

Bowling for columbine



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Bowling for Columbine by Michael Moore The theme of the film is what Michael Moore has identified as the culture of fear prevailing in the United States. The two-hour film is unravelling around the issues related to the Columbine High School tragedy. The film presents the viewpoints of people from across the spectrum, ranging from U. S foreign policy personals to gangsters. The footages taken from a surveillance camera in the Columbine cafeteria on April 20, 1999, show that the killing of 12 students and a teacher by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold and they killing themselves too. Although, Moore does not give ready-made conclusions on the cause of this tragedy, he has identified some important pathologies of American society that inevitably leads to massacres of this kind.

Moore makes a convincing case that gun possession in the United States is an identifiable cultural phenomenon, directly linked with the culture of fear prevailing in the country both at the micro and macro levels. What Moore identifies as the culture of fear is nothing but manufactured by the elites in the United States. This American reality is the result of the entrenched ruling of the politico-military-industry complex that has a substantial role in the emergence of this trigger culture. Extremely, Michele Moore was able to show that one could get a gun in America even for opening a bank account. The culture of gun ownership in the United States is certainly one of the important factors that makes tragedies such as Columbine School shooting not only possible but also a concrete possibility. However, it is not possible to empirically link the occurrence of crimes with the widespread ownership of guns since there are many countries that too have high gun possession rates but less related crimes. On the other hand, other factors such as the propagation of violence through media, especially new media technologies

like those that video games could effectively be linked to the crimes. Michele Moore himself highlights the case of Switzerland where it is compulsory for the citizens to have guns as it has no standing army. Yet, high rates of gun possession related crimes have been not reported from there. Curiously, Moore points fingers to that fact that the United States has the worlds largest defense facilities which include weapons of mass destruction, while seeking the roots of Columbine High School tragedy.

Certainly, the cultural attitudes stemming from the violent past of the United States have a decisive role in the high gun ownership rates and related crimes. Nevertheless, there are a number of administrative steps could be taken in order to mitigate the ill effects. Political solution would be too controversial to be successfully implemented since both the sides of gun control debates have convincing arguments. Besides, political solutions have little effect in addressing issues related to cultural attitudes. Improving public understanding about the problems of gun possession, reducing easy access to rifles, denying access to at-risk individuals and educational and cultural programmes against the ' culture of fear' could help to change people's attitudes towards guns and other firearms. Sufficient background checks must be done before allocating gun to someone. Also, strict measures must be introduced against illegal arms trading. Furthermore, there needs to be effective legal provisions to prevent anti-social elements such as drug addicts and criminals from obtaining guns. Most importantly, minors need to be blocked from acquiring firearms through adequate preventive mechanisms. In brief, a set of targeted but long terms measures could save the society from the fear of gun violence.

Reference

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Moore, M. (2002) Bowling for Columbine: Are We a Nation of Gun Nuts or Are We Just Nuts?, (Motion Picture), United States, United Artists.