

School crime and violence

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



Crime and violence in schools are issues that are of significant public concern, especially after the series of tragic school shootings recently. The schools have exercised care in making the students safe but many schools are now facing serious problems so that effective strategies can be devised to prevent school violence and increase school safety. (Small and Tetrick). The terms " school violence" and " school safety," are still terms that need to be commonly defined.

The authors maintain that “ Multiple approaches can prove beneficial as each discipline brings to bear the full force of its knowledge and experience, but they complicate the task of summarizing the state of school violence. For instance, should school violence be considered a subset of youth violence? ”(Small and Tetrick). Most of the violence in schools are involved in gangs. A gang is a group of people who form an allegiance for a common purpose and engage in unlawful or criminal activity. Gangs give members companionship, guidance, excitement and identity.

When a member needs something, the others come to the rescue and provide protection. Gangs members have significantly lower levels of self-esteem compared to their non-gang peers. They also could name fewer adult role models than did their non-gang , peers. It is no doubt that America has become a violent society. Television programs alone show gruesome murders and violence as if they are normal incidences in our lives. It is said that children learn to imitate the violence that they see on television. These take root in a lot of issues, foremost of which is on gun control.

The positive effects of the strict enforcement of gun laws are readily seen. The Brady Campaign, for example believes that “ background checks nationwide stopped over 600, 000 felons and other prohibited purchasers from buying handguns from federally licensed firearm dealers. ” Some say this is one big reason why there is a need to advocate gun control. Once people realize that there is a direct correlation between the increases in violence as correlated with gun possession, they would also be against gun violence in society. However, opinions are at odds with regards to the issue of gun control.

Remarkably, both advocates and opponents of gun control policies in the United States use statistics to back up their stance. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that: According to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), in 2003, 449, 150 victims of violent crimes stated that they faced an offender with a firearm. Incidents involving a firearm represented 7% of the 4. 9 million violent crimes of rape and sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated and simple assault. The FBI's Crime in the United States estimated that 67% of the 16, 503 murders in 2003 were committed with firearms. “ Gun Control vs. Gun Rights). Advocates of gun control directly use statistics such as this to assert that the increase in violence is positively correlated with gun possession. Organizations such as the National Rifle Association of America (NRA) and other proponents of gun rights oppose such view. Alexander, for one, insists that such arguments contradict factual studies.

He contradicts the correlation, saying that “ cities with the most restrictive gun laws, like Washington, D. C. , and Atlanta, Georgia, in fact, have the highest murder rates in the nation. At the center of the gun control issue is the Second Amendment to the Constitution: “ 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. ” Arguments usually focus on the interpretation of the law. The Second Amendment is the main banner of gun rights activists. Gun control advocates, on the other hand, feel that gun control opponents misinterpret the law when they assume that it means absolute right to ownership of guns by private individuals (Krouse).

They assert that the Second Amendment only refers to gun ownership in situation of “ militia” and not for general purposes. Gun control supporters feel that gun possession by just anybody is a contributing cause of increased incidence of crimes in the United States. In *Guns and Terror*, Berger and Henigan present studies to support their statement that “ Gun shows are a breeding ground for gun sales to terrorist [and that] nothing in federal law prevents terrorists from quickly amassing arsenals of weapons” (4).

Opponents to the gun control movement also believe that there is not enough factual evidence to the other side’s claim that banning the sale of some kinds of guns result to lower crime rates (“ Gun Control vs. Gun Rights”). Alexander accuses gun control groups of ‘ demagogue-ing’ the issue and maintains that the root of the problem is culture, and not the gun. He even notes that “ many of the problems in question are the result of Leftist doctrines. ” The Brady Campaign believes that stricter rules on gun

ownership will result in communities with minimal crimes since they correlate guns with most crimes committed.

Proponents of gun control also base this belief on what they see as positive effects of enforcement of gun laws. The Brady Campaign, for example believes that “ background checks nationwide stopped over 600, 000 felons and other prohibited purchasers from buying handguns from federally licensed firearm dealers. ” Gun rights proponents maintain that stricter rules could actually cause crime rates to rise as criminals only tend to go places with stricter gun rules.

Alexander quotes Thomas Sowell as saying, “ Most criminals aren’t that stupid; they tend to go where the guns aren’t. ”(Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence). Proponents of gun control continue to push for the passage of new laws and/or amendments to existing laws to restrict gun ownership. For one, they are lobbying for legislation covering what they refer to as loopholes, specifically in issues such as juvenile access to firearms, and sales at gun shows and through the Internet (Brady Campaign).

Opponents are also continuing efforts to gather support to counter the move of gun control advocates. The NRA is drawing support through massive information drive advocating Second Amendment rights and the protection of Americans’ hunting heritage. The NRA also performs studies and surveys contradicting the position of gun control supporters. In their survey on what Americans think of Right-to-Carry laws, results show that 79% of the voters stood in favor of such laws (National Rifle Association of America).

The Brady Campaign notes, “ according to an analysis of the FBI Uniform Crime Report, the percentage of violent crimes committed with firearms has declined dramatically after the Brady Law went into effect. ” Supporters of gun control assert the need for more restrictions in gun ownership, especially in the federal level. They call for stricter background checks for people who intend to purchase licensed firearms. Gun rights supporters do not see additional laws and amendments to laws as a solution to increase in crime rates.

Alexander writes, “ Gun restrictions have not protected citizens in Atlanta, Washington, D. C. , New York or Boston, much less anyone in Columbine or Red Lake. Nor did such laws protect Jews from Hitler or Stalin or Chinese peasants from Mao, etc. , ad infinitum. ” Alexander also advises politicians and gun controllers alike to look at the cultural aspects of the problem and not the instruments. The National Rifle Association of America has opposed every effort by gun control advocates, specially the Brady Campaign group, which they think will encroach on their rights under the Second Amendment.

They maintain that gun ownership is their constitutional right and should not be limited to recreational purposes only. The NRA, in fact, is supporting enactment of laws involving Self-Defense and “ freedom” to carry guns (Alexander, Mark 2005). Indeed, the right of law-abiding citizens to carry concealed firearms for purpose of self-defense has become a hot and controversial topic and one that will continue to be so for a long time. Schools need to protect the children from these gun-toting individuals and avoid another Columbine or Virginia Tech incident.