The shooter, Cho Seung-Hui have been ordered by the court to undergo psychiatric treatment two years before he stormed Virginia tech. Due to the events that has transpired and the similar incidents that followed after the Virginia tech incident, it is reasonable to doubt whether the perpetual rights to self-security is actually what is seems to be.

Furthermore, Rubin (2005) stated “ In a single year, close to 20, 000 Americans suffer nonfatal gun injuries, while 34, 000 more, including over 3, 000 children and teenagers, are killed by gunfire That’s one child killed every three hours, nine children every day, and more than sixty children every

week. In the same year not a single Japanese child died of gunshot wounds, Great Britain had 19 deaths, Germany 57, France 109, and Canada 153" (6). These numbers are enough reason to believe that strengthening gun control policies is needed more than ever. Despite the appeals in strengthening the American cultural and social values including the early detection of potential violent behavior among Americans, the number of firearm victimization continue to the expand. Although, these intervention approaches may have some value, they are still not enough to eliminate the fact that tens and thousand of people are vulnerable to deaths by firearms unless control was strictly imposed. As Rubin (2005) suggests, " Only eliminating the guns will do the job" (6), gunshot will always be among the top causes of death in the United States.

The pro-gun society will always uphold the meaning of the Second Amendment " A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed" (Rubin 7). However, this reasoning and upheaval of close-minded principle is several centuries old and encompasses dark-ages kind of thinking that is no longer applicable in today's contemporary culture. The bill of rights constituting the need for the people to take arms was created to satisfy the prevailing circumstances during its conception. The bill of rights was made to create a militia and it doesn't relate to today's situation where ordinary citizens are stocking piles of firearms and ammunition that are not in any way associated to any militia groups. Arguments on the grounds of the Second Amendment do not come to terms with the current social and political realities of 21st century according to Rubin (2005). It is true that

with or without gun control people will kill each other, but not as massive in number as those crimes committed with the aid of guns.

Main Points

Increased gun control increases civilian security on a number of reasons starting with the reduction of homicide cases (Dhanapala 163; Zimring). The wide availability of shooting weapons is attributed to large cases of homicide. Kwon et al., (1997) stated that socioeconomic variables such as poverty level, unemployment, and alcoholism are involved in gun-related homicides. Because firearms are much efficient as killing weapon, people prefer to use them during conflicts resulting to a case of homicide. In addition, the ease of access of firearms in the market exacerbate the probabilities of more people owning gun resulting to conflicts ending on a shoot out with either of the two parties involved ending with serious injury or death. Furthermore, Webster et al. (2012) denotes “ firearm homicide rate in the U. S. is twenty times greater than in these other high-income countries. The higher prevalence of gun ownership and much less restrictive gun laws are important reasons why violent crime in the U. S. is so much more lethal than in countries of similar income levels” (2). Therefore, limiting gun possession is likely to reduce the temptation for committing crimes particular during desperate times.

Secondly, the presence of gun at home increases the likelihood of people engaging in a mass shooting similar to what has transpired in similar cases of Virginia tech and Sandy Hook in 2012. In an article from CNN (2013), shooting events appears to have increased this decade and every incident

claims more lives than before. These events were attributed to the lesser extent of firearm control in the United States where high-powered weapons are made available in virtually anywhere. One could easily get a Glock 9 mm on a trip to a supermarket and give it to their teenage son and the following day will be a frenzy of reports about the same son that went on a shooting spree in his school. Webster et al. (2012) wrote, " Mass shootings involving assault weapons typically involve more victims per incident than mass shootings with other weapons. Recent examples of firearms with LCM being used in mass shootings include Jared

Lee Loughner's use of a Glock 9 mm semi-automatic pistol, with a magazine holding 33 rounds of ammunition, to murder 6 and wound 13 others, including Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, in January 2011" (9). Evidently, in order to avoid deaths resulting from mass shooting, stiffer regulations had to be imposed particularly in purchasing high-powered weapons.

Lastly, gun restrictions the cases of suicide due to a variety of factors such as economic problems and mental illness. A descriptive analysis of previous researches indicates the differences in gun-related deaths including suicides between states with gun control ordinance and those without.

Figure 1 Kwon et al. 45

The above table shows the descriptive statistics and t-values resulted from the study measuring the difference between states with and without gun control. It is apparent from the results that states without gun control ordinance have higher percentage of gun-related incidences. Deaths per 100, 000 encompass 19. 58% of gun-related incidents in states with gun control ordinance as compared to 24. 44% of gun-related deaths in areas

without prevailing gun control measures. Although the urban and demographic segment reveals otherwise, the most important concept that the statistical study conveys is that the existence of gun control can significantly reduce the number of gun-related deaths. The unemployment rate in relation to poverty as discussed earlier were also measured for gun-related deaths in the above table showing considerable margin of higher gun-related death in states without gun control laws. These findings suggest that having stricter gun control ordinance can increase civilian security.

Conclusion

The endless debates whether increasing gun control would insinuate greater citizen security. Instead of steadily relying on the interpretation of the Second Amendment to justify gun possession and continuous imposition of arguments pertaining to its regulation, it undermines the other side of the issue that relates to unreasonable deaths. While a significant number of people still believe on the idea of self-defense, it insinuates a misleading notion that translates to unreasonable violence. Increasing gun control is likely to deter gun owners from irresponsibly firing them at will. The recent events in American history speaks a much louder call for securing safety of the greater public rather than satisfying the interest of lobbying groups. It is difficult to change the way gun owners think about the issue, due to the socio-cultural aspects attributed to gun ownership in the United States. However, evidences and recent events involving shooting rampages resulting to death of innocent lives suggests a critical change on how people should look at the issue of imposing gun control. Individualism is apparent

among the pro-gun society, but through gun control that unarmed citizens can guarantee greater security.

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