

Analysis of can gun control work by james jacobs

Literature



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Critique of the book 'Can gun control work' by James Jacobs's most recent book, CAN GUN CONTROL WORK, reflects two important themes, law and pragmatism. Jacobs approaches the volatile issue of gun control from a dispassionate analytical perspective with a focus on the details of implementation. In doing so, he provides a useful contribution to both the literature on gun control and to the broader literature on policy. Although well organized and very accessible to a wide range of readers, the book falls somewhat short in a couple of ways.

He dwells so much on mechanics of implementation which gives a view regularly ignored, mostly by policy advocates. Just like any other public policy, the detail is in implementation, and implementation more often seems harder and complex than foreseen by those in favor. If the likely problems are not foreseen and addressed they will be a mountainous problem in the process of implementation that may derail everything else. Despite incrementalist theory favoring getting some policy adopted on the assumption that correction will come with time, early failure can impede legitimacy and work towards blocking future initiatives (Jacobs 2002). At the same time, measuring the success of any policy against the idealistic and inflated claims of its advocates provides the skeptic a decided and deceptive advantage (Jacobs 2002). My critique is that there are better ways of overcoming the legal and practical problems of enforcement and implementation than those presented by Jacobs.

Jacobs looks into the extent of firearm ownership and the deeply rooted position of guns in American culture. He however incorrectly makes the case that any regulatory control must contend with both the huge existing population of firearms and the entrenched political and social support for

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individual gun ownership. This is not true because to bring everyone into board is not such an easier thing achieved, you cannot satisfy everyone. Moreover, Jacobs highlighted on both the Second Amendment and federalism as barrier to new regulation. This chapter presents brought forth a well thought analysis of implementation barriers specific to guns and common to general regulatory policy. His critique of regulatory implementation concisely notes, " If a regulatory scheme is not enforced, it loses credibility." This is something that all implementation advocates should take into their minds.

Even though Jacobs did an exemplary job to looking onto implementation challenges he fails to detail the devising solutions. In the chapter skepticism is evident with little focus to how challenges in a regulatory regime might be tackled. His analysis of the complexities of a federal mandate for state regulatory action in light of the Supreme Court's ruling in *PRINTZ v. U. S.* is one of the typical examples (Jacobs 2002). Despite Jacobs accurately characterizing the case as a key stumbling block, he fails to pay attention to some of the best means for tackling it, such as cutting down the issuance of dealer licenses in states that do not meet a federal standard. This skeptical theme is frequently repeated in the book and contributes to the book's greatest failure. An examination of alternative conceptualizations of success and alternative means for accomplishing goals would increase the balance, and in my opinion, the value of the book.

Work cited

James B. Jacobs. *Can gun control work?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. P. 287

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