Resolved: In the United States, private ownership of handguns ought to be banned.
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Topic Analysis One

A Primer on the Racial Dimensions of Handgun Ownership

Lawrence Zhou

Intro

This topic has a few different aspects about it, most obviously, the huge political divisiveness about it where even many reasonable liberals in favor of background checks would probably hesitate to ban the private ownership of all handguns. But lost in the obvious political debate over things like the Second Amendment and the right to bear arms are the real life consequences of gun violence. I’m not talking about the mass shootings that have recently galvanized media attention, such as the recent tragedy in San Bernardino, which, though many, are not responsible for the worst forms of gun violence. I’m talking about the invisible violence that doesn’t attract mass media attention, the violence that plagues entire communities of poor black and brown bodies, the violence that claims lives on a daily basis that no politician seems to care about. I’m talking about the gun violence that runs rampant in America and disproportionately affects African-Americans. Gun violence is a problem. Mass shootings are a problem. Suicides by firearms are a problem. But frequently ignored in discussions of mass shootings, statistics, and mental health is a discussion of who this most often affects: poor black and brown communities.

This essay hopes to illuminate a few issues about racialized handgun violence. In no means is this intended to be anything more than a brief primer on the racial dimensions of handgun violence. There are many academic articles that examine this issue in a more in-depth and scholarly manner. I merely hope to point you in the right direction as you explore the world of handguns and racialized violence.

I'd first like to begin by discussing the basic facts. Blacks, as a percentage, own less guns than whites, yet they are disproportionately affected by gun violence. Nearly half of all gun murder victims are black, more than any other race. These shootings are typically clustered in poor urban areas, places that politicians can continually blame the problem of mass gun violence on other factors, such as poor schooling and a breakdown of the black family, or just outright ignore the problem since white politicians do not rely on the votes of blacks that they have gerrymandered into small areas or outright denied the right to vote through felon disenfranchisement. These statistics have historically been poorly documented since traditional trackers of gun violence tend to ignore race. But the proof is undeniable: handgun violence is a racial issue and has been historically underplayed.

Black Americans Are Murdered by Guns at a Far Higher Rate Than All Other Races. Reddit's Mass Shooting Tracker does not include any breakdown by race. In response to questions about the group's numbers, one project organizer, Ghost of Alyeska, wrote, "Our intent is not to analyze the causes or cures for gun violence, but simply to expose the available data. We're volunteers working from a reddit community, nothing more." The Reddit project cites 462 people killed under its broad definition of mass shootings. The number of gun homicides of black men killed in 2013, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: 5,798. Baltimore alone has seen a total of 316 total homicides so far this year - the vast majority of them shooting deaths of black victims, according to the Baltimore Sun's homicide map. The city's homicide rate is now at a record high. The Reddit tracker captures eight of those deaths.

As a side note, while other racial groups have a stake in the gun control debate, I choose to focus on Black Americans because of the unique impact that handgun violence has on them compared to other racial groups. This does not mean that other racial groups don’t matter. However, though Asian Americans and Hispanics experience disproportionate gun violence as well, it just doesn't compare to the effect handgun violence has on black Americans.

**The affirmative**

The affirmative takes the politically unpopular, but perhaps necessarily radical approach that we should ban all handguns. The reasons for this seem a bit obvious from the above points of gun violence, but we'll go in-depth on this a bit more. Given that handgun violence disproportionately affects blacks, it's no wonder that parents of inner-city youth are tired of watching their children gunned down in senseless violence in their neighborhoods. Some have called for improving gun control, but some are also calling for a total ban on all handguns, which make up the vast majority of firearm deaths because they are relatively inexpensive, easy to acquire, and concealable. Affirmative's could argue that banning handguns stems the tide of firearm deaths experienced in urban city centers.

Of course, the negative could argue that totally banning guns isn't the solution, and we'll get to some of those positions later, but on face, banning handguns would seem to be the easiest and most effective solution to ending inner city gun violence. In addition to stopping gun violence in urban centers, banning guns could also help stopping police shootings. The most common pre-text for the police shooting unarmed black men is that the police thought that the unarmed black man had a gun. Banning all guns would help remove that pre-text. Obviously, this wouldn't solve all police violence, especially since the police would still suspect people of carrying illegal firearms, but it potentially is a step towards removing implicit racial biases that police hold.
The affirmative is a fairly straight-forward approach, and as long as they have solid research and preparation, this position should be decently easy to defend a win.

The negative

So what to do on the negative? The way I see it, the negative has three basic ways of tackling the issue of gun violence.

The first way seems to be playing the moderate position, which is simply increasing background checks, improving mental health care, etc. This is the general position offered by most gun control advocates and seems to be more feasible and popular than banning all handguns, something that probably couldn't work in today's society. The negative could argue that these methods would do just as much to curb gun violence, and the evidence that it works is fairly convincing. Many scholars on both sides of the aisle seem to be in favor of universal background checks and improving mental health care. And many minority community leaders are simply for increased gun control, but not outright bans on handguns.

However, this approach does have some downsides. First, background checks tend to disproportionately harm blacks. Today, the reason that many blacks do not legally own a firearm is because they were convicted of a non-violent felony crime which prevented them from legally purchasing a firearm, whereas a white person would be considerably less likely to be imprisoned for a similar crime so would be able to legally purchase a firearm. Merely instituting background checks would likely lead to a further asymmetry in gun ownership, where white people own more guns and black own less. This would likely increase tensions between whites and blacks and allow white people to continue a legacy of white terror against black populations. Second, background checks have overall been shown to be difficult to enact. Massive loopholes such as being able to buy from gun shows without background checks still exist and are difficult to close. Finally, this is unlikely to curb gun violence to the same degree as straight-up banning handguns.

The second approach is to argue that gun control is racist. This argument has some historical merits. The KKK, for example, ardently supported gun control because they feared the idea of blacks having guns and creating some sort of post-slave revolt against the existing white order. The negative could thus argue that any attempts at gun control, including banning handguns, are based on the idea of denying blacks citizenship status and making them subhuman.

This argument is very popular amongst the conservative right who use it as a justification for why gun control is wrong. It turns out that while this argument has some truth, it is also a selective misreading of history. The cards for these can be found in the briefs, but the short story is that gun control has had both racialized and non-racialized components and conservatives over-read into the racial aspects of the racialized components. While the KKK supported gun control, so do many black community leaders.
However, some black communities have bought into the argument that gun control is racist and have become staunch NRA supporters, though for slightly different reasons. Not only do they believe that gun control is racist, they believe that guns are uniquely key for black resistance to a government that continues to deny blacks full status as citizens. They point to the fact that Martin Luther King Jr carried a firearm for defense after whites firebombed his house. Guns have been used to give things like the civil rights movement teeth and handguns have been instrumental for some minority groups in defending against racist groups. This argument is a fairly strong argument and provides a strong reason why banning handguns would actually hurt blacks more.

The third approach is to out-left the affirmative and argue that only blacks should have guns. This has some roots in the Black Panther's approach to guns, where they argued that guns were key for resisting racist groups like the KKK. Without handguns, they argue, civil rights might not have been possible. These points were explained above. This takes it one step further and argues that handguns should be banned for everyone except blacks who can use those handguns to defend against the police, other white people, or to begin an armed revolution against the US government. This approach is interesting, though probably lacks a solvency advocate, or person that actually advocates that we do this. However, it is still an interesting approach to the topic and might be very strategic against affirmatives that are race based. One issue with running this position might be the underlying structures of racism that prevent this from being effective. Leaving tons of handguns in black and brown communities that have been the subject of generations of racialized laws designed to disempower these groups might actually worsen crime as more guns fall into the hands of black youth that have nowhere to turn except violence because of the discriminatory criminal justice system. More guns might not be the solution for black communities as many elder members in urban black communities have argued. They believe that more guns only fuel the cycle of violence that have plagued their communities.

As a note for those interested in taking a race based position, or at least substantively engaging in race based debates, let’s remember not to use these stories of black and brown suffering as mere paths to the ballot. These are real stories, real instances of suffering. Behind every statistic of gun violence is someone who lost a loved one in a senseless act of gun violence. Someone portrayed as a "gang-banger" killed by black on black violence by the media was someone's son, someone's father, someone's friend. Let's be careful to realize the real-world implications of our words.

Handguns and the impacts of handgun violence on race is an important though infrequently discussed portion of the gun control debate. Hopefully, this brief primer has enlightened you to the problems of racialized gun violence as well as introduced a few positions on both the affirmative and negative to substantively engage in debates that include race. Good luck on the coming topic and let's have some serious discussions about a serious problem that plagues America.
Aff Evidence
Handgun Violence

The US leads the affluent world in gun violence. LWZ


The United States doesn't lead the world in gun violence. Just the civilized world. According to a United Nations survey, the United States annually averages 3 firearm homicides per 100,000 population. Fourteen countries topped that figure — but they were almost exclusively Third World countries. Among the 24 most affluent nations of the world, the U.S. is the far and away leader in gun homicides. None of the other 23 affluent nations has a rate above 1 firearm death per 100,000 population.

The NRA tries to hide the reality of gun violence. LWZ.

Horwitz, Josh [Executive Director of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. Mr. Horwitz is a graduate of the University of Michigan and received his law degree from the George Washington University. He is currently a visiting scholar at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the co-author of a book, Guns, Democracy and the Insurrectionist Idea]. "The Racial Double Standard on Gun Violence." The Huffington Post. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 9 Oct. 2014. Web. 01 Dec. 2015.

Which brings us back to what the NRA is trying to hide from public understanding, because whatever one's circumstances, easy access to firearms is known to make violence more lethal. For example, studies show that areas with more guns have more gun-related homicides. It is a national tragedy that we have a gun policy that makes it easy even for individuals with long histories of violence to obtain firearms. Felons, domestic abusers and those who have recently been adjudicated a danger to self and/or others based on mental health history are indeed a public safety threat, yet we still live in a country where approximately 40% of firearms transfers happen without a background check.
While knives are still used, guns increase the risk of death. LWZ


In short, there appears to be substantial evidence that removing guns saves lives. Interestingly, while the rates of assault with knives and guns in the United States are similar, there are five times as many deaths from guns. And many of these lethal guns can be obtained in the U.S. without a background check. Close to one-half of gun acquisitions in the U.S. occur on the secondary market, and sales between individuals do not require a background check.

The US experiences huge numbers of gun violence. LWZ


The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence reminds us that since 1968, when Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated, over one million people have been killed with guns in the United States. On average, almost 100,000 people in the United States are shot or killed with a gun annually. Since guns are not ubiquitous in many other industrialized countries, far fewer people die by gunshot than in the United States. In fact, the U.S. firearm homicide rate is about 20 times higher than in 22 other populous high-income countries combined, despite similar non-lethal crime and violence rates. Unsurprisingly then, they claim that in recent years, among 23 populous, high-income countries, 80 percent of all firearm deaths occurred in the United States.
Handguns are the biggest problem with firearm violence. LWZ

“Unsafe in Any Hands” The Violence Policy Center is a national non-profit educational foundation that conducts research on violence in America and works to develop violence-reduction policies and proposals. 2000.
http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

The United States leads the industrialized world in firearms violence of all types—homicides, suicides, and unintentional deaths.1 Most of this violence involves the use of a handgun.2 Handguns are easily concealed, engineered for maximum lethality, relatively inexpensive, and easy to acquire. On average, handguns are used in nearly 70 percent of firearm suicides3 and 80 percent of firearm homicides.4 The United States has not so much a firearms problem as a handgun problem.

We don’t think that we should ban all guns, but handguns are key. LWZ

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http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

The call to ban handguns is not inspired by a generalized hatred of guns. It is a response to the blood price that our nation has paid for the explosive growth of the handgun population over the past generation.5 More than two out of three of the one million Americans who died in firearm-related homicides, suicides, and unintentional shootings since 1962 were killed with handguns—i.e., 667,000.6 This weapon, which has inflicted pain and death in such a disproportionate degree, is owned by a distinct minority of Americans—only one out of six adults.7 Out of the current total firearms population of some 190 million, rifles and shotguns outnumber handguns two to one, yet handguns account for the majority of killings, woundings, and gun crimes. For example, of all firearm-related crimes in 1993, 86 percent involved the use of a handgun.8
Modern handguns have too much killing power. LWZ

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http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

The modern handgun has been honed for decades by the firearms industry to the highest possible level of lethality, just as race cars are continually redeveloped for maximum speed. The handguns that have been introduced into the market in the past two decades—especially high-caliber, high-capacity, semiautomatic pistols—meet the lethality standard admirably.9 The increased efficiency of the handgun as a killing machine is the result of a strategy by the gun industry over the past decade and a half to boost sales.10 This growth in killing power is the result of three variables deliberately designed into handguns—Greater capacity, i.e. the ability to hold more bullets.11 Higher caliber, meaning bigger bullets.12 Increased concealability, facilitating criminal use.13 These variables reached their zenith with the recent introduction of "pocket rockets,"—semiautomatic pistols in higher calibers that can be concealed in the palm of the hand. Recent data reveal the effect of this decades-long trend. From 1990 to 1997, of the 160,000 homicides committed in the United States, more than half (55.6 percent) involved a handgun.14 This block of 89,000 handgun homicides is larger than that of all other weapons used in homicides combined.
Independent of fatalities, injuries from handgun violence are massive and harm the economy. LWZ

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http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

As the debate over gun violence is almost always framed in terms of fatalities, it is easy to overlook that, for every person killed with a firearm, approximately three others require medical treatment for wounds inflicted with a gun.15 One conservative estimate places the annual cost of immediate medical care for all gunshot wounds at $4 billion.16 Other researchers take into account lifetime care and long-term economic loss, calculating the overall cost of gun violence in any given year to be in excess of $20 billion.17 Statistics for the costs of handgun violence in particular are not available. Nonetheless, since handguns cause the majority of firearm injuries, it follows that handgun injuries are responsible for the majority of firearm-related expenses.

America is actually not that violent, but handguns do contribute to America’s death rate. LWZ

“Unsafe in Any Hands” The Violence Policy Center is a national non-profit educational foundation that conducts research on violence in America and works to develop violence-reduction policies and proposals. 2000.
http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

There are an estimated 65 million handguns in America.18 The deleterious impact of this large handgun population on our murder rate becomes evident when making comparisons to countries that strongly regulate private firearms ownership with an emphasis on minimizing access to handguns. For example, in 1995 the U.S. firearms death rate was 13.7 per 100,000; in Canada 3.9 per 100,000; in Australia 2.9 per 100,000; and, in England and Wales it was 0.4 per 100,000.19 Contrary to a common rationalization, the United States is not especially more violent than other "older" cultures; in fact, as Western Europe grows more violent, the U.S. becomes less so.20 The main difference between those nations and our own is that we have more than 60 million handguns. The lesson to be learned from this is, as one public health researcher stated: "People without guns injure people; guns kill them."21
Simple cost benefit analysis shows that banning handguns is rational. LWZ

“Unsafe in Any Hands” The Violence Policy Center is a national non-profit educational foundation that conducts research on violence in America and works to develop violence-reduction policies and proposals. 2000. http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

The mythology woven around the handgun by the gun lobby clouds the reality that a handgun is a consumer product that ought to be judged and regulated by the same standards applied to all other products. However, the firearms industry is exempt from basic federal consumer product health and safety regulation. Aside from the issuance of pro forma licenses for gun manufacturers and dealers, no federal agency has the authority to review the firearm industry's products in terms of their relative costs and benefits. Using this cost/benefit standard, two reasonable and essential questions need to be posed about the handgun—Is it innately dangerous to the user or to anyone else? What does its use cost society in human and monetary terms in contrast to its beneficial applications? Indeed, by making a simple comparison between the costs of civilian handgun ownership versus the benefits these weapons are purported to deliver, the case for banning handguns becomes self-evident. For example, for every time in 1997 that a civilian used a handgun to kill in self-defense, 43 people lost their lives in handgun homicides alone. This passes any point of rational justification for condoning the existence of such a product on the open market, especially in an unregulated state.

Easy access to firearms explains our higher per capita homicide rates. LWZ


In other Western countries, per capita homicide rates, as well as rates of violent crime involving guns, are a fraction of what they are in the United States. The possible explanations of this are limited. Gun advocates claim it has nothing to do with our permissive gun laws or our customs and practices involving guns. If they are right, should we conclude that Americans are simply inherently more violent, more disposed to mental derangement, and less moral than people in other Western countries? If you resist that conclusion, you have little choice but to accept that our easy access to all manner of firearms is a large part of the explanation of why we kill each at a much higher rate than our counterparts elsewhere. Gun advocates must search their consciences to determine whether they really want to share responsibility for the perpetuation of policies that make our country the homicide capitol of the developed world.
Guns contribute to violence everywhere. LWZ


Guns offer equal opportunity tragedies. More than 8,000 white Americans had to be treated for nonfatal gun injuries in 2008. Eighty percent of those who commit suicide with a gun are white males. The gun that the suburban family buys to protect itself from "thugs killing thugs" ends up killing its own: One important new study finds that a gun kept in the house is 43 times more likely to kill a household member than to be used in self-defense.

Guns cause escalation. LWZ


Thugs killing thugs? Maybe. But many of those seeming thugs are carrying guns for the same reason that people who consider themselves respectable carry them: in a futile quest to protect themselves with greater firepower. One person can find safety that way. But if two people carry firearms, a confrontation that might otherwise have ended in words or blows ends instead with one man dead, and the other man on his way to prison for life.

Guns increase violence independent of killings. LWZ


Widespread gun ownership means not only more gun killings, but also more gun maimings and cripplings. The National Rifle Association's Wayne LaPierre hailed the ability of a "good guy" with a gun to stop a "bad guy" with a gun. Sixty seconds later, however, that bad guy may need a wheelchair for life. We can't dismiss these human costs as pertaining to only somebody else. They are all part of us.
Despite our gun violence, nothing is ever done about it. LWZ


This is a point that, by now, Americans are very familiar with. After every single mass shooting, there's a call for more gun control. Maybe some bills get introduced. Critics respond with concerns that the government — and usually Obama in particular — is trying to take away their guns. The debate stalls. Nothing seems to happen, particularly on a national scale. Why is it that for all the outrage and mourning with every mass shooting, nothing seems to change? To understand that, it's important to grasp not just the stunning statistics about gun ownership and gun violence in the United States, but America's very unique relationship with guns — unlike that of any other developed country — and how it plays out in our politics to ensure, seemingly against all odds, that our culture and laws continue to drive the routine gun violence that marks American life.

America's gun violence is the highest among developed countries. LWZ


No other developed country in the world has anywhere near the same rate of gun violence as America. The US has nearly six times the gun homicide rate as Canada, more than seven times as Sweden, and nearly 16 times as Germany, according to UN data compiled by the Guardian. (These gun deaths are a big reason America has a much higher overall homicide rate, which includes non-gun deaths, than other developed nations.)

To understand why that is, there's another important statistic: The US has by far the highest number of privately owned guns in the world. Estimated in 2007, the number of civilian-owned firearms in the US was 88.8 guns per 100 people, meaning there was almost one privately owned gun per American and more than one per American adult. The world’s second-ranked country was Yemen, a quasi-failed state torn by civil war, where there were 54.8 guns per 100 people. Another way of looking at that: Americans make up about 4.43 percent of the world's population, yet own roughly 42 percent of all the world’s privately held firearms.


These three basic facts demonstrate America's unique gun culture. There is a very strong correlation between gun ownership and gun violence — a relationship that researchers argue is at least partly causal. And American gun ownership is beyond anything else in the world. At the same time, these guns are concentrated among a passionate minority, who are typically the loudest critics against any form of gun control and who scare legislators into voting against such measures.


The research on this is overwhelmingly clear. No matter how you look at the data, more guns means more gun deaths. This is apparent when you look at state-by-state data within the United States, as this chart from Mother Jones demonstrates: And it’s clear when you look at the data across developed nations, as this other chart by Tewksbury Lab shows:
The evidence is overwhelmingly clear – more guns means more gun deaths. LWZ


The relationship between gun ownership rates and gun violence rates is well established. Reviews of the evidence by the Harvard School of Public Health's Injury Control Research Center have consistently found that when controlling for variables such as socioeconomic factors and other crime, places with more guns have more gun deaths. "Within the United States, a wide array of empirical evidence indicates that more guns in a community leads to more homicide," David Hemenway, the Injury Control Research Center's director, wrote in Private Guns, Public Health.

Making guns more accessible leads to more crime. LWZ


Experts widely believe this is the consequence of America's relaxed laws and culture surrounding guns: Making more guns more accessible means more guns, and more guns means more deaths. Researchers have found this is true not just with gun homicides, but also with suicides, domestic violence, and even violence against police. To deal with those problems, America will have to not only make guns less accessible, but likely reduce the number of guns in the US as well.

Mass shootings are only part of the problem – other gun violence and suicides are worse. LWZ


Depending on which definition of mass shooting one uses, there are anywhere from a dozen to a few hundred mass shootings in the US each year. These events are, it goes without saying, devastating tragedies for the nation and, primarily, the victims and their families. Yet other, less-covered kinds of gun violence kill far more Americans than even these mass shootings. Under the broadest definition of mass shooting, these incidents killed about 500 Americans in 2013. That represents just a fraction of total gun homicides: more than 11,200 that year. And firearm suicides killed even more: nearly 21,200 Americans.
Gun killings in self-defense are only a small fraction of unjustifiable gun deaths, so gun ownership hurts more than it saves. PJG.


In 2012, there were 8,855 criminal gun homicides in the FBI's homicide database, but only 258 gun killings by private citizens that were deemed justifiable, which the FBI defines as "the killing of a felon, during the commission of a felony, by a private citizen." That works out to one justifiable gun death for every 34 unjustifiable gun deaths. Or, look at it this way. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data shows that in 2012 there were 20,666 suicides by gun. That works out to one self-defense killing for every 78 gun suicides. CDC data show that there were more than twice as many accidental gun fatalities as as justifiable killings.
Gun ownership harms the community, as countries like the U.S. with high gun ownership have higher levels of homicides. PJG.


Potential harms associated with gun ownership extend beyond those who purchase or possess firearms. Aggregate levels of gun ownership and carrying could potentially have dramatic effects on the social ecology and safety of a neighborhood, affecting both gun owners and non-gun owners. On average, high-income nations with a relatively high prevalence of gun ownership, such as the U.S., have more homicides than do other high income countries with fewer guns after controlling for differences in age structure, racial/ethnic heterogeneity, and levels of government social support. The high homicide rate in the U.S. can not be explained by higher overall rates of criminality because U.S. non-lethal crime rates are similar to those of most other high-income, developed countries. In one comparison of death rates in the early 1990s, U.S. firearm-related homicides rates were 19 times greater than the pooled rate of 25 other high income countries. The U.S. overall homicide rate was about 3.5 times higher than the nearest other high income country (excluding Northern Ireland, whose homicide rate during a time of internal turmoil was still only about 59 percent as great as that of the U.S.) Comparing the U.S. with Canada more specifically, the age-adjusted U.S. homicide rate was almost five times higher than Canada's in 1992, a difference primarily explained by a more than ten-fold greater U.S. firearm homicide rate. More recently, in 2004 the Canadian homicide rate was 1.95 per 100,000 persons, compared with a U.S. rate of 5.9. Pg. 671.
Studies show that U.S. states with less gun ownership had lower unjustified shooting rates. PJG.


Even among U.S. cities and states, however, notable differences exist in the prevalence of firearm ownership likely associated, at least in part, with differences in the restrictiveness of their firearm laws. In a series of analyses conducted by researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health, U.S. states with fewer guns had lower rates of firearm-related suicide, homicide, and unintentional deaths after adjusting for other socio-demographic differences. The states with the lowest prevalence of gun ownership were generally those with the most restrictive handgun licensing laws. Pg. 672.

The availability of handguns self-perpetuates the level of ownership. PJG.


A further parallel is that the high rate of handgun ownership in this country is self-perpetuating. First, it is in response to the proliferation of handguns that an increasing number of people believe they need to buy a handgun for self-defense (though, as I have argued, it is an illusion that more widespread ownership of guns will decrease gun crime.) Second, while some potential criminals may be deterred by a heavily-armed citizenry, others will arm themselves with more and more powerful firearms in order to outgun resisters. Trading gunfire or playing chicken with increasingly heavily-armed criminals is a tenuous basis for the defense of society. Pg. 275.
Handguns in particular should be banned because of their prevalence and ease in using them compared to other weapons. PJG.


My reason for singling out handguns for prohibition in the United States is that they are, in this country, the firearm of choice of criminals, being used in at least 72.2 percent of firearms homicides in the years 2006–2010. Substantially reducing the number of handguns in the U.S. will very likely substantially reduce the rate of total homicide. This prediction is based not only on the noted statistics, but also on the following considerations, which constitute a rudimentary causal theory. First, a large proportion of these crimes is currently committed with handguns. Since 1970, approximately one-half of the homicides in the U.S. have been committed with handguns. In 2006-2010, an average of 6,909 homicides (48.7 percent of all homicides) was committed per year with handguns. Second, because of their cheapness, concealability, ease of use, and lethality, handguns are ideally suited to the commission of crimes and criminals are highly unlikely to be able to commit as many violent crimes by switching to alternative weapons. Third, other weapons that assailants might substitute for firearms are far less lethal than handguns, and in the case of firearms other than handguns, although the wounds that they inflict are more serious, their lower concealability makes it harder to inflict wounds in the first place.
Race

_Gun control is key to stopping racialized gun violence. LWZ_


Black Americans are more than twice as likely to be killed by firearms than white ones. Did you know that? Twice as likely. Implicit in every discussion of gun violence is our relative willingness to let black people die. Of course, the factors that protesters have been highlighting at Sanders events also play an important role. Implied bias and conscious bigotry fueled by cultural and institutional racism are certainly factors when Americans decide who is and is not a threat worth shooting. And those problems absolutely need to be addressed. But people wouldn't have such an easy time killing black Americans if they weren't armed to the teeth. And everyone--including police officers--wouldn't be so frightened and trigger-happy if they didn't know there was a very good chance that anyone else could be, too. In an armed, paranoid culture, black people pay twice the cost in terms of lives lost.

_Gun violence is racialized. LWZ_


Gun violence is disproportionately affecting the country's African American population. Black Americans are more than twice as likely to die from gun violence than whites, according to a new study that surveyed more than a decades' worth of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Between 2000 and 2010, the death rate due to firearm-related injuries was more than 18.5 per 100,000 among blacks, but only nine per 100,000 among whites. For Hispanics, it was just over seven per 100,000, and for all other races it was just below 3.5 per 100,000.
It gets worse in particular states. LWZ


The racial divide is even more prominent on state and district levels. In Washington D.C., for instance, the death rate associated with firearms is more than thirteen and a half times for African Americans what it is for whites. No state has as wide a gap as New Jersey, where black people are four and a half times as likely to die from gun violence than whites. In Illinois, the state with the second largest divide, African Americans are roughly four and a quarter times as likely; in Massachusetts, the third most divided, black people are just over four times as likely; and in Michigan, the fourth most divided, black people are just under four times as likely.

Even though it looks like it is getting better, it is not. LWZ


While the national divide remains stark, it actually used to be even more stark. A little over 20 years ago, in 1993, African Americans were more than three times as likely to die from gun violence than white Americans. And that gap has continued to close. "The overall fall in FRF [firearm-related fatality rates] after 2000 corresponded to a related narrowing of the racial gap between African-Americans and Caucasians," the study said. But, as Pew Research pointed out last year, that narrowing of the gap is in part due to the the changing face of America. "The share of victims by racial or ethnic group has changed little since 1993, but the makeup of the U.S. population has altered," Pew notes. The particularities of gun deaths among white and black Americans can be as different as the rates at which they occur. As The Washington Post noted last year, African-Americans who are killed by gun violence are significantly more likely to die as a result of a homicide. Whites are much more likely to use a gun to commit suicide. A white person is five times as likely to commit suicide with a gun as to be shot with a gun; for each African American who uses a gun to commit suicide, five are killed by other people with guns.
African Americans overwhelmingly support gun control. LWZ


Even sentiments about gun control are, in at least some ways, split along racial lines. A Washington Post-ABC News poll from last year found that more than three quarters of African Americans support stronger gun control, compared to fewer than half of whites. The reality is that gun violence is largely divided, and shaped, by race in America.

Blacks are more likely to experience handgun violence. LWZ


The typical murder has one victim, not many. The typical murder is committed with a handgun, not a rifle. And in the typical murder, both the perpetrator and the victim are young black men. Blacks are six times as likely as whites to be the victim of a homicide. Blacks are seven times as likely to commit a homicide. The horrifying toll of gun violence on black America explains why black Americans are so much more likely than whites to favor gun control.

Race is a driving factor in white gun ownership. LWZ


Conversely, fears of being victimized by violence explain why so many white Americans -- especially older and more conservative white Americans -- insist on the right to bear arms in self-protection. They see gun violence as something that impinges on them from the outside. They don't blame guns for gun violence. They blame a particular subset of the population. And they don't see why they should lose their right because some subset of the population abuses theirs.
Failure to consider race in the gun debate is wrong. LWZ


But countries cannot dismiss the sufferings of great blocks of their people by dismissing some "demographics" as unworthy of attention. If you ignore America's poor, you can make all kinds of problems disappear from view. Not counting the poor and minorities, the country does not have an obesity epidemic. Not counting the poor and minorities, the United States has perfectly adequate schools. Not counting the poor and minorities, America would have a higher average income. Likewise, not counting hurricanes, America would not have so many natural disasters. Not counting divorces, America would have more intact families. Not counting wars, America would have a smaller public debt. But what's the point of this exercise? The people who make up America count as Americans, and their problems count as America's problems. Their problems do not occur in isolation, but are manifestations of failures to which all Americans contributed together. Those young men in Baton Rouge who are killing each other in such horrific numbers do not manufacture their own guns. They did not organize the gun trade that brings the guns to their town. They did not write the laws that prevent their town government from acting against guns. They carry guns -- and misuse guns -- thanks to a national system of gun regulation that makes guns easily accessible to those least likely to use guns responsibly.

Blaming gun violence on race is factually incorrect. LWZ.

Horwitz, Josh [Executive Director of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. Mr. Horwitz is a graduate of the University of Michigan and received his law degree from the George Washington University. He is currently a visiting scholar at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the co-author of a book, Guns, Democracy and the Insurrectionist Idea]. "The Racial Double Standard on Gun Violence." The Huffington Post. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 9 Oct. 2014. Web. 01 Dec. 2015.

Where to begin... For starters, Nugent has blatantly misstated the facts. In truth, more whites are arrested for violent crime in the United States than blacks (even though African Americans are arrested for such crimes at a higher rate than whites). There are multiple socioeconomic and structural causes that increase an individual's propensity for violent behavior. Pigmentation is simply not a factor.
Race frames the way we discuss gun violence. LWZ.


But reading Nugent's column brought an equally important point home for me. The way we talk about incidents of gun violence in this country -- and the solutions we propose to stem future acts of violence -- seems to be dramatically different depending on the race of those involved. Consider the tragic death of 25 year-old African-American Kajieme Powell in St. Louis this summer. Powell came to the attention of St. Louis County police on August 19 when he stole two energy drinks and packet of pastries from a local convenience store. He made no attempt to get away, however. Instead, he placed the cans on the ground outside the store and paced nervously back and forth, as if waiting for something. When two police officers arrived on the scene, Powell walked toward them with a kitchen knife in his hand, yelling, "Shoot me!" As he closed in on the officers, they obliged, shooting him dead. It was a textbook example of suicide-by-cop. And yet very little of the subsequent national conversation mentioned the issue of mental health. Instead, we got the standard character assassination that is so common when African-Americans are involved as perpetrators. Comments like this one by NBC contributor Jeff Halevy: "Knife-wielding thug who just robbed a store. Get over it. It's not always race." It's not always race? Then why is a perpetrator immediately dehumanized when he is African-American? He is a "thug" who was involved in a "drive-by." Or he's a "gang banger" who got caught up in "inner city violence" ... Convenient terms to let people know that it was a black person who pulled the trigger. Mental health is not part of the discussion, even in cases like Powell's where it's an obvious factor.
It's empirically proven – white perpetrator’s always invite conversations of mental health. LWZ.


Conversely, when an episode of mass gun violence involves a white perpetrator (think Jared Loughner, James Holmes, Elliot Rodger, etc.), the conversation immediately turns to mental health. The shooter was "deranged" and probably on medication, we are told. And we'll hear asides like, "He seemed like such a good person" or "We never could have seen this coming."

Race is just used as a scapegoat to avoid a conversation about guns. LWZ.


This dichotomy of treatment is intentional. Consider the NRA's response to the Sandy Hook massacre committed by Adam Lanza, a young white man. NRA CEO Wayne LaPierre conducted a press conference a week after the tragedy and condemned our government for refusing "to create an active national database of the mentally ill" -- a curious position for an organization that purports to be a protector of individual rights and privacy. Meanwhile, LaPierre rants to conservative audiences about "knock-out gamers" and sits on the NRA board with Nugent, who declared, "Apartheid isn't that cut and dry. All men are not created equal." The NRA fully understands the racial dynamic at play here. As long as we can blame something other than guns, America will not have to come to terms with the truth that violence is a complicated phenomenon that is made far more lethal by the easy availability and killing power of firearms. And for an organization with an overwhelmingly conservative, white base, that "something other" is minorities.
The gun lobby uses race to sell guns even though race is not a determinative factor in violent behavior. LWZ.


The gun lobby is able to pitch this myth because, on the surface, it may seem that gun violence is connected to race. Although African Americans make up only 13 percent of the U.S. population, nearly 40 percent of homicides are committed by African-Americans. However, as I noted above, more sophisticated analyses of the propensity for interpersonal violence show race is not a determinative factor in violent behavior. For example, gun death rates (including suicide) for blacks and whites are similar in some states (including Mississippi, New Mexico, and Arizona). States that do have racial disparities in gun death rates typically have large African-American populations concentrated in segregated inner-city poverty (i.e., Missouri, Michigan, and Illinois). Let's not forget that, throughout history, racist government policies have contributed to poverty, unemployment and lack of mental health services in communities that are predominantly African-American. Take any racial or ethnic group and subject them to these types of conditions and the results will be similar. Nonetheless, the NRA understands that fear is the best motivator when it comes to selling guns. Sadly, its not-so-subtle attempt to blame African-Americans for violence seems to be a contributing factor to the unnecessary killing of unarmed black men in our society.

Gun debates fail to account for race. LWZ


In a provocative piece published by ProPublica on November 24, Lois Beckett explores how the debate over gun laws frequently fails to address the disproportionate impact that gun violence has on black men, who make up 6 percent of the U.S. population but roughly half of its gun murder victims. Mass shootings like Newtown and Aurora capture the public’s attention, but “by most counts they represent less than 1 percent of all gun homicides,” she notes. While the calls for reform that come in the wake of such high-profile incidents — like universal background checks and banning assault weapons — address gun violence in general, they don’t specifically tackle the inner city gun violence that kills black men, which is driven largely by crime and street corner feuds.
As long as gun murders are of black men in inner cities, we will won’t tackle the gun problem. LWZ


Focusing on the underfunded Operation Ceasefire, Beckett makes the case that a lack of political will hampers efforts to prevent the murders of black men: as long as the deaths are confined to the inner city, she argues, the problem is viewed as simply an inner city crisis, not a national one.

The idea that gun control is racist is historically inaccurate. LWZ


Let’s get right to the big question. Some gun-rights advocates argue that the initial aim of gun control was to keep firearms away from African-Americans. Is that accurate? It’s a half-truth. There’s a long history of gun regulation in the United States. Some of the regulations have to do with slavery, but most don’t. Conservatives are taking one strand of history and making it seem like that’s the whole story. In fact, there were a lot of other gun regulations in the 18th and 19th centuries, and they had nothing to do with race or slavery. In general, that’s one of the biggest problems with the debate — the history is so complex, and if you just pick out little bits, you can construct any story you want.

Arguments that gun control is racist selectively misread history. LWZ


Those who suggest gun control aligns with racism often point back to the Jim Crow era. In the period after the Civil War, you have Black Codes being enacted to disarm African-Americans. The Fourteenth Amendment was at least partially a consequence of these laws, which makes it illegal to prevent an African-American’s access to guns. But what gets forgotten is, during that time period, the Republicans of the north, who are responsible for the Fourteenth Amendment, are also enacting neutral gun regulations because of violence in the south. After the Civil War, the south was very violent.
Incidents like Newtown are tragic but cover up stories of urban gun violence. LWZ


ON A DRIZZLY AFTERNOON in January 2013, almost a month after the school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, that left 20 first-graders dead, more than a dozen religious leaders assembled in Washington, D.C. They had been invited by the Obama administration to talk about what the country should do to address gun violence. Vice President Joe Biden had been meeting with victims and advocates all day, and he arrived so late that some in the room wondered whether he would come at all. When he finally walked in, the clergy started sharing their advice, full of pain, some of it personal. “The incidents of Newtown are very tragic,” Michael McBride, a 37-year-old pastor from Berkeley, California, recalled telling Biden. “But any meaningful conversation about addressing gun violence has to include urban gun violence.” McBride supported universal background checks. He supported an assault weapons ban. But he also wanted something else: a national push to save the lives of black men. In 2012, 90 people were killed in shootings like the ones in Newtown and Aurora, Colorado. That same year, nearly 6,000 black men were murdered with guns.

Mass shootings and gun violence statistics fail to account for the racialized factor of gun violence. LWZ


Mass shootings, unsurprisingly, drive the national debate on gun violence. But as horrific as these massacres are, by most counts they represent less than 1 percent of all gun homicides. America’s high rate of gun murders isn’t caused by events like Sandy Hook or the shootings this fall at a community college in Oregon. It’s fueled by a relentless drumbeat of deaths of black men. Gun control advocates and politicians frequently cite the statistic that more than 30 Americans are murdered with guns every day. What’s rarely mentioned is that roughly 15 of the 30 are black men.
Gun violence is largely about race. LWZ


Gun violence in America is largely a story of race and geography. Almost two-thirds of America’s more than 30,000 annual gun deaths are suicides, most of them committed by white men. In 2009, the gun homicide rate for white Americans was 2 per 100,000 — about seven times as high as the rate for residents of Denmark, but a fraction of the rate for black Americans. In 2009, black Americans faced a gun homicide rate of nearly 15 per 100,000. That’s higher than the gun homicide rate in Mexico.

Liberal/conservative views on urban gun violence ignores key facts. LWZ


To liberals, gun violence among African-Americans is rooted in economic disadvantage and inequality, as well as America’s gun culture and lax gun laws. Conservatives, meanwhile, often focus on black “culture.” “The problem is not our gun laws,” a member of the Wall Street Journal editorial board wrote last year about Chicago’s murder rate. “Nor is it our drug laws, or racist cops, prosecutors and judges. The problem is black criminality, which is a function of black pathology, which ultimately stems from the breakdown of the black family.” Lost in the debate is that even in high-crime cities, the risk of gun violence is mostly concentrated among a small number of men. In Oakland, for instance, crime experts working with the police department a few years ago found that about 1,000 active members of a few dozen street groups drove most homicides. That’s .3 percent of Oakland’s population. And even within this subgroup, risk fluctuated according to feuds and other beefs. In practical terms, the experts found that over a given stretch of several months only about 50 to 100 men are at the highest risk of shooting someone or getting shot.
Failure to pass gun laws is rooted in racism. LWZ


Declines in violent crime over the last two decades have made it harder to galvanize support for gun violence prevention. The number of Americans murdered by guns peaked in 1993, then dropped sharply until 2000 for reasons that are still not fully understood. Since then, the number of Americans killed in gun homicides has remained remarkably consistent, about 11,000 to 12,000 a year. Another constant: About half of those killed this way are black men, though they make up just 6 percent of the U.S. population. In 2001, when George W. Bush took office, 5,279 black men were murdered with firearms, according to estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2012, it was 5,947. These deaths are concentrated in poor, segregated neighborhoods that have little political clout. “I think that people in those communities are perceived as not sufficiently important because they don’t vote, they don’t have economic power,” said Timothy Heaphy, a former U.S. attorney who has spent much of his career focused on urban violence. “I think there’s some racism involved. I don’t think we care about African-American lives as much as we care about white lives.”

Narratives of gun violence prevention is typically meant to appeal to white people. LWZ


The few congressional efforts to advance gun legislation in recent years have been prompted by mass shootings, violence that is seemingly random and thus where everyone can feel at risk. “Congress has only moved in response to galvanizing tragedy, and galvanizing tragedy tends to not involve urban, run-of-the-mill murder,” said Matt Bennett, a gun policy expert at Third Way, a centrist think-tank. “The narrative about the need for gun violence prevention generally is driven by these black swan events, and those often involve white people,” he added. “It is horrific and tragic, but that’s the fact.”
Fewer guns mean less deaths. Other policy solutions don’t solve gun violence. LWZ


I get it: Police officers have a duty to protect us. We pay them. We have every reason in the world to hold them to a higher standards than a Crip or a Blood. But why do black lives seem to matter most when they are taken by white police officers? Is a death at the hands of a gangbanger with bad aim any more acceptable? Why do we explain such shootings away, like an embarrassing stain on our living room carpet? I applaud the Black Lives Matter movement for calling attention to the festering problem of police shootings, which have taken the lives of 980 Americans this year, including at least 74 unarmed black people. But I don’t understand why gun control is not on their agenda. The recently-released Campaign Zero, set up by Black Lives Matter activists, presents 10 policy solutions — including better training, body cameras, limits on the use of force, and independent investigations of police killings — to curb the violence. Good on them for proposing solutions, many of which are solid ideas. But it feels like they’re ignoring the obvious: If there were fewer guns on the street, there would be fewer shootings, including by police. Campaign Zero’s impressive website contains a graph that compares the number of people killed by police in the United States (1,100 in 2014) to the number killed in Germany (six), Australia (six), Britain (two), and Japan (none.)
Body cameras and other alternatives don’t change that gun laws are the key factor. We can’t end police shootings until we address gun violence. LWZ


It fails to mention that the big difference between the United States and those countries is not body cameras, or police training, but gun laws, plain and simple. Gun laws in Germany are considered some of the strictest in Europe. Private possession of handguns or pistols is permitted only with special authorization. After a horrific massacre, Australia instituted sweeping new restrictions, including prohibitions on carrying firearms in public without “a genuine reason.” (Personal protection is not considered a “genuine reason.”) There are reportedly only 77 handguns in civilian possession in the entire nation of Japan. And in London, police officers don’t even carry guns, because the likelihood that they will need one is almost nil. The idea that we can compare ourselves to places like that — and be more like them, with just a tweak here or there in our police training — is a fallacy. Can we improve the situation? Sure. But can we end police shootings altogether without addressing underlying issues of gun violence in this country? I don’t think so.
Guns are a key part of police shootings. LWZ


Black Lives Matter activist Deray McKesson, who is involved in Campaign Zero, sees racism as the main underlying issue. “Their primary excuse/justification [for the shootings] is an expansive ‘fear’ of black skin,” he tweeted when I asked him about it. To be sure, racism plays a role. But plenty of white people are getting shot by cops, as data on the Campaign Zero website reveals. And a racist police officer who isn’t carrying a gun (like those in Britain) and officers who can’t claim that they thought you were carrying a gun (like those in most of the rest of the world) don’t pull the same kind of shenanigans that we’ve seen here in the United States. The fact that so many people have guns — and use them against police officers — is the main reason (or excuse) that police officers give to explain why they took a life. It’s a reason that so few are punished for doing so.
Concealed carry culture negatively affects black people. LWZ


“At least 30 people were killed in 2014 after police engaged them for possessing an illegal firearm. Forty-percent of these people were black,” the website states. “More research needs to be done to determine whether gun restrictions (i.e., criminalizing guns and those who carry illegal guns) will reduce or increase police killings — particularly of black people.” That’s missing the forest because of the trees. The climate of fear — both real and imagined — created by our concealed-weapon culture takes its toll on black people far beyond the realm of policing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 11,208 people died in firearm-related homicides in 2013. Of them, 6,442 were black. Two-hundred-eighty-one people died from stray bullets or accidental discharges that year. Forty-three of them were black. For every life cut short by a stray bullet, there are countless lives that are circumscribed in immeasurable ways: kids who aren’t allowed to play outdoors; mothers who give up jobs on streets they deem risky; students who drop out of school rather than run the gantlet of guns.
Gun violence disproportionately affects black America – this is why blacks overwhelmingly support gun control. LWZ


Although homicides have actually fallen from their peak in 1993, gun violence still takes an enormous toll on America — black America, in particular. Nobody suffers more than black people, who are twice as likely to die from gunfire as whites. (It used to be three times as likely, so there is some progress.) But this is still perhaps the greatest disparity of all in America: Some kids grow up in fear — not just of the police, but of stray bullets — while other kids grow up with the luxury of never having to worry about getting shot. That’s why 78 percent of blacks support tougher gun laws, compared to less than half of whites. The desire for stricter gun laws might be the one thing that the black community and police departments everywhere have in common. Except that Black Lives Matter activists aren’t sold on it. I wish they’d reconsider, and send the message that Carey Gabay’s black life matters, too.
Guns have been a tool for white racial terror. LWZ


This past Thursday, as the nation mourned the horrific, racially motivated mass shooting that killed nine people at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, Hillary Clinton spoke of the urgent need for honesty. “We have to face hard truths about race, violence, guns and divisions,” she said during a speech in Las Vegas. Historically, these truths go back at least 150 years, right after the end of slavery and the Civil War. 2015 marks the 150th anniversary of the end of slavery and the beginning of Reconstruction, a period of enormous potential and ambition for reimagining American citizenship. Watershed racial progress via the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution, which ended slavery and established black citizenship and black male voting rights, was challenged by racial terror. Organized white supremacists, most notably the Ku Klux Klan, attacked churches, burned down homes and turned religious symbols into icons of terror, such as burning crosses. African-Americans responded to the onslaught of racial terror by building parallel institutions, moving to Midwestern states such as Oklahoma and Kansas, and arming themselves, where and when guns were available, for self-protection. Black veterans of the Civil War and future conflicts kept guns in their homes as a defense against organized white violence. The aftermath of Reconstruction inspired the period of Redemption (1877-96), which saw the creation of Jim Crow, the Klan and other racial terror groups, and a proliferation of lynching that took almost 4,000 lives by the early 1930s.
Anti-black violence is backed by guns. LWZ


African-American veterans returned from World War I with a renewed militancy that helped ignite a New Negro Movement that promoted black political self-determination. New Negroes flocked to Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, creating businesses, publishing newspapers and preaching a gospel of racial unity whose cultural arm would flower in the Harlem Renaissance. But whites’ anti-black violence, often backed by guns, was never far away. Racial segregation in public accommodations and the disenfranchisement of black voters was backed by both public policy and popular consensus. Just as guns, many of them—including those wielded by black soldiers—helped to end slavery and win the Civil War, it would take thousands of guns—this time wielded by white supremacists—to enable white Southerners to win the peace. The modern civil rights era unfolded against this backdrop, where whites used guns and threats of violent reprisals to ensure a brutally unjust racial order. The movement’s nonviolent face, personified by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream of a “beloved community,” hid a long history of armed self-determination within the black community.
Guns are ignored by conservative politicians as a major source of violence in black communities.


Post-civil-rights America has seen an explosion of guns and gun violence that has disproportionately hurt the African-American community. The flood of guns in racially segregated and impoverished black neighborhoods has produced catastrophic trauma in inner cities. Black homicide rates dwarf their white counterparts, with most victims killed by African-Americans, the pro-gun control Violence Policy Center reports. Yet too often the easy access to guns, coupled with the racial segregation, high unemployment, failing schools and mass incarceration that leads to such carnage, is ignored by politicians in favor of a facile condemnation of “black-on-black crime” (in contrast to white-on-white crime, which is rarely spoken of) and the decline of the black family. The black community’s relationship with guns remains fraught and ambivalent, with one-third of African-Americans owning guns, compared with just over half of whites. Blacks favor stricter gun control laws, perhaps due to a deeper understanding that “stand your ground” laws have, as in the George Zimmerman case, made it more likely for white-on-black homicides to be considered justified.

Guns have been used by both the state and vigilantes as part of a on-going legacy of racial terror and white power.


The racial impact of America’s gun culture affects the black community on multiple levels, often unforgivingly. State-sanctioned violence, as practiced by law enforcement, targets blacks with a vengeance for crimes both real and imagined, as we have witnessed in meticulous detail since Ferguson. Armed vigilantes have also played a role, from the racial terror of the Klan to the shooting in Charleston. Perhaps most depressing is the black gun violence by young people who have been abandoned by mainstream society to join gangs, engage in turf wars and debase themselves through acts of killing that further dehumanize their very existence. The hard truth about race, gun violence and divisions in America is that the very acts of racial violence being decried in Charleston are connected to a long and continuous history of racial and economic oppression. It’s one rooted in an intimate relationship—between racial slavery and capitalism, Jim Crow and the criminal justice system, and racial terror and white power—that has always been backed by guns.
Suicide

*Firearms increase the risk of suicide.* LWZ


Further, research they cite by Wiebe (2003) indicates that 94 percent of gun-related suicides would not occur had no guns been present. Since keeping a firearm at home increases the risk of homicide by a factor of three, it is not surprising that guns are more likely to raise the risk of injury than to confer protection. In fact, they claim that every year there are only about 200 legally justified self-defense homicides by private citizens.

*Handguns make suicide attempts readily available.* LWZ

“Unsafe in Any Hands” The Violence Policy Center is a national non-profit educational foundation that conducts research on violence in America and works to develop violence-reduction policies and proposals. 2000. http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

Throughout the long and bitter debate over gun violence, the fact that the largest number of gun deaths is suicides, not homicides, has been consistently overlooked. For example, from 1990 to 1997 there were 147,000 suicides committed with a firearm in contrast to 100,000 firearm homicides.33 An estimated 90,000 of these suicides were accomplished with a handgun34—a tribute to the operational simplicity and high lethality that make it the ideal suicide machine. Perhaps because of a lingering sense of suicide as a shameful act, this calamitous by-product of handgun ownership has been largely disregarded by even gun control advocates. Obviously handguns by themselves do not make people suicidal. But their ready availability has increased their use in suicide attempts and the use of a firearm all but guarantees that a suicide attempt will end in a fatality.35
Handguns are massive contributors to suicide. LWZ

“Unsafe in Any Hands” The Violence Policy Center is a national non-profit educational foundation that conducts research on violence in America and works to develop violence-reduction policies and proposals. 2000.

http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

People living in a household with a gun are five times more likely to commit suicide than those living in a gun-free home36—and seven times out of 10 a handgun will be their weapon of choice.37 The deadly link between handgun ownership and suicide was decisively established in a 1999 study of California handgun purchasers showing that the suicide rate during the first week after the purchase of a handgun is 57 times higher than for the population as a whole. During the first year after purchase, suicide remained the leading cause of death among handgun purchasers.38

Suicide is one of the largest problems we face. LWZ

“Unsafe in Any Hands” The Violence Policy Center is a national non-profit educational foundation that conducts research on violence in America and works to develop violence-reduction policies and proposals. 2000.

http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

In sharp contrast, unintentional shootings involving children, which receive the lion's share of media attention, actually generate the smallest number of firearm deaths in any category. In 1997 there were 981 victims of unintentional shooting deaths, of whom 142 were aged 14 years old or younger.39 Regardless of the means, the violent death of a young person is a catastrophe, but it is still important to note that, while 300 young people between the ages of 15 years to 24 years old died in unintentional shootings in 1997, more than eight times as many died in firearms suicides,40 most involving handguns.
Gun Culture Bad

*Gun culture is basically a nuclear arms race – everyone becomes worse off. LWZ*


<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/why-gun-control-is-not-enough/?_r=0>.

The logic of private gun possession is thus similar to that of the nuclear arms race. When only one state gets nuclear weapons, it enhances its own security but reduces that of others, which have become more vulnerable. The other states then have an incentive to get nuclear weapons to try to restore their security. As more states get them, the incentives for others increase. If eventually all get them, the potential for catastrophe — whether through irrationality, misperception, or accident — is great. Each state’s security is then much lower than it would be if none had nuclear weapons.

*Either everyone has them or no one does – there is no real middle ground. LWZ*


<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/why-gun-control-is-not-enough/?_r=0>.

Gun advocates and criminals are allies in demanding that guns remain in private hands. They differ in how they want them distributed. Criminals want guns for themselves but not for their potential victims. Others want them for themselves but not for criminals. But while gun control can do a little to restrict access to guns by potential criminals, it can’t do much when guns are to be found in every other household. Either criminals and non-criminals will have them or neither will. Gun advocates prefer for both rather than neither to have them.
The NRA blocks gun control legislation at the federal level now. LWZ


The National Rifle Association (NRA), it seems, has so much power over politicians that even when 90% of Americans (including a majority of NRA members) wanted universal background checks to be adopted following the Newtown killings of 2012, no federal action ensued. Certainly, it's unlikely that any useful legislation will emerge in South Carolina.

Gun culture is what leads to troubled individuals seeking vengenance. LWZ


The gun culture's worship of the magical protective capacities of guns and their power to be wielded against perceived enemies -- including the federal government -- is a message that resonates with troubled individuals from the Santa Barbara killer, who was seeking vengeance on women who had failed to perceive his greatness, to the Charleston killer who echoed the Tea Party mantra of taking back our country.
Solvency

*Other countries prove that gun control can work.* LWZ


As an academic exercise, one might speculate whether law could play a constructive role in reducing the number or deadliness of mass shootings. Most other advanced nations apparently think so, since they make it far harder for someone like the Charleston killer to get his hands on a Glock semiautomatic handgun or any other kind of firearm (universal background checks are common features of gun regulation in other developed countries). • Germany: To buy a gun, anyone under the age of 25 has to pass a psychiatric evaluation (presumably 21-year-old Dylann Roof would have failed). • Finland: Handgun license applicants are only allowed to purchase firearms if they can prove they are active members of regulated shooting clubs. Before they can get a gun, applicants must pass an aptitude test, submit to a police interview, and show they have a proper gun storage unit. • Italy: To secure a gun permit, one must establish a genuine reason to possess a firearm and pass a background check considering both criminal and mental health records (again, presumably Dylann Roof would have failed). • France: Firearms applicants must have no criminal record and pass a background check that considers the reason for the gun purchase and evaluates the criminal, mental, and health records of the applicant. (Dylann Roof would presumably have failed in this process). • United Kingdom and Japan: Handguns are illegal for private citizens. While mass shootings as well as gun homicides and suicides are not unknown in these countries, the overall rates are substantially higher in the United States than in these competitor nations. While NRA supporters frequently challenge me on these statistics saying that this is only because "American blacks are so violent," it is important to note that white murder rates in the U.S. are well over twice as high as the murder rates in any of these other countries.
France is not a great example – the attack was rare and gun violence is still lower in the US. LWZ


When American audiences read of a dramatic event in a foreign country, they often frame it in terms of the political debates occurring at home. As such, it was no surprise that after shootings at the satirical French newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris this week, some Americans began to wonder about gun control laws. "Isn't it interesting that the tragedy in Paris took place in one of the toughest gun control countries in the world?"

American reality television star Donald Trump wrote on Twitter shortly after the news broke. The tweet prompted both praise (over a thousand retweets) and scorn (Trump was labelled a "moron" and an "idiot" by other tweeters). Trump, a perennial attention seeker, was likely attempting to score political points and insult liberals with his tweet. But behind the disingenuity, there is a genuinely troubling question: Why didn't France's gun laws save the Charlie Hebdo victims? France's gun laws date back to April 18, 1939, though they have been amended a number of times since. They are certainly tough: There is no right to bear arms for the French, and to own a gun, you need a hunting or sporting license which needs to be repeatedly renewed and requires a psychological evaluation. According to Gun Policy, a project by the University of Sydney, the punishment for illegally having a gun is a maximum of seven years in prison and a fine. In 2012, the French government estimated that there were at least 7.5 million guns legally in circulation. As The Post's Thomas Gibbons-Neff notes, the men who attacked Charlie Hebdo appeared to be carrying two different types of Kalashnikov rifles. Such weapons are highly restricted and require extremely stringent background checks to buy (CNN describes it as rivaling the "clearance work done by the FBI for anybody employed at the White House"). How did the attackers get the guns? Almost certainly illegally. Bloomberg reports that weapons designed for military use, such as the Kalashnikov AK series, have been illegally flooding France over the past few years, with state bodies recording double digit increases. “The French black market for weapons has been inundated with eastern European war artillery and arms,” Philippe Capon, the head of UNSA police union, told Bloomberg. “They are everywhere in France.” The number of illegal guns is thought to be at least twice the number of legal guns in the country. Weapons such as AK-47s can be bought for the equivalent of a few thousand dollars. Could more relaxed gun laws have changed the situation? The worrying level of firepower in the Charlie Hebdo attack certainly affected the situation. While many French police officers are armed, the first to arrive on the scene were reported to have been overwhelmed by superior firepower and forced to retreat. Some, such as the National Review's Jim Geraghty, have pondered how the event would go down in the United States, where more gun ownership could have prompted an "armed response from ordinary citizens." Such an alternative reality scenario is hard to guess at, though it's worth noting that the evidence from the United States is far from clear, especially in shootings involving automatic weapons. Did France's gun laws fail? French gun laws are a response to a variety of factors. For example, statistics from Gun Policy show that the number of
deaths from firearms was about 0.2 per 100,000 people in 2010 and hovered around that for the previous few years. In America, it was a little over 2.8 per 100,000. Mass shootings are relatively rare, when compared to the United States: While the Charlie Hebdo attack was horrific, it was also an anomaly.

Strict gun laws don’t fail – UK proves. LWZ


And while the flood of illegal weapons into France is clearly a bad thing, it's worth noting that not all countries with strict gun laws are facing similar problems. In the United Kingdom, guns are now so rare that rival gangs have been known to use the same gun in turf war shootings (they rent it from a third party as the guns are too expensive to own). Even so, France may respond to the Charlie Hebdo shootings with a change to legislation. After a series of deadly shootings in 2012 in Toulouse and Montauban (which also involved the use of illegally obtained weapons), the response was a call for a crackdown on gun availability.
Australia is a fantastic example – since banning guns, there have been no mass shootings.

LWZ


The story of Australia, which had 13 mass shootings in the 18-year period from 1979 to 1996 but none in the succeeding 19 years, is worth examining. The turning point was the 1996 Port Arthur massacre in Tasmania, in which a gunman killed 35 individuals using semiautomatic weapons. In the wake of the massacre, the conservative federal government succeeded in implementing tough new gun control laws throughout the country. A large array of weapons were banned -- including the Glock semiautomatic handgun used in the Charleston shootings. The government also imposed a mandatory gun buy back that substantially reduced gun possession in Australia. The effect was that both gun suicides and homicides (as well as total suicides and homicides) fell. In addition, the 1996 legislation made it a crime to use firearms in self-defense. When I mention this to disbelieving NRA supporters they insist that crime must now be rampant in Australia. In fact, the Australian murder rate has fallen to close to one per 100,000 while the U.S. rate, thankfully lower than in the early 1990s, is still roughly at 4.5 per 100,000 -- over four times as high. Moreover, robberies in Australia occur at only about half the rate of the U.S. (58 in Australia versus 113.1 per 100,000 in the U.S. in 2012). How did Australia do it? Politically, it took a brave prime minister to face the rage of Australian gun interests. John Howard wore a bullet-proof vest when he announced the proposed gun restrictions in June 1996. The deputy prime minister was hung in effigy. But Australia did not have a domestic gun industry to oppose the new measures so the will of the people was allowed to emerge. And today, support for the safer, gun-restricted Australia is so strong that going back would not be tolerated by the public. That Australia hasn't had a mass shooting since 1996 is likely more than merely the result of the considerable reduction in guns -- it's certainly not the case that guns have disappeared altogether. I suspect that the country has also experienced a cultural shift between the shock of the Port Arthur massacre and the removal of guns from every day life as they are no longer available for self-defense and they are simply less present throughout the country. Troubled individuals, in other words, are not constantly being reminded that guns are a means to address their alleged grievances to the extent that they were in the past, or continue to be in the US.
Banning in the entire US is key – otherwise gun control efforts will be undercut by other states. LWZ


Of course, strict gun regulations cannot ensure that the danger of mass shootings or killings has been eliminated. Norway has strong gun control and committed humane values. But they didn't prevent Anders Breivik from opening fire on a youth camp on the island of Utoya in 2011? His clean criminal record and hunting license had allowed him to secure semiautomatic rifles, but Norway restricted his ability to get high-capacity clips for them. In his manifesto, Breivik wrote about his attempts to legally buy weapons, stating, "I envy our European American brothers as the gun laws in Europe sucks ass in comparison." In fact, in the same manifesto ("December and January -- Rifle/gun accessories purchased", Breivik wrote that it was from a U.S. supplier that he purchased -- and had mailed -- 10 30-round ammunition magazines for the rifle he used in his attack. In other words, even if a particular state chooses to make it harder for some would-be killers to get their weapons, these efforts can be undercut by the jurisdictions that hold out from these efforts. In the U.S., of course, gun control measures at the state and local level are often thwarted by the lax attitude to gun acquisition in other states.
We should definitely ban handguns. LWZ


Why has more than 30 years of federal gun control legislation failed to slow the carnage? This is in large measure due to the ad hoc nature in which gun control legislation has been enacted often in response to specific acts of violence. Effective legislation must take into account the following—Most victims know their killers and are often related to them. Criminals often get their guns through gun stores and are skilled in evading point-of-purchase legal roadblocks. The secondary gun market—i.e., the selling of guns at gun shows or over the Internet—is in reality totally unregulated. It is the self-defense handgun purchased by "law-abiding" citizens that ends up being used in most handgun violence. Politicians and gun control advocates alike, however, have a tendency to proffer the same legislative remedies over and over ("licensing and registration" or "background checks") without consideration of these fundamentals or inquiry into the actual effects such laws might have on reducing firearms violence overall. A contrasting legislative approach to curtailing gun violence begins with the recognition that the firearms industry remains the last unregulated manufacturer of a consumer product. Guns are the only consumer product in America specifically exempted from federal health and safety requirements. The firearms industry maintains this regulatory immunity despite the fact that their products kill more Americans every year than all household and recreational products combined. To end this era of national denial, Congress should vest the Department of the Treasury with strong authority to regulate the design, manufacture, and distribution of firearms. Such authority should include the ability to remove from the market firearms that pose a serious threat to public health and safety. In every other part of the consumer economy we have long recognized that the damage wrought by some products can be controlled only by an unequivocal ban. Products such as three-wheel ATVs and lawn darts had related death rates microscopic in comparison to handguns, but were nevertheless banned. Also, under federal regulation, products ranging from cribs to automobiles have undergone major structural alterations to minimize inherent dangers. Firearms and particularly handguns are long overdue to receive the same regulatory scrutiny.

Yes, buyback would be expensive, but easily recouped. LWZ


If a handgun ban were enacted, what should be done about the existing supply of some 65 million civilian-owned handguns? Could the nation afford to eliminate them through a program? Since many handguns began as cheap "junk guns," a generous estimate of the average buy-back price would be $250. The total tab would be about $16.25 billion, which is slightly more than three SSN-21 nuclear attack submarines.44 Considering that by conservative estimates America spends $4 billion annually on medical care for gun violence victims, the cost of a buy-back could be recouped in a few years.
It doesn’t mean that we ban all guns. LWZ


A prohibition of private ownership would not mean that no one could shoot guns. Guns for target shooting could be rented under security arrangements at the range. And there’s perhaps scope for debate about private possession of single chamber shotguns for hunting.

Australia proves – gun controls works and lowered firearm homicide rate by 42 percent. LWZ


In 1996, a 28-year-old man walked into a cafe in Port Arthur, Australia, ate lunch, pulled a semi-automatic rifle out of his bag, and opened fire on the crowd, killing 35 people and wounding 23 more. It was the worst mass shooting in Australia's history. Australian lawmakers responded with new legislation that, among other provisions, banned certain types of firearms, such as automatic and semi-automatic rifles and shotguns. The Australian government confiscated 650,000 of these guns through a gun buyback program, in which it purchased firearms from gun owners. It established a registry of all guns owned in the country and required a permit for all new firearm purchases. (This is much further than bills typically proposed in the US, which almost never make a serious attempt to immediately reduce the number of guns in the country.) The result: Australia's firearm homicide rate dropped by about 42 percent in the seven years after the law passed, and its firearm suicide rate fell by 57 percent, according to one review of the evidence by Harvard researchers.

Now, it's difficult to know for sure how much of the drop in homicides and suicides was caused specifically by the gun buyback program. Australia's gun deaths, for one, were already declining before the law passed. But Harvard's David Hemenway and Mary Vriniotis argue that the gun buyback program very likely played a role: "First, the drop in firearm deaths was largest among the type of firearms most affected by the buyback. Second, firearm deaths in states with higher buyback rates per capita fell proportionately more than in states with lower buyback rates." One study of the program, by Australian researchers, found that buying back 3,500 guns per 100,000 people correlated with up to a 50 percent drop in firearm homicides, and a 74 percent drop in gun suicides. As Vox’s Dylan Matthews noted, the drop in homicides wasn't statistically significant. But the drop in suicides most definitely was — and the results are striking.


One other fact, noted by Hemenway and Vriniotis in 2011: "While 13 gun massacres (the killing of 4 or more people at one time) occurred in Australia in the 18 years before the [Australia gun control law], resulting in more than one hundred deaths, in the 14 following years (and up to the present), there were no gun massacres."
Israel shows that reducing firearms lowers suicides. LWZ


Preventing suicides isn't something we typically include in discussions of gun control, but other countries' experiences show it can save lives. In Israel, where military service is mandatory for much of the population, policymakers realized that an alarming number of soldiers killed themselves when they went home over the weekend. So Israeli officials, as part of their solution, decided to try forcing the soldiers to keep their guns at the base when they went home. It worked: A study from Israeli researchers found that suicides among Israeli soldiers dropped by 40 percent.

A handgun ban in particular will be effective because long gun alternatives are more difficult to conceal, making shootings more difficult. PJG.


Another reason to doubt that long guns would be used in great numbers to replace handguns in robberies, assaults, and homicides is that long guns are obviously much more difficult to conceal. A potential mugger roaming the streets wielding a long gun will cause everyone in sight to flee, and is likely to be quickly arrested when alarmed people call the police. Similarly, a bank robber carrying a long gun will be immediately detected by security guards, alarm systems will be triggered, and the chances of a successful robbery greatly diminished. Handguns are obviously much more convenient for the commission of such crimes. Kates and Benenson point out that most homicides occur in the home, where concealability is "irrelevant." However, concealability would seem to be an important factor even in the home. Since the victim may well be unaware that the killer is carrying a concealed weapon, the "surprise factor" which is peculiar to handguns can still apply even in the home. In contrast, people can hardly be unaware that the person they are with is carrying a shotgun or rifle. Moreover, in any argument or domestic quarrel, regardless of whether the potential victim knows that the assailter is carrying a handgun, the ease of pulling out the gun and shooting makes such arguments more likely to spill over into murder. In contrast, by the time the assaulter has gone into another room to retrieve their long gun and loaded it, the potential victim has crucial seconds in which to escape. Pg. 270.
Children

"Guns in the home are a disaster if children get their hands on them. SBH."

Janine Stanwood [Jamie is a reporter at a news station.] “Keeping Children Safe With Guns at Home”

In the hands of trained adults, guns are a tool for protection. In the hands of children, guns can be a disaster waiting to happen. In incidents nationwide, children have been killed, injured or have hurt others because a gun was not properly stored. At the National Armory in Pompano Beach, firearms instructor Gary Lampert said there are simple devices that could save a child's life. "(A gun) should be locked up, because if you put it on a top shelf, the kids are going to get into it," he said. Lampert said push-button, combination safes can be easy for adults to access, but difficult for children. The cost: about $120. Another device that’s simple and cheap is a cable lock. There are several kinds and they work with any type of hand gun. "You can actually take it through in the gun this way, and lock it, and there's no way the gun can be opened then," Lampert said. The cost is about $15. Lampert said one thing that can't be purchased at a store is a conversation with your kids. "(They need) to understand that a gun is dangerous and they should be taught not to handle them," he said.

There are lots of accidents with children and unintentional shootings. SBH.


After a 9-year-old girl in Arizona accidentally shot and killed her shooting range instructor with an Uzi last week, it raised what would appear to be a fairly obvious question: How often do children in the United States — where unintentional or accidental shootings occur with some frequency — fatally shoot people by accident? ¶ The answer: We don’t actually know for sure. At least that’s what the people and agencies tracking this topic say. ¶ “We know how many times children die each year as a result of gun deaths,” Jon S. Vernick, co-director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, said in an interview last week. “We don’t know how many times children pull the trigger and someone dies.” ¶ Vernick said the data is out there, but it has not been pulled together or compiled by anyone. ¶ Agencies that compile statistics regarding shooting deaths told The Post that while they have data on many aspects of shooting deaths, this figure was unavailable. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that there is no nationwide data regarding the age of the person who pulls the trigger in an unintentional shooting. The Justice Department offered a similar response. “We do not have any statistics available regarding this topic,” a statistician with the Bureau of Justice Statistics wrote in an e-mail last week. ¶ Some details regarding gun deaths are known, collected and reported. We know how many gun deaths occur in a given year, which makes sense, because when people are shot and killed, there are death
certificates and there are reports by medical examiners, and national reports can conclusively come up with a number

There are many accidental shootings of children by children or adults. SBH.


(There were 32,351 such deaths in 2011, according to the CDC.) We know how many gun deaths were declared accidental (591 in 2011, the CDC says). And we know that 102 people killed in these accidental gun deaths in 2011 were younger than 18, according to Vernick, with half of these children younger than age 13. ¶ But when you try to look into how many of the people pulling the trigger in accidental gun deaths were also children, you run into a problem. ¶ When children unintentionally shoot themselves or other people, media reports typically follow. A three-year-old boy is playing with a gun and shoots himself in the face. A four-year-old girl discovers a gun and shoots her four-year-old cousin, killing him. A three-year-old boy shoots himself in the head. A five-year-old accidentally shoots a three-year-old girl. A five-year-old boy accidentally shoots and kills himself. A four-year-old boy accidentally shoots himself. A two-year-old boy shoots and kills his 11-year-old sister. It goes on like this, story after story of unintentional shootings involving children that lead to injuries or deaths. (Many unintentional shootings of children occur when they are with people of similar ages, Vernick said, though many also involve children by themselves.) ¶ The National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), which the CDC launched in 2002, does combine data from death certificates, medical examiner reports and law enforcement reports to try to produce this type of information. However, this system currently only operates in 18 states, so the numbers it offers are not national and the CDC cautions that the data should not be viewed as nationally representative. Still, it offers some information: Across the 17 states the NVDRS has data for from 2011, there were 11 unintentional firearm deaths that year in which the person pulling the trigger was age 14 or younger. ¶ In addition to uncertainty regarding how many children accidentally shoot and kill people, the overall number of accidental gun deaths may also be incomplete. The CDC’s numbers, available through the National Center for Health Statistics, are collected from a mortality database that includes causes of death as determined by medical examiners, coroners and attending physicians. Yet this, again, is not foolproof. Medical examiners may say that a shooting death that appears to be unintentional was a homicide or say the cause cannot be determined, which is a separate category. ¶ Vernick offered an example of what would appear to be an unintentional shooting: A teenager is playing with a gun that he thinks is empty pulls the trigger, shooting and killing another teenager. In this case, such a death could actually be deemed a homicide, since the teen intentionally pulled the trigger, even if there was no intent to actually fire a bullet.
Domestic Violence Plan

This would evidence for a plan that says that the US should ban handguns only in domestic violence situations.

Symbolically, women having a gun gives them a chance to stand up against male oppressors. SBH.

Mary Zeiss Stange and Carol K. Oyster [Mary Stange has a Ph.D. 1982, Religion, Syracuse University M.A. 1974, Religion, Syracuse University B.A. magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, 1972, English Literature, Syracuse University. She also teaches courses on feminist theories and methodologies, ecofeminism, and global and transnational feminism.] “Gun Women: Firearms and Feminism in Contemporary America” NYU PRESS September 1, 2000

In these male hands, the gun has served a symbolic function that exceeds any practical utility. It has become the symbol par excellence of masculinity: of power, force, aggressiveness, decisiveness, deadly accuracy, cold rationality. These are not things generally believed to be available to, let alone desirable for, women. Annie Oakley, whom Sitting Bull nicknamed "Little Sure Shot" and who managed to project an aura of petite femininity even as she outshot every male opponent who had the guts to take her on, looks, if anything, like the rare female exception that proves the gender rule. But of course, as Oakley herself knew, gender rules are made to be broken. And, as even a cursory study of American social history bears out, gun use has never been solely the prerogative of men. Here, as elsewhere in the tangled history of gender relations, popular myth flies in the face of historical fact. There have always been gun women: pioneers, hunters, adventurers, defenders of their homes and families. There have been some outlaws, too, although as with their male compatriots, the vast majority of gun women are, and have always been, law-abiding citizens who possess and use firearms for an array of legitimate purposes. It is true that the number of female firearms users has always been smaller than the number of men. It is equally true, however, that women have been an increasingly visible component of the gun-owning population since the 1980. If, as conventional wisdom has it, women and guns don't mix, then how can we account for the fact that today in America, one in four guns is being purchased by a woman?

Handguns empirically increases murder. SBH.

Crime Prevention Research Center “Murder and homicide rates before and after gun bans” Crime Prevention Research Center 12/1/13
Original post: Every place that has been banned guns has seen murder rates go up. You cannot point to one place where murder rates have fallen, whether it’s Chicago or D.C. or even island nations such as England, Jamaica, or Ireland. For an example of homicide rates before and after a ban, take the case of the handgun ban in England and Wales in January 1997 (source here see Table 1.01 and the column marked “Offences currently recorded as homicide per million population”). After the ban, clearly homicide rates bounce around over time, but there is only one year (2010) where the homicide rate is lower than it was in 1996. The immediate effect was about [as] a 50 percent increase in homicide rates. The homicide rate only began falling when there was a large increase in the number of police officers during 2003 and 2004. Despite the huge increase in the number of police, the murder rate still remained slightly higher than the immediate pre-ban rate.

**Giving women the choice to carry empowers them. SBH.**


The risk of rape that women face has been compared to the risk of being mugged that men face.118 This comparison is inapt for at least two reasons that are relevant here, as well as a host of reasons that are not. Both rape and robbery have the potential for unexpected and unprovoked violence, even when the victim submits without protest.119 Absent this kind of violence, the most serious consequence of robbery is mere property loss; men who are mugged may lose their wallet, watch, or other material things that can be replaced. Rape, even absent additional violence, is “destructive of the human personality”120 and “short of homicide, it is the ultimate violation of self.”121 Women who survive rape often suffer psychological trauma that can last for years—indeed, a lifetime.122 Since women are in danger of being raped wherever they are, denying them the right to carry a concealed weapon to prevent this kind of devastating harm is reprehensible. 123 Second, women are often blamed for their rape because they “put themselves in a dangerous situation.” A woman who is raped while walking home alone late at night “should have known better;” somehow, she is to blame because she dared to venture from the confines of her home after dark. Yet a man who is mugged while walking home alone late at night is considered an innocent victim. Women’s liberty and freedom of movement are restricted far more than men’s because the consequences of the crimes are vastly different, and we blame only women for “allowing” themselves to become victims.124 Having the choice to carry a gun would empower women to navigate the world outside their home with much less fear of victimization and blame.125

**More women having guns tied to more city safety. SBH.**

Widespread concealed carry may provide self-defense and psychological benefits for individual women, and other benefits for women as a whole. Some of these societal benefits could be realized if more women simply obtained a concealed carry permit, regardless of whether they actually choose to carry on a regular basis. Allowing law-abiding citizens to carry concealed weapons has been shown to deter violent crime. According to economist John Lott, “the [deterrent] effect is especially pronounced for women. An additional woman carrying a concealed handgun reduces the murder rate for women by about three to four times more than an additional man carrying a concealed handgun reduces the murder rate for men.” Lott also found that “rapists are particularly deterred by handguns.” Every woman who carries a gun is making the world a little bit safer for her sisters: “[c]itizens who have no intention of ever carrying concealed handguns in a sense get a ‘free ride’ from the crime-fighting efforts of their fellow citizens.” This should be encouraged. Women may be able to achieve some deterrent effect by simply learning how to shoot, obtaining concealed carry permits, and publicizing the number of women eligible to carry a weapon—even if many of them never actually carry concealed. This is not mere theory: In October 1966, the Orlando Police Department began conducting highly publicized firearms safety training for women, after observing that many women were arming themselves in response to a dramatic increase in sexual assaults in the area. Orlando rapes fell by 88% from 1966 to 1967. Burglary fell by 25%. Not one of the 2,500 trained women actually ended up firing her weapon; the deterrent effect of the publicity sufficed. . . . That same year, rape increased by 5% in Florida and by 7% nationally. For purposes of reducing stranger-rape attempts, making criminals believe that women are likely to be armed may be even more important than actually arming them. Thus, women who feel uncomfortable carrying a firearm could still “do their part” by contributing to the number of women with concealed carry permits. Publicizing a growing number of female permit holders could change a potential rapist’s mental calculus by increasing the perceived costs associated with attacking a seemingly defenseless woman.

Women are killed by males with handguns in domestic violence situations. SBH.

Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence “Domestic Violence & Firearms Policy Summary” May 11, 2014

Guns pose a particular threat in the hands of domestic abusers. Abused women are five times more likely to be killed by their abuser if the abuser owns a firearm. Domestic violence assaults involving a gun are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force. More than two-thirds of spouse and ex-spouse homicide victims between 1980 and 2008 were killed with firearms. In 2011, nearly two-thirds of women killed with guns were killed by their intimate partners. Domestic violence also plays a role in mass shootings. A study by Everytown for Gun Safety of every identifiable mass shooting (shooting in which four or more people were murdered) between January 2009 and July 2014 found that 57% of them involved the killing of a family member or a current or former intimate partner of the shooter. The impact of guns in domestic violence situations is not limited to homicides. A 2004 survey of female domestic violence shelter residents in California found that more than one third (36.7%) reported having been threatened or
harmed with a firearm. In nearly two thirds (64.5%) of the households that contained a gun, the intimate partner had used the firearm against the victim, usually threatening to shoot or kill her. As described below, federal law prohibits abusers who have been convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors and abusers subject to certain domestic violence restraining orders from possessing guns. The federal laws intended to prevent access to firearms by domestic abusers have significant limitations, however, and some states have adopted broader laws to address these problems.

**Women can use a gun for self defense. SBH.**


Some women harbor the mistaken belief that their gun is likely to be taken away at the crucial moment and used against them. Perhaps this myth comes from watching too many movies where a weak-willed woman refused to pull the trigger and allowed an attacker to wrest the gun from her limp grasp. In reality, the vast majority of women who undertake the responsibility of carrying a weapon are capable of using it competently and decisively when threatened. “At most, one percent of defensive gun uses result[] in the offender taking the gun away from the victim.” Women who choose to carry a gun would do well to remember the tenth rule of gun fighting: “someday someone may kill you with your own gun, but they should have to beat you to death with it because it is empty.”

**Women can get together and protect others with handguns. SBH.**

Hannah Bleau “Feminists Ignore The Practical Solution To Violence: Self-Defense” 6/10/14

The Founders of America would argue that, “a well-armed populace” actually discourages– not only gun related crime– but crime of any kind. Many criminals cower or take their own life when confronted with armed opposition. It might be asking too much, but these activists should take a look at their hypocrisy and make simple amends. Feminism is supposed to be all about female empowerment. What’s more empowering than arming and defending yourself? We’re never going to be able to find every psychopath before they commit a crime, but I guarantee you the tides will turn when you point a gun in their direction. Gun violence shouldn’t be a partisan issue. We need to unite and think about practical solutions, despite how we “feel” about weapons. It’s totally sensible and most importantly, totally constitutional. You can’t always count on someone else to protect you. The police are only a phone call away, but who’s to say you have five minutes to wait? In violent
situations, every second counts. I realize many feminists have a clear disdain for firearms, and they’re entitled to that opinion. Keep in mind though; aggressors often carry out their evil intentions with more than a gun.

Hand guns are useful tools to keep women safe. SBH.

Hannah Bleau “Feminists Ignore The Practical Solution To Violence: Self-Defense” 6/10/14

This issue isn’t about “rape culture,” men’s disrespect of women or the evil of weapons. It all comes down to the condition of someone’s heart. If a person with deep-seated hatred decides to take the lives of innocent people, laws won’t stop them. Anti-gun feminists are only making it more difficult for women to be empowered. In essence, these campaigns are fostering an environment of helplessness, and that kind of mentality will only produce more victims. Using feminist logic, it would be better to run to an emergency call box, scream for a police officer or blow a rape whistle than to empower potential victims with a firearm. I’m sure Cosmo editor Elisa Benson reflected the attitudes of her feminist allies when she suggested that self-defense was “icky.” Is that female empowerment in the 21st century? Feminists can pretend that all would be well in their weaponless utopia. The reality is there are twisted people out there who don’t value human life. Making it more difficult for law-abiding citizens to obtain weapons will only make matters worse.

Black women having guns are useful for self defense. SBH.

Renee Simms “Who will protect us? Why I am still conflicted by guns as a black feminist,” The Salon 11/5/13

I don’t own a gun but I know plenty of educated black women who do. These are working- and middle-class women, some of them single and some with families, and statistics support what I see. According to a National Shooting Sports Foundation report, 78.6 percent of retailers reported an increase in the number of women buying guns in 2012. Although a 2013 Pew research report reveals that gun ownership remains overwhelmingly white and male, black women made up the fastest growing purchasers of concealed handguns in Texas between the years 2007 and 2012. J. Victoria Sanders, a black Texan and journalist, reported this trend in a 2011 article detailing the increased marketing of guns to women and Sanders’ own journey toward gun ownership.

Black women using guns helps protect themselves against others. SBH.

Renee Simms “Who will protect us? Why I am still conflicted by guns as a black feminist,” The Salon 11/5/13

This movement toward guns seems a rational decision for black women when you consider some of our experiences. Historically, black women have been left unprotected as a matter of law and custom, our bodies
designated as commodities, used as “de mule uh de world” as Zora Neale Hurston wrote, and as sites for sexual violence and mockery. In an analysis of 2011 data, the Violence Policy Center reported that black women are murdered at rates three times that of white women and these murders usually involve a gun used by someone that the woman knows. Given these realities, some of us are pragmatic about self-defense. Even when we identify as feminist, as I do, we remain uncommitted to anti-gun feminism that erases our specific experience.

**Black women and men have using guns to protect themselves is originated in white racial violence. SBH.**

Renee Simms “Who will protect us? Why I am still conflicted by guns as a black feminist,” *The Salon* 11/5/13

If the roots of our nation’s gun culture, so carefully analyzed in “Guns in America,” trace back to colonial expansion, revolutionary wars, militias, hunting and living on the frontier, African-Americans share some of this history. But the roots of black gun ownership originate, also, in black Americans’ need to protect themselves against white racial violence. In her documentation of southern lynching, Ida B. Wells famously wrote, “The only times an Afro-American who was assaulted got away has been when he had a gun and used it in self-defense. The lesson this teaches and which every Afro-American should ponder well, is that a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give.” Wells, along with the NAACP and Tuskegee Institute, gathered and published lynching statistics from 1882 to 1968. 1968 was the not-so-distant past for the black homeowners where I grew up as a girl.

**Guns are the best way to protect women. SBH.**

Major Van Harl USAF Ret “Feminism and Firearms” Ammoland 4/4/13

The issue is I am getting old and if four big guys decide to assault me in a surprise attack at a Wal-Mart parking lot I am going to lose. Now envision the 100 pound, highly educated woman assaulted in the same parking lot by the same four big men. She is also going to lose. Give me even a few seconds warning and the access to a handgun and those four men are going to wish they had not gotten involved with me. Put that same firearm in the trained hands of the woman about to be assaulted, and I would suggest her outcome will be much better. She may have some issues of PTSD after she had to use deadly force to keep herself safe from bodily harm. This PTSD is better than dealing with the PTSD because you were raped and beaten half to death.

**Women should learn how to carry a gun and use it properly. SBH.**
Major Van Harl USAF Ret “Feminism and Firearms” Ammoland 4/4/13

The Colonel and her sister have their concealed carry permits. Ammo is hard to find right now but the sister-in-law was all excited we found 9mm ammunition for her. I was able to pick up a 20ga shotgun for the daughter’s gun safe and we all gazed into the display cases and dreamed about what our next handgun would be. Then we went into a Fleet-Farm supply store and I found myself helping a woman select the correct ammo she needed for a number of firearms she had at home. I don’t think she understood I did not work in the store. I was just please to find her in the ammo section getting prepared and was happy to help. There are a lot more women in the gun stores now-a-days. I have watched women reading the side of an ammo box trying to figure out the correct type of bullet configuration to buy for their firearm. Women have always worked hard at being knowledgeable consumers, why not in the guns and ammo area of personal buying? Many are with the men in their lives but more and more the women are there by themselves buying firearms.

Women having guns helps break down gender gap. SBH.

Jennifer Dawn Carlson “carrying guns, contesting gender” contexts 2/23/15

Others, however, highlight the protection guns can afford women. According to a series of papers published by Gary Kleck and colleagues that focus on women’s victimization during street crime, acts of resistance against an attacker—including, but not limited to, brandishing or firing a gun—lessen the likelihood that an attack, such as sexual assault, is “completed.” Indeed, many Americans argue women stand to gain as much as, if not more than, men from armed protection. From the NRA to the firearms industry to gun instructors, gun advocates are cozying up to the idea of women owning, learning about, and carrying guns. Pundits and policymakers on both sides of the gun issue argue whether armed women represent collusion with the patriarchy or the dawn of armed feminism. But politically evocative as it may seem, this binary just doesn’t capture the dynamic, contested, and at times pragmatic nature of women’s participation in gun culture. At the shooting range, in the gun store, and walking through daily life with a holstered firearm, the women I met during my fieldwork defied a single, straightforward narrative. They engaged in an ever-changing set of gendered negotiations through which women’s empowerment and masculine protectionism were meshed in sometimes familiar, sometimes surprising ways.

Guns empower women. SBH.


Dartmouth student, Taylor Woolrich, says, she may leave school because she can't carry a gun on campus, despite having a crazed stalker. Legal ownership gives you real power, equalizing the battle between you and
Greg Gutfeld - When Woolrich was 16 an obsessed middle age creep -- not me -- would follow her home from work. She filed a restraining order but he kept at it, promising to visit her at school and showing up at her front door. He's in jail -- found in his car: a noose, knife and gloves. To be fair, maybe he was on a scavenger hunt. Woolrich still lives in fear, but Dartmouth won't budge -- which I get. But if I were her, I would still pack heat. Now, I get the concern about arming co-eds. I went to college once -- I think. But, there are kids that same age who carry, it's called the military. They can handle it. Stalkers are called stalkers, because they don't quit, which means their target has just one recourse: "boom." But this anti-gun push is more about the sexist notion that girls shouldn't have guns. Guns are deadly objects, but so are cars. Perhaps only men should drive. The fact is, guns do more for female empowerment than modern feminism which prefers government as their protector. But legal ownership gives you real power, equalizing the battle between you and evil. Ask any girl: The confidence from learning to shoot a pistol is far superior to any gender studies course, and a stalker is less likely to stalk if you can ventilate his groin. Which is why a whirring bullet is the ideal rape whistle and the real feminist icon should be Annie Oakley, not Sandra Fluke.
Women

A ban on hand guns helps women because gun control is a feminist issue due to domestic violence situations and increased murder of women. SBH.

Rain Strickland [Rain Strickland writes for two blogs and multiple websites. Being somewhat politically-minded, she often has the temerity to speak out about various injustices she sees in the world. A proud defender of equal rights.] “Why Women Should Be More Involved in the Gun Control Debate” Feminspire 4/18/13

Of course, this comes as little surprise to women in the U.S. American women have been running headlong into that particular wall for some time now. Nearly 700 new pieces of legislation were put forth in the first quarter of 2013 to try to control, restrict and inhibit women’s reproductive rights, many going against Constitutional law. Here’s where gun control becomes a feminist issue: To start, the government listens even less often to its female constituents than it does to its male constituents. Whatever opinion women may have about this issue, it’s not going to be heard in the first place. The second big reason gun control is a feminist issue is because of the domestic violence statistics associated with firearms. Women are 500% more likely to die from a domestic violence situation in a home where there is a firearm. According to the Violence Policy Center, “A 1976 to 1987 analysis of Federal Bureau of Investigation data revealed that more than twice as many women were shot and killed by their husbands or intimate acquaintances than were murdered by strangers using firearms, knives, or any other means.” This same site lists numerous statistics and studies, including the fact that half of the women who were victims of homicide in 2000, where the weapon was known, were killed by firearms. These statistics are not hidden in some dark little hole where no one can find them. These statistics are readily available from a massive number of sites just by using a search engine and typing in the search string “domestic violence firearm.” The statistics are backed up by numerous academic and government studies, as well as studies done by law enforcement agencies such as the FBI.

Countries with handgun bans see a decrease in murder and rape of women. SBH.


Our study also provided some surprises. While support for strict gun control laws has usually been strongest in large cities, right-to-carry laws produced the largest drops in violent crimes in counties with the highest populations and highest crime rates. For example, in counties with populations over 200,000, concealed
handgun laws produced an average drop in murder rates of over 13 per cent. The half of the counties with the highest murder rates experienced over a 10 per cent drop in murders. The half of the counties with the highest rape rates saw rapes fall by over 7 per cent. Concealed handguns also appear to be a great equaliser among the sexes. Murder rates decline when either more women or more men carry concealed handguns, but the effect is especially pronounced for women. An additional woman carrying a concealed handgun reduces the murder rate for women by about three to four times more than an additional man carrying a concealed handgun reduces the murder rate for men. Possibly, this arises because allowing a woman to defend herself with a concealed handgun represents a much larger change in her ability to defend herself than the change created by providing a man with a handgun.

**Connection between violence with handguns and masculinity. SBH.**

Libby Anne [Libby Anne writes about politics and feminism] “The Intersection of Guns, Gender, and Violence” January 10, 2013

Even as I have watched gender being brought into the discussion on guns in the context of domestic violence, I have also seen it discussed in the context of the Sandy Hook shooter’s own identity – like all but one of the 62 mass shootings over the past thirty years, the perpetrator was male. This reality has led to some feminists arguing that we need to discuss the connection between masculinity and violence. The fact that 61 out of 62 mass murders which happened over the past 30 years were committed by men is not considered particularly noteworthy because, in a country where 95 percent of violent crime is committed by men, it’s not noteworthy. It is expected. We’ll assume the shooter is a man unless told otherwise and then we’ll be surprised.¶ Can we talk about how fucked up that is for a just a second, please? Because we don’t talk about it—or if we do, we talk as if it’s somehow inevitable. We accept essentialist beliefs about the genders and consider it “natural” that men are aggressive and women are nurturing, and so–while we hope that community norms and social conditioning will keep men’s “natural tendencies” towards violence in check–we are in no way surprised that when those checks fail, those who turn violent are overwhelmingly men.¶ That is exactly backwards. The social conditioning that happens is in the reverse. We teach men to be aggressive. We teach them that is the very essence of “being a man.” We say that women are supposed to be caring and compassionate and we tell men not to be like women—to be anything but a “girl.” We teach men that anger is the only acceptable emotion for them to express—and violence is an appropriate way of expressing it. We police their masculinity in a million small ways every day from the time they are even younger than the children who died in Sandy Hook.

**More evidence for connection between violence and handguns and masculinity. SBH.**

Libby Anne [Libby Anne writes about politics and feminism] “The Intersection of Guns, Gender, and Violence” January 10, 2013
In Katz’s words: “We socialize empathy out of boys all the time.” And then we act as though this state of affairs is natural—as though the rules of masculinity are ordained and not systematically enforced. It’s not. There is nothing inevitable about the fact that 95 percent of violent crime in this country is committed by men. The author of this piece asks why we haven’t been discussing the fact that almost all mass shooters, and nineteen out of twenty murderers, are male. I think the answer isn’t that complicated. First, given that male is the default category anyway, people don’t always notice the pattern. If all but one of the shooters had been, say, Asian, we would be talking about that. But the other part of the reason, I think, is that feminists are accused often enough of being men haters that we shy away from doing things like discussing connections between masculinity and violence. But you know what? I think having discussions about why the vast, vast, vast majority of mass shooters are male is actually the pro-man route while ignoring those discussions is the anti-man route. Why? Because not trying to figure out why gun violence is overwhelmingly male means buying into an assumption that men are somehow just naturally more violent than women, and that assumption leads to some less than positive ideas about men. If instead we ask why men commit more gun violence than women, we can look for the various social factors that result in men committing more gun violence than women and then work to bring about change rather than simply assuming that men are naturally more violent than women. Anyways, like I said, I’ve been finding discussions of the intersections between guns, gender, and violence thought provoking. What have you read on this nexus? What are your thoughts on the articles I’ve excerpted from above? What do you think about Sam Harris’s suggestion that women should arm themselves against domestic abusers and Sierra’s contrasting personal testimony? What are your thoughts on masculinity and violence? I’m especially interested in hearing some male voices.

Gun controls helps women in domestic situations. More women are killed in domestic violence situations than men. SBH.

Rain Strickland [Rain Strickland writes for two blogs and multiple websites. Being somewhat politically-minded, she often has the temerity to speak out about various injustices she sees in the world. A proud defender of equal rights.] “Why Women Should Be More Involved in the Gun Control Debate” Feminspire 4/18/13

What it boils down to is very simple: Women get killed in domestic situations by firearms far more often than men do. There’s no getting around it. There is legislation to acknowledge the disparity with regard to gun control and domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Offender Gun Ban is meant to keep firearms out of the hands of those who have been convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence. Basically, if you’ve been convicted of any form of domestic violence, you cannot legally own a firearm. This might seem like a great thing, but with the current state of legislation on gun control measures in the U. S., this ban is extremely easy to get around. The very measure that 90% of Americans were hoping would pass on April 17th would have made a significant contribution to enforcing the DVOGB. By making sure that all gun sales were subject to criminal
background checks, the people who are banned from owning firearms would not be able to simply buy their guns from Craigslist or gun shows.

*Violence against women in America that is fueled by guns is comparable to domestic terrorism against women.*  
*SBH.*

**Libby Anne [Libby Anne writes about politics and feminism] “The Intersection of Guns, Gender, and Violence” January 10, 2013**

The Sandy Hook shooting has brought guns into the spotlight once again, and as I’ve read about this issue in the blogs I follow I’ve been fascinated by the different ways in which gender has been brought into this discussion. I’m going to offer some quotations from several of these articles, along with a bit of commentary. First, Sam Harris responded to Sandy Hook by arguing that the answer is more guns, not fewer. His argument, which was covered by fellow Patheos blogger Hemant Mehta, was that if more people have guns for self defense, everyone will be safer. Sean Faircloth of the Richard Dawkins Foundation responded to Harris’s comments (Hemant covered this response as well), and in his response he brought gender into the picture: In an ironic coincidence, Harris’s piece on gun control was published on the same day that The Violence Against Women Act was unjustly shot down in the U.S. House. Firearm assaults on female family members, and intimate acquaintances are approximately twelve times more likely to result in death than are assaults using other weapons. Two-thirds of women killed by spouses are killed with guns. This is not some minor secondary issue, yet Mr. Harris did not delve into it. It is the heart of the matter—a form of chronic and pervasive domestic terrorism. It is impossible to claim to address gun violence in American while failing to address domestic violence against women.

*In domestic violence situations, women are silenced.*  
*SBH.*

**Vidal N. Wachuku [Vidal Wachuku is a writer.] “Suffering in Silence” Real Truth Magazine**

A pregnant woman sits on a bed, sobbing softly and rubbing her stomach. Her face is marred with bruises and blood trickles from her nose. As she hears a door slam below, a boy’s small head peers around her bedroom doorframe. Is he gone? he whispers. Her son rushes into her arms, and she holds him close, her whole body shaking. She did not think she would live to see her son again. Three times before her husband threatened to kill her, but this time he almost made good on his promise. Their relationship was not always this way. At first he had been kind, bringing her gifts, occasionally paying visits to her family or stopping by to enjoy a meal. Everyone believed he would make the perfect husband. It was not until they married that he changed: what began with emotional abuse soon turned physical. His private rage became a way of life for her. Ashamed and afraid, she quickly discovered how to hide the wounds inflicted from the times he hit, pushed, kicked or hurled.
items at her.¶ The first time he threatened her life, she finally worked up the courage to tell her family about the assaults, which they quickly dismissed as exaggeration, making her feel even more vulnerable. Without support from relatives, she has given up any hope of escape, nearly numb to the reality of her violent home life.¶ Yet every time she feels her husband’s wrath, he later apologizes, tearfully begging her to stay, promising to “never do it again.” And time and again, she naively believes his empty promises.¶ It’s my fault, she thinks while patting her child’s head. I must try harder next time not to upset him for the sake of my children.¶ The unnamed woman in the scenario depicted could be any one of millions of women who are not alone in their suffering.¶ From Argentina to Zimbabwe, the situation is similar, with statistics showing that over two-thirds of women worldwide are abused in their lifetime—some of whom suffer in silence until the abuser ultimately takes their life. Shame, humiliation, embarrassment, degradation, anxiety, fear of living alone, a custody battle, danger of escaping, and financial worries often outweigh these women’s wishes to remove themselves and their children from abusive situations.

**More guns leads to more rape. SBH.**

Dana Bolger and Alexandra Brodsky [Dana Bolger and Alexandra Brodsky are the founding co-directors of Know Your IX, a national student campaign against campus gender-based violence.] Feb. 19, 2015 “Guns make campus rape victims less safe, not more”

In a move that would be ironic if it weren’t so sadly predictable, the gun lobby is attempting to co-opt the anti-sexual violence movement for its own violent ends. Lawmakers in 10 states including Florida, Nevada, and Texas are pushing legislation that claims to reduce sexual violence—by arming students with guns. The legislation seeks to overturn bans on carrying guns on college campuses. As Nevada Assemblywoman Michele Fiore said, “If these young, hot little girls on campus have a firearm, I wonder how many men will want to assault them. The sexual assaults that are occurring would go down once these sexual predators get a bullet in their head.” But easily accessible weapons on campus won’t reduce violence. Instead, they’ll put even more students in danger. The lawmakers’ efforts have built legislation on a classic rape myth: that the greatest threat to a woman is a stranger lurking in the bushes on her late-night run. Actually, women (and people of other genders) are most in danger while with someone they know and trust. Studies demonstrate that the vast majority of campus victims were raped by a partner, friend, or close acquaintance. The gun lobby elides the fact that the high-profile stories to which it implicitly appeals—the stories of young women like Emma Sulkowicz at Columbia and Angie Epifano at Amherst—are stories of violence at the hands of trusted friends. These close classmates are precisely the people around which victims will never think to carry a gun—let alone use one.
More evidence for more guns leads to more rape. SBH.

Dana Bolger and Alexandra Brodsky [Dana Bolger and Alexandra Brodsky are the founding co-directors of Know Your IX, a national student campaign against campus gender-based violence.] Feb. 19, 2015 “Guns make campus rape victims less safe, not more”

Not only will guns fail to reduce sexual violence, they will increase it. Guns are the most common weapon used in the murders of intimate partners. Time and again, research has shown that having guns in the home exacerbates domestic violence: The Department of Justice found that in the U.S. between 2000 and 2012 7,454 women were shot to death by intimate partners. Of intimate partner murders around that period, nearly half — 48% — involved a gun. For victims in abusive dating relationships, guns can be a death sentence: The mere presence of a gun increases the risk of homicide by 500%.

Specific examples of rape victims approving of gun control. SBH.

Amanda Collins [Amanda Collins is a member of the National Rifle Association and has testified in support of NRA-backed campus carry legislation across the country.] March 11, 2015. “Counterpoint: A rape survivor argues why we need guns on campus”

Across the country, legislators are debating the right of law-abiding concealed carry permit holders to legally carry firearms onto university campuses. Just the other day, I was asked “Why do you need a firearm on campus? What’s so threatening about becoming educated?” Here’s my answer: Eight years ago, during my junior year at the University of Nevada-Reno, I was raped in the parking garage only feet away from the campus police office. “Why do you need a firearm on campus? What’s so threatening about becoming educated?”AMANDA COLLINS As this stranger raped me while holding a pistol to my temple, I could see the police cruisers parked for the night, and I knew no one was coming to help me. Eventually the man who raped me, James Biela, was caught. He was tried and convicted for not only raping me at gun point in a gun-free zone, but also raping two other women and murdering Brianna Denison. So, I ask, “How does rendering me defenseless protect you against a violent crime?” At the time of my attack, I had obtained my Concealed Carry Weapons (CCW) permit for the personal choice of not wanting to be a defenseless target. In Nevada, permit holders are not allowed to carry firearms on campuses. As a law-abiding citizen, I left my firearm at home, which means that the law that is meant to ensure my safety only guaranteed the criminal an unmatched victim. I still wonder what would have been different if I’d been carrying my weapon that night. But here’s the truth: Had I been carrying my firearm, I would have been able to stop the attack. Not only that, but two other rapes would have been prevented and three young lives would have been saved, including my own. Any survivor of rape can understand that the young woman I was walking into the parking garage that night was not the same
woman who left. My life has never been the same after my attack. Legalized campus carry would have saved my family, who happens to be the collateral damage in my story, and me a great deal of untold torment. My case is a perfect example that despite law enforcement’s best efforts to ensure our safety, they are unable to be everywhere at once. All I wanted was a chance to effectively defend myself. The choice to participate in one’s own defense should be left to the individual. That choice should not be mandated by the government. As a law-abiding citizen, I should not have to hand over my safety to a third party. Laws that prohibit campus carry turn women like me into victims by stripping away our Second Amendment rights. Unfortunately, legislators opposed to campus carry are more intimidated by law-abiding citizens like me sitting in class with a legal firearm, than the rapist waiting for me in the parking garage. Most people are unaware that one in four women will be raped while attending college and one-third of them occur on the campus they attend. Currently, seven states allow campus carry. Not a single one of those states has seen an increase in crimes committed with firearms. In fact, there has been a decrease in crimes committed on campus property. Still, law-abiding citizens are barred from exercising this fundamental freedom on our publicly funded university campuses, leaving them defenseless against gun-wielding criminals who disregard the laws. The laws need to change so that those who have a valid concealed carry permit can lawfully bring their firearms onto college campuses, just as they do elsewhere in their daily lives. I know from my personal experience that threats to personal safety don’t magically disappear in declared “safe-zones.” Some who oppose campus carry cite research showing that alcohol is involved in most sexual assaults, and that alcohol leads to impaired judgment about gun use. The solution to that is focusing on reducing underage drinking, not denying Second Amendment rights. Perhaps the weakest argument against campus carry was from a professor at Florida’s Eckerd College, who said that “proponents will argue that allowing concealed carry will protect female students from sexual assault. I will point out the obvious; you will be arming the assailants, too.” That statement ignores the fact that assailants are already armed, and there is nothing in place to keep them from coming onto our campuses. My attacker was armed, and as a law-abiding citizen I had more to lose than he did that night. If I’d had my firearm I would have faced expulsion from school, losing my permit and possibly jail time. My attacker was not a student nor did he have a CCW permit. I believe in empowering women with the choice to protect their bodies. Law-abiding concealed carry permit holders should not be denied their fundamental, constitutional right to protect themselves on college campuses.

This violence against women crosses racial, class, religious boundaries. Gun violence impacts multiple different women from different areas of the world. SBH.

Vidal N. Wachuku [Vidal Wachuku is a writer.] “Suffering in Silence” Real Truth Magazine
Violence against women, also known as gender-based violence, cuts across national boundaries as well as racial, class, religious, traditional and cultural barriers. It limits full participation of women in society. In 1993, the international community acknowledged this kind of violence when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which defines violence against females as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” The Platform for Action, an agenda for women’s empowerment, expanded this definition at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, during which rape in armed conflict was declared a war crime that could, under certain circumstances, be termed genocide. Several years later, November 25 was set aside as the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women.

This evidence can function as impact analysis showing how much violence against women already exists and decreasing guns means a decrease in this violence.

Large number of domestic violence and rape. Wachuku, Vidal N. Wachuku [Vidal Wachuku is a writer.] “Suffering in Silence” Real Truth Magazine

A World Health Organization study about women’s health and domestic violence across 10 countries, revealed the following:

- Between 15 percent and 71 percent of women reported physical or sexual violence by a husband or partner. Many said their first sexual experience was not consensual while 4 percent to 12 percent reported being physically abused during pregnancy.
- About 5,000 women annually are murdered worldwide by family members in the name of “honor.”
- Up to one in five women (and one in 10 men) globally experience sexual abuse as children.
- The practice of forced or child marriages occurs in many countries across Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa.
- According to the study, limited education of women or their partners, marital conflict, male dominance, economic stress, gender inequality, alcohol and drug use, and restrictive laws on divorce are contributing factors of abuse.
- The psychological and emotional effects of abuse on women can be devastating. Women tend to be more empathetic and therefore try to understand the feelings of others, whereas men’s responses typically rely heavily on logic.
- Often, this tendency works against women attempting to extricate themselves from a dangerous situation. Dr. Andrzej Urbanik, a researcher who studied the differing reactions of men and women to danger, said, “…when confronted with dangerous situations, men are more likely than women to take action” (BBC).

This evidence can function as impact analysis showing how much violence against women already exists and decreasing guns means a decrease in this domestic violence and rape.

There is a cycle of violence that women are trapped in. SBH.
Along with this tendency, women often choose to suffer in secret as they are afraid of the repercussions that such a revelation could bring upon them and their families. A report by the London Abused Women’s Centre said that often it is when women try to escape the violence that they lose their lives. “Women are at most risk of being killed by an abusive partner after separation. In Canada, intimate femicides account for between 61% and 78% of all killings of women where an offender is identified. Abusers may also kill the victim’s children, parents, relatives, friends or acquaintances. The perpetrator may also commit murder-suicide.” In Wales, England, for example, domestic violence is the single biggest killer of women under 35, with reports of violence especially skyrocketing during the Christmas season. In other societies, women are concerned that they will be ostracized by the community, as it is considered acceptable for a man to beat a woman. A report issued by Amnesty International said that because Yemeni females are considered second-class citizens, they are less likely to come forward about domestic violence. “Their rights are routinely violated because Yemeni laws as well as tribal and customary practices treat them as second class citizens,” the report said. “Women are not free to marry who they want and some are forced to marry when they are children, sometimes as young as eight…Once married, a woman must obey her husband and obtain his permission just to leave the house. Women are valued as half the worth of men when they testify in court or when their families are compensated if they are murdered. They are also denied equal treatment when it comes to inheritance and are often denied it completely. Women are dealt with more harshly than men when accused of ‘immoral’ acts, and men are treated leniently when they murder female relatives in ‘honour killings.’ Such discriminatory laws and practices encourage and facilitate violence against women, which is rife in the home and in society at large.” A Ugandan mother of eight, who was beaten often by her businessman husband, faced similar circumstances. Wife beating was so common in her neighborhood that she knew her friends were enduring it too, but none of them spoke about it. “My husband would get quite violent with me if he was ever angry or if he didn’t have a good day at the market,” she says. “I would get very upset, but there was no option to leave him or to explain that he was hurting me. Women from my neighbourhood knew what was going on, but it was so regular that it was kind of accepted” (The Guardian). Last year, Ugandan daily newspaper, The New Vision reported that at least 72 percent of women in Mubende District, which has a population of over 430,000, were sexually abused and another 28 percent were raped. Some cultures even teach that women should feel unloved if their husbands do not beat them!

This evidence can function as impact evidence explaining how women need out of the cycle of violence. A contention can explain that removing gun violence will help.

More evidence explaining that the cycle of violence exists in the United States. SBH.
Vidal N. Wachuku [Vidal Wachuku is a writer.] “Suffering in Silence” Real Truth Magazine

“In March 2006, Arcely Gomez was pregnant with her fourth child, when her husband shot her in the face. The husband was angry because Gomez wanted to take the couple’s three children and leave, so he decided to kill her, then himself. But miraculously, Gomez survived. “She gave birth to her fourth child and began working at carnivals around town to make ends meet.” Then another tragedy struck. “Six months ago Gomez’s cousin, Fortunada Cardenas, was murdered by her boyfriend. The boyfriend shot Cardenas, then committed suicide—all in front of the children who were suddenly left without a mother.” According to the United States National Crime Victimization Survey, and the most recent statistics, 232,960 women in the U.S. were raped or sexually assaulted in 2006—more than 600 every day! In addition, the National Violence Against Women Survey reported that on average about 1.5 million American women are raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually.

Working to give women a voice should be an obligation globally. SBH.

Vidal N. Wachuku [Vidal Wachuku is a writer.] “Suffering in Silence” Real Truth Magazine

To combat this global pandemic, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Network of Men Leaders. It includes current and former politicians, activists, actors, and religious and community figures including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the South African Nobel Peace Laureate. Mr. Ban also issued two new reports. One focused on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including increased coordination and collaboration among entities of the United Nations and enhanced support for national efforts to address the issue, and the other dealing specifically with violence against female migrant workers. Additionally, on its site, the UN pledged by 2015 to: Adopt and enforce national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls. Implement multi-sectoral national action plans. Strengthen data collection on the prevalence of violence against women and girls. Increase public awareness and social mobilization. Address sexual violence in conflict. “Our goal is clear,” Mr. Ban said during a speech on the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women in 2009, “an end to these inexcusable crimes—whether it is the use of rape as a weapon of war, domestic violence, sex trafficking, so-called ‘honour’ crimes or female genital mutilation/cutting. We must address the roots of this violence by eradicating discrimination and changing the mindsets that perpetuate it.” But for women who live in constant danger, manmade efforts cannot provide a solution quickly enough. As the mother described earlier tucks her little one into bed, she wonders, Where is God in all of this?
Neg Evidence
Leaves People Unprotected

Gun bans make people sitting ducks. LWZ


For example, it might seem obvious to protect people by banning guns in areas. But law-abiding citizens, not those intent on committing terrorist acts, obey these bans. Instead of making places safer, disarming law-abiding citizens leaves them as sitting ducks. With just one single exception, every public shooting since at least 1950 in the United States in which more than three people have been killed has taken place where citizens are not allowed to carry guns. This isn't random. If it were, 98 or 99 percent of the attacks would occur in areas where people are allowed to carry concealed handguns for protection. Yet, all these attacks are squeezed into the tiny areas where guns are banned.

Common sense and Aurora prove – guns are great deterrence and banning them only endangers people. LWZ


Take the Aurora, Colo. tragedy. There were seven movie theaters showing the premiere of the Batman movie within a 20-minute drive of the killer's apartment. Only one banned guns, posting signs warning permit holders that their guns weren't allowed. Yet, the killer didn't go to the theater that was closest to his home. Nor did he go to the largest theater. He went to the single one where he didn't believe that others would be able to protect themselves. There is a simple way of understanding this point. If a violent criminal were ever stalking you or your family, would you put a sign in front of your home announcing that you didn't own a gun? Probably not. Yet, even though no one puts up those signs in front of their homes, we put up those signs on all sorts of other areas.
A gun ban would prohibit citizens from defending themselves more so than it would limit criminals from committing violent crimes. PJG.


Gun control laws tend to influence the behavior of would-be crime victims much more than the behavior of criminals. Those who are willing to commit violent felonies are much more likely than the average citizen to be willing to commit misdemeanors such as carrying a concealed weapon without a permit. They are also more likely to have black market contacts capable of supplying them with illegal weapons. Thus, laws that prohibit or place obstacles in the way of carrying concealed weapons, or owning weapons at all, are likely to cause a much greater reduction in the proportion of armed victims than in the proportion of armed criminals. Furthermore, one can guess that the possibility of encountering an armed victim probably has a greater effect on would-be criminals, with respect to deterring violent crimes, than would a moderate increase in the difficulty of obtaining a gun to assist in crimes, since the feared consequences of attacking an armed victim are extremely serious, whereas increased difficulty in obtaining a gun is a relatively small impediment to committing a violent crime, particularly if one can choose a victim who is physically weaker than oneself and unarmed, or if one has black market contacts. This argument is inconclusive, since it could be that very few noncriminals would carry guns for self-protection even if allowed to, in which case the risk to criminals of encountering armed victims would still be a minor factor. But in fact, a great many noncriminal Americans presently own guns, and approximately 9% of Americans surveyed admit to carrying a gun for self-protection outside the home. Accordingly, criminals surveyed report being more afraid of encountering armed victims than they are of encountering the police.
Fails

*Gun control measures fail. LWZ*


These advocates of gun control note the efficacy of the confiscations they only hint at while sidestepping the fact that none of the restrictive measures they explicitly endorse—banning so-called assault weapons, limiting the size of magazines, or requiring background checks on the private transfer of firearms—would have prevented these mass shootings, committed as they were by individuals using legally obtained firearms that did not fall under the definition of “assault weapon.” That the perpetrators violate a host of well-intentioned laws, like bringing a weapon onto a “gun-free zone,” just goes to show how difficult it is to eliminate such crimes when people are determined to inflict harm in a society so permeated with guns.

*Two studies demonstrate gun control fails. LWZ*

http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

In this connection, two recent studies are pertinent. In 2004, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences released its evaluation from a review of 253 journal articles, 99 books, 43 government publications, and some original empirical research. It failed to identify any gun control that had reduced violent crime, suicide, or gun accidents.15 The same conclusion was reached in 2003 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control’s review of then extant studies.16
Banning firearms doesn’t work. LWZ


http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

One reason the extent of gun ownership in a society does not spur the murder rate is that murderers are not spread evenly throughout the population. Analysis of perpetrator studies shows that violent criminals—especially murderers—“almost uniformly have a long history of involvement in criminal behavior.” So it would not appreciably raise violence if all law abiding, responsible people had firearms because they are not the ones who rape, rob, or murder. By the same token, violent crime would not fall if guns were totally banned to civilians. As the respective examples of Luxembourg and Russia suggest, individuals who commit violent crimes will either find guns despite severe controls or will find other weapons to use.

Banning guns won’t change the number of deaths. LWZ


http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

There is no social benefit in decreasing the availability of guns if the result is only to increase the use of other means of suicide and murder, resulting in more or less the same amount of death. Elementary as this point is, proponents of the more guns equal more death mantra seem oblivious to it. One study asserts that Americans are more likely to be shot to death than people in the world’s other 35 wealthier nations. While this is literally true, it is irrelevant—except, perhaps to people terrified not of death per se but just death by gunshot. A fact that should be of greater concern but which the study fails to mention—is that per capita murder overall is only half as frequent in the United States as in several other nations where gun murder is rarer, but murder by strangling, stabbing, or beating is much more frequent.
Preventing most people from owning guns does nothing to reduce crimes. LWZ

http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

These facts are only anomalous in relation to the mantra that more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death. In contrast, these facts accord with the earlier point regarding the aberrance of murderers. Whatever their race, ordinary people simply do not murder. Thus preventing law-abiding, responsible African-Americans from owning guns does nothing at all to reduce murderers, because they are not the ones who are doing the killing. The murderers are a small minority of extreme antisocial aberrants who manage to obtain guns whatever the level of gun ownership in the African American community.

Most people are not “violent predators”. LWZ

http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

Indeed, murderers generally fall into a group some criminologists have called “violent predators,” sharply differentiating them not only from the overall population but from other criminals as well.96 Surveys of imprisoned felons indicate that when not imprisoned the ordinary felon averages perhaps 12 crimes per year.97 In contrast, “violent predators” spend much or most of their time committing crimes, averaging at least 5 assaults, 63 robberies, and 172 burglaries annually.98 A National Institute of Justice survey of 2,000 felons in 10 state prisons, which focused on gun crime, said of these types of respondents: [T]he men we have labeled Predators were clearly omnibus felons . . . [committing] more or less any crime they had the opportunity to commit....The Predators (handgun and shotgun combined) . . . amounted to about 22% of the sample and yet accounted for 51% of the total crime [admitted by the 2,000 felons] . . . . Thus, when we talk about “controlling crime” in the United States today, we are talking largely about controlling the behavior of these men.99
Handguns should not be banned because they are a great equalizer, as they allow the weak to defend themselves against the large. PJG.


Handguns are force-multipliers. They create disparity of force. They also equalize it. A handgun is the only practical means to enable smaller, weaker defenders to nullify the advantage that larger, stronger, or more numerous assaulters would otherwise enjoy in close encounters of the lethal kind. And indeed, the data show that citizens who put up gun-armed resistance to criminal assault suffer injury less often than non-gun resisters or than non-resisters.

*Even though the CDC arguably favors gun control, it found no positive effect on the D.C. gun ban. PJG.*


Various federal agencies have considered the effectiveness of the D.C. gun ban. The Center for Disease Control [CDC] commissioned a panel of health experts to examine the effects of gun control on violence. After surveying the existing research in the field, the panel found that "studies of the Washington, D.C., handgun ban yielded inconsistent results", and that there is "insufficient evidence to determine [the] effectiveness" of gun bans on violence. The panel's analysis of fifty-one studies, examining the effects of eight types of gun control and three combinations of those types, concluded that there existed "insufficient evidence to determine effectiveness" in every case. Despite widespread accusations that the CDC strongly favors gun control, its panel still concluded, based upon all available evidence, that there is no proof that the D.C. gun ban, or any gun control law, has reduced violence. Pg. 54.
Handgun deterrence works because criminals don’t know who has guns; if all guns are banned, the deterrent effect will fail. PJG.


If the state prohibits the legal ownership of firearms, then it eliminates any deterrent effect from that ownership. Firearm prohibition means that criminals no longer need fear, as surveys show they do, that their victims will defend themselves with firearms. Since criminals can never have certain knowledge about who exactly owns a firearm, the deterrent effect protects not only gun owners, but all citizens. Lawrence Southwick's analysis of the defensive gun use research found a remarkable correspondence between the numerous surveys and concluded that civilian firearm ownership deterred between eight hundred-thousand to two million crimes and disrupted between one and a half to two and a half million crimes in the United States annually. The District of Columbia's near total ban on handguns and its extremely restrictive registration, handling, and storage laws prevent any firearm ownership deterrence from protecting not only gun owners, but all D.C. citizens. Pg. 71.
Comprehensive studies show that gun control measures have not reduced crime. PJG.


In 2004, the National Academy of Sciences studied gun control, reviewing 253 journal articles, 99 books, 43 government publications, and 24 some empirical research of its own about gun crime. The Academy could not identify any gun restriction that reduced violent crime, suicide, or gun accidents. A year earlier, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), which endorses banning handguns and severely restricting other guns, released an exhaustive review of all extant literature. The CDC likewise could not identify any gun control measure that had reduced murder, violent crime, suicide, or gun accidents. Pg. 1690.

Enforcing a gun ban will be extremely difficult as criminals will not follow the law. PJG.


In response to New Jersey's "assault weapon" ban, prohibiting the mere possession of many semiautomatic firearms, only eighty-eight of the 300,000 or more affected weapons in New Jersey had been registered as of November, 1990. No weapons had been surrendered to the police and only seven had been rendered inoperable. As of November 28, 1990, only 5,150 guns of the estimated 300,000 semiautomatic firearms banned by the May 1989 California "Assault Gun" law had been registered as required with the California State Department of Justice. These results suggest that the majority of otherwise law-abiding citizens will not obey a gun prohibition law; much less criminals, who will disregard such laws anyway. It is ludicrous to believe that those who will rob, rape and murder will turn in their firearms or any other weapons they may possess to the police or be deterred from using them again by the addition of yet another gun control law to the 20,000 plus that are already in effect in the United States. Pg. 96.
Ban Won't Stop Criminals from Acquiring Guns

*People with prior criminal records, not law-abiding gun owners, commit murder so they will find guns anyway.* PJG.


Proponents of banning firearms to the general public falsely blame murder on law abiding gun owners. Uniformly they attribute "most shootings" not to felons or mentally ill people, but to ordinary gun owners. Likewise, anti-gun activist Amitai Etzioni claims "most homicides are not committed by the 'hardened' criminal who would seek out a gun or other lethal weapon, whether or not it was legal, but rather by ordinary, 'law abiding' citizens who kill on impulse rather than by intent." This is diametrically contrary to established criminological fact. Professor Elliott's characterization of murderers as felons and mentally ill individuals is based on murder studies from the nineteenth century to 1997, and more recent data agree that murderers are extremely aberrant individuals whose prior felonies preclude their legally having guns. For example, a New York Times summary of 1,662 murders in New York from 2003 to 2005 reported that "[m]ore than 90 percent of the killers had criminal records." Furthermore, according to a Massachusetts Kennedy School study, "[s]ome 95% of homicide offenders . . . were arraigned at least once in Massachusetts courts before they [murdered]", and [o]n average . . . homicide offenders had been arraigned for 9 prior offenses." Pg. 1688.

*If guns are banned, felons will still demand guns, creating an illegal supply.* PJG.


Gun ownership is already illegal for felons. This is largely irrelevant to non-felons who are far less likely to murder. Furthermore, there is no good reason to suppose that people intent on arming themselves for criminal purposes would not be able to do so even if the general availability of firearms to the larger population were sharply restricted. Here it may be appropriate to recall the First Law of Economics, a law whose operation has been sharply in evidence in the case of Prohibition, marijuana and other drugs, prostitution, pornography, and a host of other banned activities and substances-namely, that demand creates its own supply. There is no evidence anywhere to show that reducing the availability of firearms in general likewise reduces their availability to persons with criminal intent, or that persons with criminal intent would not be able to arm themselves under any set of general restrictions on firearms. Pg. 1690.
Handguns decrease violence

The use of handguns is both useful as an intimidation tool and common as a tool of self-defense. PJG.


The great majority of victims do not even need to fire a gun; displaying the gun will cause an attacker to retreat. Not only are firearms advantageous for those defending themselves, but also their defensive use is very common." The best research on the frequency of defensive gun uses finds that there are about two and a half million defensive gun uses a year in the United States (a defensive gun use includes the display of a firearm, in addition to cases where the gun was fired). Defensive gun use in this country is around three times more common an experience than criminal use of a firearm. Although the vast majority,' of defensive gun uses do not involve firing the gun, justified civilian self-defense killings of violent criminals surpasses police killings of criminals by five times.' Therefore, use of a firearm for self-defense is both effective and common. p. 69.

Handgun ownership deters criminals from committing violent crime. PJG.


Not only do firearms provide citizens an effective means of self-defense when directly confronted with violent crime, firearm ownership also acts as a deterrent to many types of violent crime. A survey of incarcerated felons found that forty-three percent had decided not to commit a specific crime because they believed that the victim might be armed. Knowledge that an intended victim might possess a gun plays a role in many criminals' decision to either commit the crime through direct confrontation with the victim, through a more indirect method, or whether to commit the crime at all. Such is the likely reason the United States has a lower rate of burglars victimizing occupied homes than countries with strict gun control. Nations with strict gun control, like Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Canada, have rates of burglaries into an occupied home at around fifty percent of all residential burglaries; the rate in the United States is usually around ten percent. When a criminal enters an occupied home, there is a serious risk that the criminal will assault the legal occupant. Increasing the rate at which burglars victimize occupied homes is thus likely to increase rates of violence as more burglars assault occupants. Therefore, firearm ownership reduces violent crime because it deters criminals from directly confronting their victims, especially through burglars' avoidance of occupied homes. Pg. 70.
Statistics show that guns are commonly used in self-defense and save more lives than the number of gun homicides. PJG.


Guns are used surprisingly often by private citizens in the United States for self-defense purposes. Fifteen surveys, excluding the one discussed in the following paragraph, have been conducted since 1976, yielding estimates of between 760,000 and 3.6 million defensive gun uses per year, the average estimate being 1.8 million. Probably among the more reliable is Kleck and Gertz's 1993 national survey, which obtained an estimate of 2.5 million annual defensive gun uses, excluding military and police uses and excluding uses against animals. Gun users in 400,000 of these cases believe that the gun certainly or almost certainly saved a life. While survey respondents almost certainly overestimated their danger, if even one tenth of them were correct, the number of lives saved by guns each year would exceed the number of gun homicides and suicides. For the purposes of Kleck and Gertz's study, a "defensive gun use" requires respondents to have actually seen a person (as opposed, for example, to merely hearing a suspicious noise in the yard) whom they believed was committing or attempting to commit a crime against them, and to have at a minimum threatened the person with a gun, but not necessarily to have fired the gun. Kleck's statistics imply that defensive gun uses outnumber crimes committed with guns by a ratio of about 3:1. While Kleck's statistics could be an overestimate, one should bear three points in mind before relying on such a hypothesis to discount the defensive value of guns. First, Kleck's figures would have to be very large overestimates in order for the harms of guns to exceed their benefits. Second, one would have to suppose that all fifteen of the surveys alluded to have contained overestimates. Third, it is not clear prima facie that an overestimate is more likely than an underestimate; perhaps some respondents either invent or misdescribe incidents, but perhaps also some respondents either forget or prefer not to discuss their defensive gun uses with a stranger on the telephone.
Studies show that guns help people much more often than hurt them, and that guns are often used successfully in self-defense. PJG.


A statistician for the U.S. Justice Department's National Crime Victimization Study estimates that when defending against rape, robbery, or assault, guns help 65% of the time and make things worse about 9% of the time. There are hundreds of thousands of violent felonies annually. Many Americans are armed, and handguns are used for self-defense millions of times per year. "[S]urveys reveal a great deal of self-defensive use of firearms, in fact, more defensive gun uses than crimes committed with firearms." For instance, "firearms are used over half a million times in a typical year against home invasion burglars; usually the burglar flees as soon as he finds out that the victim is armed, and no shot is ever fired." Pg. 1693.

Guns deter criminals from committing crimes. PJG.


Overwhelmingly when victims draw guns, criminals flee. Criminals flee armed citizens because they want helpless victims, not gunfights with armed ones. Indeed, 36 percent of the respondents in [a study of imprisoned juvenile criminals] reported having decided at least "a few times" not to commit a crime because they believed the potential victim was armed. Seventy percent of the respondents reported having been "scared off, shot at, wounded, or captured by an armed crime victim." Pg. 1693.
Handgun ownership deters criminals, most of the time without actually firing the gun. PJG.


However, the shooting of criminals represents only a small minority of the defensive uses of firearms by civilians. Most civilian defensive uses involve only the use of a gun to threaten, apprehend, fire a warning shot, or shoot at a criminal without the actual killing or wounding of the felon. A 1978 national survey found that seven percent of the households in the United States reported that a member of the household had at one time or another used a gun of some kind for self-protection against another person, excluding military or police experiences. In other words, out of the 77 million U.S. households in 1978, over five million households reported having used a firearm for self-defense purposes at one time or another. A 1986 poll sponsored by the now defunct National Alliance Against Violence, an antigun organization, found that six percent of the adults interviewed replied "yes" to the question of whether in the past five years they, or a member of their household, had used a handgun, even if it was not fired, for self-protection or for the protection of property at home, work, or elsewhere, excluding military service or police work. It is estimated that between 1976 and 1981 there occurred per year 645,000 defensive uses of handguns alone by civilians.8 2 Firearms of all types are estimated to have been used by civilians for defensive purposes about 1,000,000 times a year during that time period. Pg. 85

Studies show that crimes were less likely to be completed when victims resisted with a gun. PJG.


Victimization surveys indicate that for both robbery and assaults, the crime was less likely to be completed against victims, and victims were less likely to be injured, when such victims resisted with a gun, compared to victims who did not resist. A study compiled by the U.S. Department of Justice, noted that where guns or knives are used for protection by potential rape victims, the rape was completed only three percent of the time as opposed to a completion rate of thirty-two percent for rapes where no guns or knives were used by the victim. Pg. 86
Interviews with criminals show that they are less likely to commit crimes when guns are involved. PJG.


The use of firearms by civilians to defend themselves, their families and their property, against criminals is very well-known to criminals and profoundly affects criminals' behavior, often deterring them from committing certain crimes. In a 1983 study of criminals and firearms sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, Professors James D. Wright and Peter H. Rossi interviewed over 1800 prison inmates in ten states. Fifty-seven percent of those felons agreed that "most criminals are more worried about meeting an armed victim then they are about running into the police"; fifty-six percent agreed that "a criminal is not going to mess around with a victim he knows is armed with a gun;" seventy-four percent agreed that "one reason burglars avoid houses when people are at home is that they fear being shot"; and fifty-eight percent agreed that "a store owner who is known to keep a gun on the premises is not going to get robbed very often." Pg. 86

The example of the hurricane in the Virgin Islands shows that people need guns to defend themselves because they cannot rely on the police. PJG.


In September of 1989, Hurricane Hugo hit the U.S. Virgin Islands. Because of restrictive gun control laws the law-abiding citizens of the various islands were unable to protect themselves and their property from looters in the aftermath of the damage done by Hurricane Hugo. In fact, among the few nonmilitary/police who were able to protect their property were certain shopping malls who posted guards with firearms on their roofs. As the local police refused to stop looting and even took part in the looting, National Guard troops were mobilized in the area, including the island of St. Croix. However, such troops, instead of restoring order, reportedly joined police and others in the looting of homes and private property. Those later arrested for looting included a police captain and a bank vice-president. Pg. 88
Self Defense

Banning guns is confiscation and violates rights. LWZ


Rarely in American gun-control advocates’ references to the Australian policy, however, do they acknowledge that the program amounted to confiscation. “When Australia had a mass killing—I think it was in Tasmania—about 25 years ago, it was just so shocking, the entire country said, ‘Well, we’re going to completely change our gun laws,’ and they did,” Obama said after a June shooting in a Charleston church killed nine people. Curiously, the president omitted just what “change” the people of Australia decided to implement. Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton told an audience in New Hampshire last month that “Australia is a good example” of gun-control laws, so much so that it “would be worth considering” the Antipodean solution here in the United States. She, too, neglected to mention the obligatory nature of the gun buyback scheme. The following week, after having explicitly praised gun confiscation, however, she mocked the National Rifle Association for supposedly scaring its members into thinking that “they’re the only thing that’s going to stop the black helicopters from landing in the front yard and people’s guns being seized.”

Holding up Australia as a model of sensible gun policy without mentioning how that government forced its citizens to turn over their weapons is like praising Chinese population-control efforts without mentioning the one-child policy.

The right to bear arms is important and prevents more deaths. LWZ


Which leads to the second unspoken truth of America’s gun debate, that held by the pro-gun side: Americans should be willing to tolerate tens of thousands of gun deaths per year as the cost of the inalienable right, as enumerated in the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, to bear arms. “Guns don’t kill people; people kill people,” goes the proverbial pro-gun mantra. That is, of course, true, but a whole lot fewer people would be killed in the United States were there not some 350 million guns—more than one for every man, woman, and child)—in private circulation. (Stabbings, for instance, are eight times less likely to kill than a gunshot wound.)
Handguns are great deterrents and self-defense tools. LWZ

http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

More than 100 million handguns are owned in the United States primarily for self-defense, and 3.5 million people have permits to carry concealed handguns for protection. Recent analysis reveals “a great deal of self-defense use of firearms” in the United States, “in fact, more defensive gun uses [by victims] than crimes committed with firearms.” It is little wonder that the National Institute of Justice surveys among prison inmates find that large percentages report that their fear that a victim might be armed deterred them from confrontation crimes. “[T]he felons most frightened ‘about confronting an armed victim’ were those from states with the greatest relative number of privately owned firearms.” Conversely, robbery is highest in states that most restrict gun ownership. Concomitantly, a series of studies by John Lott and his coauthor David Mustard conclude that the issuance of millions of permits to carry concealed handguns is associated with drastic declines in American homicide rates.

If handguns are useful self-defense tools for police, then they should be useful self-defense tools for civilians, too. PJG.


Those in favor of the prohibition almost never suggest that police should likewise go without a firearm; to do so would leave Metropolitan Police Officers vulnerable in a very dangerous city. Guns must thus be effective defensive tools for police officers. It is doubtful why guns would help the police defend themselves, but be useless for ordinary citizens. Police officers face more dangerous situations more often than average citizens do, even citizens of D.C.; however, a higher probability of being attacked or victimized does not make guns either more or less effective tools for self-defense, it only increases the chance of self-defense becoming necessary. If the reason is that the police have more firearms training than the average citizen does, then the solution is to require training as a requisite for firearm ownership. There is no reason to believe that firearms are not useful self-defense tools for civilians and police; otherwise, the ban should disarm the police as well. pg. 69.

foundationbriefs.com
Most people will confront violent crime at some point in their lives, and they cannot always rely on the police for defense. PJG.


When confronted with a violent criminal act, many have no choice but to respond in self-defense or acquiesce to the criminal's will. Eighty-three percent of Americans will be the victims of violent crime sometime in their lives. Most of those victims will not be able to rely on police protection during the commission of the crime, but instead must rely upon themselves. Police forces react to crime by finding the perpetrator and by acting as a general deterrent to crime; however, they are not personal bodyguards and usually cannot disrupt a crime in progress. Even when only responding, the Metropolitan Police are abysmal, taking an average of eight and a half minutes to respond to their highest priority 911 calls. The police are not responsible for the protection of individual citizens; the highest court for the District of Columbia has ruled that it is a "fundamental principle of American law that a government and its agents are under no general duty to provide public services, such as police protection, to any individual citizen." The reality is that most people will be the victim of a violent crime at some point in their lives, and for many of them self-defense with a firearm is statistically their best option. The law-abiding citizens of the District of Columbia do not have that option for survival, despite living in one of the most crime-ridden areas in the nation. Pg. 70.
Aff Increases Crime

*England’s gun laws did not contribute to gun violence, and in fact increased violence.* LWZ


Stringent gun controls were not adopted in England and Western Europe until after World War I. Consistent with the outcomes of the recent American studies just mentioned, these strict controls did not stem the general trend of ever growing violent crime throughout the post WWII industrialized world including the United States and Russia. Professor Malcolm’s study of English gun law and violent crime summarizes that nation’s nineteenth and twentieth century experience as follows: The peacefulness England used to enjoy was not the result of strict gun laws. When it had no firearms restrictions [nineteenth and early twentieth century] England had little violent crime, while the present extraordinarily stringent gun controls have not stopped the increase in violence or even the increase in armed violence.17 Armed crime, never a problem in England, has now become one. Handguns are banned but the Kingdom has millions of illegal firearms. Criminals have no trouble finding them and exhibit a new willingness to use them. In the decade after 1957, the use of guns in serious crime increased a hundredfold.18

*American violence has gone down while England’s gun laws have increased violence.* LWZ

The results discussed earlier contradict those expectations. On the one hand, despite constant and substantially increasing gun ownership, the United States saw progressive and dramatic reductions in criminal violence in the 1990s. On the other hand, the same time period in the United Kingdom saw a constant and dramatic increase in violent crime to which England’s response was ever more drastic gun control including, eventually, banning and confiscating all handguns and many types of long guns. Nevertheless, criminal violence rampantly increased so that by 2000 England surpassed the United States to become one of the developed world’s most violence-ridden nations.

**Economics suggests that increased handguns decrease crime. LWZ**


The divergence between the United States and the British Commonwealth became especially pronounced during the 1980s and 1990s. During these two decades, while Britain and the Commonwealth were making lawful firearm ownership increasingly difficult, more than 25 states in the United States passed laws allowing responsible citizens to carry concealed handguns. There are now 40 states where qualified citizens can obtain such a handgun permit. As a result, the number of U.S. citizens allowed to carry concealed handguns in shopping malls, on the street, and in their cars has grown to 3.5 million men and women. Economists John Lott and David Mustard have suggested that these new laws contributed to the drop in homicide and violent crime rates. Based on 25 years of correlated statistics from all of the more than 3,000 American counties, Lott and Mustard conclude that adoption of these statutes has deterred criminals from confrontation crime and caused murder and violent crime to fall faster in states that adopted this policy than in states that did not.
Even if deterrence isn’t true in other countries, it is true of the US – reducing guns simply doesn’t reduce violence. LWZ


In sum, though many nations with widespread gun ownership have much lower murder rates than nations that severely restrict gun ownership, it would be simplistic to assume that at all times and in all places widespread gun ownership depresses violence by deterring many criminals into nonconfrontation crime. There is evidence that it does so in the United States, where defensive gun ownership is a substantial socio-cultural phenomenon. But the more plausible explanation for many nations having widespread gun ownership with low violence is that these nations never had high murder and violence rates and so never had occasion to enact severe anti-gun laws. On the other hand, in nations that have experienced high and rising violent crime rates, the legislative reaction has generally been to enact increasingly severe antigun laws. This is futile, for reducing gun ownership by the law-abiding citizenry—the only ones who obey gun laws—does not reduce violence or murder. The result is that high crime nations that ban guns to reduce crime end up having both high crime and stringent gun laws, while it appears that low crime nations that do not significantly restrict guns continue to have low violence rates.
There is more crime where there are less guns. LWZ


http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

This inverse correlation is one of several that seems to contradict more guns equal more death. For decades the gun lobby has emphasized that, in general, the American jurisdictions where guns are most restricted have consistently had the highest violent crime rates, and those with the fewest restrictions have the lowest violent crime rates.131 For instance, robbery is highest in jurisdictions which are most restrictive of gun ownership.132 As to one specific control, the ban on carrying concealed weapons for protection, “violent-crime rates were highest in states [that flatly ban carrying concealed weapons], next highest in those that allowed local authorities discretion [to deny] permits, and lowest in states with nondiscretionary” concealed weapons laws under which police are legally required to license every qualified applicant.133 Also of interest are the extensive opinion surveys of incarcerated felons, both juvenile and adult, in which large percentages of the felons replied that they often feared potential victims might be armed and aborted violent crimes because of that fear.134 The felons most frightened about confronting an armed victim were those “from states with the greatest relative number of privately owned firearms.”135
Since handguns are force multipliers, they produce an intimidation factor that actually limits their use. PJG.


Even more important from an overall injury-reduction standpoint, handguns are widely-perceived as force-multipliers. For purposes of intimidation, no conveniently portable weapon beats a handgun. There are bilateral implications. Gun display, or even the insinuation of gun possession, enables a criminal to extract victim submission by intimidation. And indeed, available evidence finds that gun-armed criminals injure their victims less often in assaults. Similarly, a defender's gun display may preempt criminal attack by intimidation rather than by gunshot. There is credible evidence to support this conjecture. When bodily attacks are preempted by intimidation, total injury tends to decline. Guns are useful for preemptive intimidation because people perceive a gun-armed person as having the power to inflict crippling injury or death. An alternative weapon might be equally or even more lethal, but not useful for preemptive intimidation because its lethality is unapparent. Its usefulness would be limited to preemptive attack—the actual infliction of disabling injury or death. Because preemptive intimidation depends on aggressor-belief, a gun-facsimile or an empty gun may be useful for preemption despite its non-lethality. By contrast, technologically innovative weapons, whether more or less lethal than firearms, may promote more preemptive attacks if their intimidation value is low.
January/February 2016

Race

Guns provide a way for blacks to protect themselves against law enforcement. LWZ


John Blake has been You can't talk about guns in America without talking about race, Gallagher and others say. The panic that would ensue at the sight of armed black men in public, they say, derives from the same racial fears that can be traced to the conquest of Native-Americans and the institution of slavery. The United States has the most armed civilian population on the planet, they say, because some of its white citizens have a history of confronting racial anxieties by "gunning up." Gun rights advocates reject that notion. They say racial paranoia doesn't explain America's gun culture, and that they actually want blacks to have more guns. They say blacks should support groups like the National Rifle Association because law enforcement officers have traditionally not protected them.

Blacks should support gun rights. LWZ


"The NRA should stand for the Negro Rifle Association," says Robert J. Cottrol, a professor of law and history at George Washington University in Washington. "You would think the way many black politicians are supportive of gun control that African Americans were the most protected people in American history." These gun rights advocates acknowledge that racism shaped some American attitudes toward guns in the past. But they say it's race-baiting to insist it shapes gun culture today. Many non-whites, they point out, are supporters of gun rights but are ignored by the media. "There's very little about anything in America for which race is not part of the story," says David Kopel, research director at the Independence Institute in Colorado, which offers expertise on Second Amendment rights. "That doesn't mean that race is the only part of the story."
The first gun right supporters were the Black Panther Party. LWZ


The links between race and guns, though, may surprise you, some historians and gun scholars say. One of the first groups to dramatically tout its support of open-carry guns laws was not a predominantly white group like the National Rifle Association. It was the Black Panther Party. Southern blacks were such strong supporters of gun rights that even the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. once kept an "arsenal" in his home, one gun control historian says.

**Gun control originated from the KKK. LWZ**


And if you think gun control started with a liberal do-gooder group, you're wrong. America's first gun control group, as well as its first domestic terrorist organization, says Kopel, was the Ku Klux Klan.

**The KKK wanted to disarm blacks out of fear of slave revolts. LWZ**


How the KKK got into gun control The KKK took so easily to gun control because the nation's first gun control laws in the 19th century were rooted in racism, historians say. Before the Civil War, Southerners passed laws to keep guns away from slaves and free blacks because they feared slave revolts. After the war ended, Southern states passed laws that made it illegal for blacks to possess guns or ammunition. The Klan's rise was driven by the fear of blacks with guns, Kopel says. He quotes one 19th century lawyer who said that when the Klan took control of an area, "The first thing done was to disarm the Negros and leave them defenseless."
This isn’t just historical – even today, whites arm themselves against blacks out of fear. LWZ


These racial fears may seem like they belong to another era, but sometimes the present looks like the past, one historian says. There was a run on gun stores when President Obama was elected and another when he was re-elected. There was also a run on gun stores just before President Clinton signed the Federal Assault Weapons ban in 1994. One historian, however, says the surges in gun sales that accompanied Obama's elections were reminiscent of another era. When emancipated blacks starting winning political offices right after the Civil War, Southern whites went on gun-buying sprees, says Dylan Rodriguez, an ethnic studies professor at the University of California Riverside. "You had an absolute rush on guns by ordinary white citizens to arm themselves to the teeth because black people were being put in positions of white power," says Rodriguez, author of "Suspected Apocalypse: White Supremacy, Genocide and the Filipino Condition."

Modern gun control efforts are still racially charged. LWZ


Race and ethnicity continued to be the "unspoken motive" in gun control efforts well into the 20th century, says Kopel, author of "The Truth About Gun Control." The state of New York passed the 1911 Sullivan Act, which made owning a handgun more difficult, after large numbers of Italian and Jewish immigrants pouring into America were blamed for urban crime. The fears of black people with guns resurfaced during the 1960s. After a group of armed Black Panther members invoking their open-carry gun rights barged into the California state Capitol, lawmakers there passed the Mulford Act, banning the open carrying of loaded guns in public in 1967. The federal Gun Control Act of 1968 was passed after race riots rocked the nation. Kopel says the Black Panthers had a different agenda than their contemporary counterparts. "The Panthers' arms-carrying was often intended to be intimidating," he says. "That's one difference between the Panthers and modern open-carry activists. The latter are attempting to convey the message that they are harmless and peaceful."
Guns helped spawn the civil rights movement – Southern blacks can’t trust the government.


It's a mistake to think that our gun culture is lily-white, historians say. Contemporary blacks may be some of the strongest supporters of gun control, but the black community has a strong gun rights tradition, particularly in the South. Guns helped spawn the civil rights movement, says Cottrol, the history professor at George Washington University. White vigilantes who tried to attack black communities were met at times by gunfire. The Deacons for Self-Defense, an armed black group, protected civil rights activists, says Cottrol, author of "The Long, Lingering Shadow: Slavery, Race and Law in the American Hemisphere." Southern blacks in particular recognized the value of owning guns because they couldn't depend on anyone else to protect them during a time when the sheriff could be a member of the Klan, historians say. "The civil rights movement was made possible because the Klan knew that black communities were armed," Cottrol says.

Even MLK owned a gun.


Even King, the apostle of nonviolence, once armed himself, says Adam Winkler, author of "Gunfight: The Battle Over the Right to Bear Arms in America." King applied for a concealed gun permit after his house in Alabama was bombed during his first civil rights campaign. "Witesses from the time who were allies of Dr. King reported that his home was an arsenal," Winkler says. "One reporter who was trying to interview Dr. King almost sat on a loaded gun when he sat down on the couch."
Gun laws victimize black people. LWZ


Some gun rights advocates say contemporary black communities could learn from that tradition of self-defense. Restrictive gun control laws often victimize black people more than any other group because they suffer disproportionately from violent crime, says John R. Lott Jr., author of "More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws." A black person is 6.5 times more likely to become a murder victim than someone who is white; and 92% of black murder victims are killed by members of their own race, Lott says. "Given the anger about police in many black communities, it might make more sense to let the law-abiding citizens in those communities have a greater chance to defend themselves," says Lott, founder and president of the Crime Prevention Research Center, a group that examines the links between gun control and crime.

Gun bans increase murders. LWZ


And gun restrictions don't help black people living in violent neighborhoods, he says. Every time guns have been banned, Lott says, murder rates have increased. When the state of Massachusetts increased the costs of gun ownership, the number of registered gun owners in the state plummeted -- and the state's murder rate rose. Other academics say Lott's research is faulty. "The big problem," Lott says, "is that law-abiding good citizens, not criminals, obey the gun control laws."
African-American gun ownership is lower than white gun ownership. LWZ

http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

These conclusions are reinforced by focusing on patterns of African-American homicide. Per capita, African-American murder rates are much higher than the murder rate for whites. If more guns equal more death, and fewer guns equal less, one might assume gun ownership is higher among African-Americans than among whites, but in fact African-American gun ownership is markedly lower than white gun ownership.

The urban/rural divide disproves the gun violence thesis. LWZ

http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

Particularly corrosive to the mantra are the facts as to rural African-Americans gun ownership. Per capita, rural African-Americans are much more likely to own firearms than are urban African-Americans. Yet, despite their greater access to guns, the firearm murder rate of young rural black males is a small fraction of the firearm murder rate of young urban black males.
Increasing numbers of blacks want guns for protection. LWZ


While it’s not yet clear what effect, if any, the church shooting in Charleston will have on gun purchases, a growing number of African-Americans across the United States have changed their position on firearms in recent years, breaking with a long tradition of gun control advocacy among blacks and embracing the kind of pro-gun positions that are more widely held by whites. To be sure, attitudes toward guns are still deeply divided along racial lines, with 60 percent of blacks prioritizing controls on gun ownership over protecting gun rights, while 61 percent of whites say they consider gun rights more important than gun controls, according to a December poll by the Pew Reserch Center. But the level of African American support for gun control has fallen by 14 percentage points since 1993, when it stood at 74% according to the Pew data.

Black gun ownership has been vilified by the media. LWZ


Collins Idehen, a 31-year-old African American attorney in Texas, said he used to hide his interest in guns because he was concerned about being stereotyped as a “young black thug.” Idehen, who makes YouTube videos under the name Colion Noir as a commentator for the NRA, worried there was no space to openly discuss his interest in guns. As he put it in one video: “The image of black gun ownership has been hijacked and vilified by an anti-gun mainstream media.”

foundationbriefs.com
More blacks seek guns for protection. LWZ


Still, some African-American gun supporters see a need for gun groups specifically aimed at their concerns. “If anyone should have the right or need to carry a gun, it should be the African-American community,” said Philip Smith, who earlier this year founded the National African American Gun Association, which he says now has a couple of hundred members. He cited slavery and the Jim Crow-era South as reasons that blacks should arm themselves, noting that “all those things happened to us because we weren’t able to defend ourselves.” Smith says he expects that the massacre in Charleston last month will draw more African Americans to the idea that guns are necessary for protection. “Just think if one of those folks had a gun, or two or three,” he said. The idea that guns provide protection appears to be quickly gaining currency among American blacks. In December, 54 percent of blacks polled by Pew said they believed guns were more likely to protect people than to put their safety at risk. That figure was up from 29 percent two years earlier. For whites, 62 percent said guns protect people, up from 54 percent in 2012.

Anti-gun activists are distanced from young black men who need guns to protect themselves. LWZ


Jooyoung Lee, a sociologist who has studied the effect of gun violence on black men in Los Angeles and Philadelphia, said that he hears young black men in the inner city complaining that African American leaders at the forefront of the gun debate are distant from the struggles of those who may need guns to protect themselves. Lee said his research found a strong sense of distrust between African Americans and the police. The perception was that “police don’t always respond when people are in trouble, and when they do, sometimes they beat and abuse people,” Lee said.
Blacks can’t trust the government to protect them so they need guns. LWZ


Mistrust of the government is strongly correlated to support for gun rights, said Daniel Webster, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research. People feel like they have to take care of themselves, he said. In some cases, that attitude has led - as it has with some white gun owners - to deliberately provocative displays of gun rights. At the Huey P. Newton Gun Club in Texas, formed last year after Michael Brown was killed by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, members participate in open-carry displays during demonstrations against police brutality. Club co-founder Darrin Reed, who is also a member of the New Black Panthers, said more blacks are arming themselves now then in the past because the government and police have shown “they’re not able to keep drug dealers” out of African American communities. “They failed to protect the black community,” he said.

Black communities can’t trust the police to protect them so they need handguns. LWZ


When James Craig was a young man in the 1970s, he says law-abiding people wouldn't dream of carrying guns. But then he left town to pursue a career in policing. In the years he was gone, Michigan liberalized its gun laws, making it easier for people to get concealed-carry permits. When he came back to become Detroit's police chief in 2013, he found a whole new reality. "You would have thought, given the dynamic of people who carry weapons, that we were maybe in Texas," he says. "But in fact, we were in Detroit, Michigan!" Police chiefs usually don't like the idea of citizens carrying concealed guns for self-defense, but Craig says he had to be realistic about the situation in his hometown. "It was a well-known fact here in Detroit," he says. "People didn't have a lot of confidence that when they dialed 911, that the police were going to show up. In fact, we know they didn't." So he endorsed a trend that was already well under way — the trend toward more people carrying legal guns. According to a survey by the Pew Research Center, 54 percent of blacks now see gun ownership as a good thing, something more likely to protect than harm. That's up from 29 percent just two years ago. In places like Detroit, more African-Americans are getting permits to carry concealed weapons.
Black communities have been slower to embrace guns because of past restrictions. LWZ


Ector thinks African-Americans nationally have been slower to embrace concealed-carry because so many of them live in places where it's still more restricted. Both Chief Craig and Ector are black. "When you look at New Jersey, you look at New York, you look at California, D.C. and Chicago, really it's still a foreign experience," he says. "When you really look at the city of Detroit, we're kind of leading the way in terms of urban areas with law-abiding citizens carrying guns."

The Civil Rights Movement relied a lot on armed self-defense. LWZ


Targeting blacks is a new turn for the gun rights movement, but the arguments they're using are not. For decades, black opponents of gun control have also been fighting their cause under the banner of civil rights, although their ranks have dwindled. Armed self-defense had a critical role in the civil rights movement. In certain southern states, black-armed groups would guard voter drives and the homes of civil rights leaders. In her landmark reports on lynching, Ida B. Wells, a co-founder of the National Association of Colored Women, wrote, "a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every Black home" for the "protection which the law refuses to give." When Rosa Parks and her husband began organizing activist meetings in their home, she claims she had no place to put the refreshments "with the table so covered with guns." Even Martin Luther King, Jr. applied for a concealed firearm permit, after his house was firebombed. This tradition has shaped the politics of many black gun rights advocates. Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said her defense of the second amendment is rooted in memories of growing up in Birmingham, Ala., when her father and his friends would guard their streets against white terror groups.
The need for self-defense among poor black communities is high. LWZ


"The only thing that's going to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun," says Micheal Cargill, a black gun shop owner in Austin, Tex., who only applied for a concealed gun license after his grandmother, who decided to get a nursing degree at the age of 70, was mugged and raped on the way home from the library. Cargill said he faced hostility from friends and neighbors when he started his business. "It's not typical in the African American community," he said. "It's something frowned upon." The need for self-defense is often felt more acutely in neighborhoods, where there's the sense that the police will take a long time to come, or may not come at all. "These black people living in these hyper-ghettos feel like they're on their own," says Yale University sociology professor Elijah Anderson, author of the classic "Code of the Street," who's spent most of his adult life studying these communities. "To protect yourself from criminals, to protect your daughter, to protect your son, you have to show this person in no uncertain terms that if the police don't deal with you, I'll deal with you. I'll kick your ass," he told The Huffington Post. "This is a decent person who goes to church. An old lady who's 65 years old, who has a gun."

Disarming minorities has historical roots in denying blacks citizenship. LWZ


For many black gun rights activists, policies that disarm minorities eerily echo old racist claims that blacks were unfit for citizenship. Throughout the country's history, it's been harder for minorities to get their hands on firearms. Black gun rights advocates often point this out, from the explicitly racist gun laws of our early republic, to racially suspicious laws, like bans on cheaper guns, stricter regulations in black communities, and the major 1968 gun control act, which came on the heels of several race riots. Even Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, in his concurring opinion overturning the Chicago handgun ban, detailed the long history of whites disarming blacks. Thomas' defense of gun ownership was so fervent that an op-ed in the Washington Post called it "straight from the heart of Malcolm X."
Historically, pro-gun groups have been marginalized for being associated with “black violence”. LWZ


This line holds a clue as to why black pro-gun voices are so marginal today. In the 1970s, black arguments for armed self-defense were often confused with calls for black violence. In response, civil rights groups like the NAACP distanced themselves from the pro-gun wing of the movement to gain wider support with whites, according to Nicholas Johnson, a professor at Fordham University School of Law, who's writing a book on the black tradition of gun ownership. The strategy worked, he says. And when those groups found a home in the Democratic Party, they ditched the pro-gun talk altogether. Today, race beats gender, age, geography, and politics as the most powerful predictor of whether an American owns a gun.

Stricter gun laws will just lead to discrimination. LWZ


Without that, Haviland-Eduah and Sinyangwe fear, black communities will unfairly bear the brunt of stricter gun laws. The idea wasn’t created in a vacuum: Going back well over a century, vagrancy and anti-loitering laws were selectively enforced against blacks, and more recently, police practices such as stop-and-frisk, in which an officer stops and pats down a pedestrian suspected of possessing contraband such as a firearm, have been shown to be highly racialized. Though ostensibly aimed at getting guns off the streets, guns were found in only 0.1 percent of 532,000 stop-and-frisk stops made in New York City in 2012, according to the New York Civil Liberties Union. Ninety percent of those stopped were black or Latino, even though whites were more likely to be found packing heat, according to research by Jeffrey Fagan at Columbia University Law School.
A handgun ban denies the black poor in particular of a means to self-defense. PJG.


The obvious effect of gun bans and prohibitions is to deny law-abiding citizens access to firearms for the defense of themselves and their families. That effect is doubly discriminatory because the poor, and especially the black poor, are the primary victims of crime and in many areas lack the political power to command as much police protection as richer neighborhoods. Of course, present gun prohibitions make possession of firearms illegal in the hands of the entire population of the affected political subdivision, for all races and religions, and the rich and the poor alike. Yes - and the law, in its majestic equality, "forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread." Those living in well-off, police protected neighborhoods are less likely to "sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets" or to need a firearm for self-protection. Pg. 83

The black poor need access to handguns because they are likeliest to be victimized without good protection from police. PJG.


National figures indicate that a black female in the median female age range of 25-34, is about twice as likely to be robbed or raped as her white counterpart. She is also three times as likely to be the victim of an aggravated assault. In the final analysis, victims must protect themselves and their families or property from criminal attack at the moment the criminal strikes. The need for the ability to defend oneself, family and property, is much more critical in the poor and minority neighborhoods ravaged by crime and without adequate police protection. However, these citizens who are most likely to be victims have no right to demand or even expect police protection. Courts have consistently ruled "that there is no constitutional right to be protected by the state against being murdered by criminals or madmen. Furthermore, courts have ruled that the police have no duty to protect the individual citizen, absent facts establishing a special relationship between the authority and the person assaulted. Pg. 84
The effect of eliminating deterrence from guns especially hurts black people who live in crime-ridden areas without decent police protection. PJG.


Reducing gun ownership among law-abiding citizens may significantly reduce the deterrent effect of widespread civilian gun ownership on criminals, particularly in regards to such crimes as residential burglaries and commercial robberies. Of course, this effect will be most widely felt among the poor and minority citizens who live in crime-ridden areas without adequate police protection. It must also be noted that in many instances in the past, and even at this time, the security forces of the state not only fail to provide protection to these deprived citizens but are, in fact, used to oppress those citizens. Pg. 88

Enforcing a gun ban would entail intrusions against racial minorities, the people who need protection from guns the most. PJG.


Average citizens will generally keep their firearm in their home or business. Very few citizens habitually carry firearms. Clearly neither stop and frisk laws, streetside general searches, nor gun detection devices as advocated by the prohibitionists, would be able to enforce any gun prohibition. A serious attempt to enforce a gun prohibition would require an immense number of searches of residential and business premises. Thus, necessity would dictate that enforcement must involve intrusions into residences where firearms ownership is suspected. Furthermore, the bulk of these intrusions will be directed against racial minorities, whose possession of arms the enforcing authorities may view as far more dangerous than illegal arms possession by other groups. As civil liberties attorney Kates has observed, when laws are difficult to enforce, 'enforcement becomes progressively haphazard until the last of the laws are used only against those who are unpopular with the police.' Of course minorities, especially minorities who don't 'know their place', aren't likely to be popular with the police, and those very minorities, in the face of police indifference or perhaps even antagonism, may be the most inclined to look to guns for protection - guns that they can't acquire legally and that place them in jeopardy if possessed illegally. While the intent of such laws may not be racist, their effect most certainly is. Given the potential discriminatory application of gun bans, and the grave consequences of such enforcement schemes, legislatures should not pass such statutes. Pg. 96,
Right to Own Guns

*We have a right to own a handgun because “owning a gun,” in itself, does not harm others; it merely makes it easier for us to harm others, which *is* something we do not prohibit.*

PJG.

Huemer, Michael (Professor of Philosophy at the University of Colorado). “*Is There a Right to Own a Gun?*” *Social Theory and Practice.* Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 297-324 (April 2003).

Begin with the principle that one lacks a right to do things that harm others, treat others as mere means, or use others without their consent. It is difficult to see how owning a gun could itself be said to do any of those things, even though owning a gun makes it easier for one to do those things if one chooses to. But we do not normally prohibit activities that merely make it easier for one to perform a wrong but require a separate decision to perform the wrongful act.

*Universal background checks would lower criminal violence.* LWZ


So ignore the extremists. The only way to keep guns out of the hands of bad guys is to figure out who they are before they get armed. That means universal background checks and record-keeping requirements for all firearms transactions. Under federal law, purchases from a licensed gun dealer require identification, and a form stating the buyer is purchasing it for himself and is not part of a group prohibited from obtaining a gun—felons, people under felony indictment, drug addicts, fugitives and the like. Then, after a background check (90 percent of them take a few minutes), the sale is complete. The dealer makes a record of the transaction and keeps it permanently. That’s a wonderful system, and it is totally worthless in the real world, because almost half of all gun sales are private transactions that entail no procedural safeguards. No identification is required, there’s no background check, and no records are kept. This is wonderful for a criminal—or a psychopath. This is what gun opponents mistakenly refer to as the “gun show loophole,” but no such loophole exists. Private parties are allowed to sell at gun shows—and anywhere else.
There is a right to own a firearm based on the right to self-defense. LWZ


Yes, there is a right to own firearms, which is a derivative of man’s right to self-defense, which is itself derived from man’s right to life. The field of battle on which gun control should be fought is exactly on this issue: man’s rights. The field of battle on which gun control should be fought is exactly on this issue: man’s rights. Statistical arguments on gun control are a red herring — as the leftists’ appeals to hungry children or the environmentalists’ appeals to clean parks are also meant to distract their opponents from the fundamental issues at stake. While the National Rifle Association (NRA) and other defenders of the right to bear arms argue over statistics and interpreting the Constitution, the real issues remain untouched and are sacrificed to the enemies of our freedom. As stated, the gun control debate should be addressed as a debate over man’s rights. A man’s right to own a gun is based on his right to self-defense. This right itself is not a primary, but rather is a corollary of the right to life. Clearly, if a man has a right to his life, then he necessarily has the right to defend that life in times of need, i.e., against those who act to violate his rights. This is the “ten-second outline” of the source of the right to self-defense.

To deny the right to a firearm makes the right to self-defense meaningless. LWZ


Given the prior acceptance of an individual’s right to his life and his corollary right to self-defense, the conclusion that weapons should be privately owned follows logically. To argue otherwise is to drive a wedge between our moral rights and the physical means by which these rights are implemented. If a man chooses to argue for a right, but denies its reality, then he has stepped into an explicit dichotomy between value and facts. The ultimate conclusion is that man has no rights at all. This was best illustrated in Nazi Germany, where businessmen had the “right” to their property, but the state controlled every aspect of its use and disposal, e.g., setting wages, prices, production levels, etc. Thus, in reality, there were no such rights under the Nazis, regardless of the pieces of paper providing for deeds and titles to property. For the same reason, the rights to life and liberty are meaningless words without the right to control and use the tools necessary to protect these values.
The “people will own tanks” objection is invalid – it assumes that the right to own firearms is based on a right to property, not self-defense. LWZ


An interesting question I have heard at this point is whether the right to own firearms is based in man’s right to property or man’s right to self-defense. This is a false dichotomy. There are no autonomous rights that stand distinct from each other in our conceptual hierarchy. However, in asking which is the essential right in question, the answer is the right to self-defense. The reason is that a right to property would not distinguish between owning a rocket launcher or a handgun, because in principle both are held as property. On the other hand, the right to self-defense does clearly delimit what types of weapons an individual may own within civilized society. Nonetheless, why it is valid to own a handgun, and not a tank or howitzer, is not self-evident. This issue is what I’ll address next.
The “I have a right to a howitzer” argument misunderstands what the purpose of firearms is.


The classic question that I'm certain many people have heard at this stage — especially anyone who has ever spoken with a Libertarian — is typically phrased in the following syllogism: “I have a right to own weapons (in accordance with my right to defend my life), howitzer cannons are weapons, therefore, I have a right to own a howitzer.” Beyond the obvious methodological problem of rationalism, this argument represents a serious misunderstanding of the right to self-defense, and the action that this right sanctions. Rights are moral principles sanctioning man’s freedom of action in a social context. The right to property, for example “is the right to gain, to keep, to use, and to dispose of material values.” [“Man’s Rights,” Virtue of Selfishness] The right to self-defense sanctions only those actions you take at the moment a crime occurs. However, if you take the punishment of the criminal into your own hands subsequent to a crime, then you are a vigilante. Vigilantism is appropriately outlawed in civil society — the power of punishment is rightfully delegated to the government. With respect to self-defense, the law requires that your action is commensurate with the crime committed against you. For instance, you cannot pull out a shotgun and shoot a man for simply grabbing an orange out of your backpack in the park. You do have the right, however, to chase him down and hold him until the authorities arrive, or to enlist others in your attempt to stop him. The point is: the purpose of self-defense is to stop the crime, not eradicate the world of all criminals. When the crime is not violent or potentially life threatening, then your reaction cannot be violent or life threatening as well. Firearms are thus available for only those times that the nature of the crime is life threatening or violent. Firearms are the best (and sometimes only) means to defend your life and property in these contexts.

Given the principle of self-defense as the moral sanction of owning weapons, one can now distinguish between two general types of weapons: (i) those capable of very limited destruction, and (ii) those capable of mass destruction. Examples of the former are handguns, rifles, and shotguns, and examples of the latter are machine guns, rocket launchers, tanks, bombs, nuclear weapons. Weapons of mass destruction only have a single use: destruction of as many people and as much property as is possible. These weapons are not legitimately owned by private citizens; they are designed for and used in wars between countries. Again, this is a function of only the government — a function which is legitimately delegated to this institution to protect the rights of its citizens on a large scale (such as dealing with Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, or Iraq).


As such, weapons of mass destruction do not meet the requirements for self-defense. When, for example, is a homeowner ever threatened at 2 a.m. by a regiment of Iraqi tanks, thus requiring the use of anti-tank rockets and grenades? In what alley would a citizen require a machine gun capable of firing 3000 rounds per minute simply to stop a mugger? On the other hand, handguns, rifles, and other types of “small arms” do fulfill the needs of self-defense. That is, the limited need to stop at most a small number of criminals in one’s home, business, or neighborhood. It is for this reason that every individual has the right to own such firearms, and use them in the protection of life and property.
People should be allowed to acquire larger weapons anyways if there is a legitimate need for it. LWZ


It is also important to realize that this is a principle of ownership we are speaking about, and as with all principles, its application is contextual [For details on the nature of contextual absolutes see Leonard Peikoff’s Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand — Editor]. If a citizen can demonstrate a legitimate need for a weapon that is typically used for mass destruction, then there is no reason why he should not be able to purchase it. For example, a mining company can demonstrate a need for high explosives that a citizen living in New York City has no need for. Texans who live on the border with Mexico could plausibly demonstrate a need to the government to purchase larger-scale machine guns if they had problems with border raids from large gangs of Mexican criminals. Although the government would probably just dispatch troops to the area, if the Texans had a legitimate claim then it is the government’s responsibility to ensure that its citizens can adequately protect themselves. The point being that the principle determining private ownership of firearms should never be interpreted as an intrinsicist, dogmatic rule.

The first step in addressing the topic of gun control is to draw the necessary distinction between contemporary American society and a laissez-faire society based upon a rational philosophy. This distinction is important, because gun control has vastly different implications in either of these societies. In today’s society — one that is ruled by pragmatism and collectivism — any initial program of gun control will eventually result in a complete abdication of our rights to gun ownership, and by implication, to self-defense. Observe, for instance, the step-by-step prohibition of semi-automatic rifles over the past few years. First, the federal government banned the production and importation of what it termed “assault rifles.” The actual definition of this term is: any firearm that happens to cosmetically look like a military weapon, regardless of its actual function. The full implications of this definition are slowly playing out. The federal government then banned all sales of these “assault rifles” a couple of years later. Then government expanded the number of weapons it included under this term, including some shotguns and rifles commonly used for hunting, because of the arbitrary standard of cosmetics. President Clinton is now pushing for additional restrictions, and the expansion of the powers of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) to execute the law. Some recent proposals include the delegation of the “administrative” function of identifying which weapons fall within the government’s category of “assault weapons” to the BATF itself. Anyone aware of the extensive abuses of rights perpetrated by the IRS under the rubric of the “administration of the tax code,” can only imagine what the BATF can do — and already has done.

We should oppose all expansions of firearm bans. LWZ


Each year, more and more bills are proposed in Congress, calling for such things as the repeal of the Second Amendment, an increase of taxes on ammunition by 10,000%, the outlawing of all 9mm and .45 caliber ammunition sales to private citizens (effectively banning these handguns by default), and the outlawing of all private ownership of handguns. As with the introduction of national health care bills in the early eighties by Ted Kennedy, these anti-gun bills are ominous signs for the laws that will be placed on the books in the coming years. Any restriction of our access to and use of firearms, even such seemingly innocuous acts as national waiting periods, only provide precedent for the further curtailment of our rights in the years to come. This is why I believe that any attempt to expand gun control in the U.S. today must be fought at every step of the way.
A right to a firearm doesn’t ban background checks. LWZ


But would questions of waiting periods, national registration, or background checks arise in a rational society? I believe that these questions would be considered, and rightly so. Firearms are tools of force, and the government is the institution with a monopoly on the (legitimate) use of force. It is the function of the government to define the legal conditions for when self-defense can be invoked as a sanction of the private use of force, as well as to ensure that weapons are not obtained by criminals. In this vein, I think both registration and background checks would be legitimate laws in a rational, free society. With respect to waiting periods, however, the only justification has been the limitation of “crimes of passion,” but there is no evidence that handguns are purchased or even used in a fits of rage as opposed to baseball bats, knives, or other household objects. Thus, I am not inclined to support this proposal even in a free society.

An outright prohibition on handguns violates the prima facie right to self-defense. LWZ


Huemer’s answer to his titular question is that yes, we do have a right to own a gun. Like most rights, it is a prima facie right, that is, a right that can be justifiably overridden in certain circumstances by sufficiently weighty reasons. But is a right that is supported by serious moral considerations. Among the most weighty of these is the right to self-defense. Huemer believes that gun control unjustly infringes upon this right. To support this claim, he asks us to consider the following hypothetical scenario: A killer breaks into a house, where two people—"the victim" and “the accomplice”—are staying. (The "accomplice" need have no prior interaction with the killer.) As the killer enters the bedroom where the victim is hiding, the accomplice enters through another door and proceeds, for some reason, to hold the victim down while the killer stabs him to death. Obviously, the killer in this situation is doing something seriously wrong. But so too, most of us would think, is the accomplice. But what is the accomplice actually doing? He is simply coercively preventing the victim from exercising his right to self-defense. But isn’t that precisely what a legal ban on firearm ownership would do? If, then, the action of the accomplice in the scenario is wrong, doesn’t this give us good reason to think that a legal ban on firearm ownership would be wrong too?
Nothing about a right to own a gun implies we can’t have background checks or certain bans, but handgun bans do violate rights. LWZ


It’s worth noting that Huemer’s aim in this paper is fairly limited. He is arguing that there is a strong prima facie right to own a gun. But that conclusion is compatible with the belief that the exercise of that right ought to be regulated in various ways. Huemer talks about some of the stronger forms that regulation might take – a ban on all handguns (as opposed to rifles and shotguns), and a ban on concealed carry. And he argues that we have some reason to be wary of such measures. But nothing in his paper directly tells against, say, limits on the capacity of magazines, waiting periods, background checks, bans on fully automatic weapons, or a host of other actual or possible regulations. I suspect that Huemer would find current calls for bans on all semi-automatic weapons to be unjustifiable, given the utility such weapons have both for recreational and defensive purposes. But that, it seems to me, is a fairly modest claim.
Second Amendment

Anti-2nd Amendment arguments have it wrong. LWZ


The reigning anti-individualist interpretation to the Second Amendment is one in which the text grants a right to governments, not people; it is, in the words of the ACLU, a “collective right,” which presumably means a government “right.” One school of thought holds that it grants states the right to maintain militias, in order to provide a militaristic check against otherwise-unchecked federal power. The other holds that the Second Amendment places the burden upon the Federal government to uphold states’ militias—again in order to ensure that states will have localized defenses against a centralized standing army. Both are wrong on a functional level, because both ignore extant and binding clauses within the Constitution itself—and the second is such a wacky explanation that one struggles to know where to begin.

States can’t have collective rights to militias. LWZ


For starters, the states themselves are forbidden from keeping troops without the consent of Congress—period, with no exceptions. That’s in Article 1, Section 10 of the Constitution. There has never been any evidence that the Second Amendment changed this. Indeed, the Federal government’s own records contradict this. Every provision of the original Constitution that has been changed by subsequent amendments is highlighted to show such a change. In some texts an altered clause is marked with an asterisk; in others, in brackets. On the government’s own website it is noted: “Items [in the Constitution] that are hyperlinked have since been amended or superseded.” And yet the provision that bans states from keeping troops shows no such demarcation—not on archives.gov, and not in any physical copy of the Constitution across which I’ve come. If the Second Amendment truly allows states to maintain their own militias—if it confers a “right” upon which the Federal government cannot infringe—then the editors of every copy of the Constitution over the last couple of centuries have been mercilessly sloppy.
The federal government cannot possibly maintain state militias. LWZ


Similarly, the Constitution has never been edited to suggest that the Federal government has the duty to maintain state militias; Article 1, Section 8 of the document still maintains that the Federal government may do whatever it pleases regarding the militia, and with no duties or responsibilities attached. If the feds were truly required to provide for state militias, then where is the change that reflects this reality? There isn’t one, because they’re not required to do so, and they never have been. And with good reason: how on earth could a federally-sponsored militia somehow protect against the federal government? That would be like allowing a violent criminal to dictate the manner and execution of a restraining order taken out against him. People who claim that the Second Amendment guarantees states the “right” to a militia from Washington seem to think that the American people are supposed to seek security and protection against a tyrannical government from the tyrannical government itself. How on earth would this work?

The collective rights interpretation is wrong. LWZ


If we’re to take the “collective right” explanation on its face, then the Second Amendment created a right that the states are powerless to execute, that the Federal government has no duty to provide, and that would be useless and oxymoronic if the latter did so anyway. If one spends five minutes thinking about the “collective right” theory, it quickly becomes apparent that the individual right is the only one that can possibly function appropriately, and is thus the only right that the amendment was ever intended to protect. To put it bluntly, the “collective right” approach makes no sense.
Independent of other things, the 2nd Amendment clearly guarantees an individual right to guns. LWZ


It does to some people, however. In an otherwise-noble quest to try and reduce the amount of gun violence in modern America, the anti-gun lobby often indulges in any number of bizarre political contortions in order to get its point across. Lowering the number of gun deaths in the United States—a number that is dismayingly high—should be any right-thinking, sensible person’s priorities. Yet we shouldn’t indulge in bizarre historical and linguistic psychoses in pursuit of that laudable end. The Second Amendment guarantees an individual right—subject to reasonable regulation and control, of course, but individual nonetheless. The only way to change this reality is to amend the Constitution again. Then, at least, the anti-gun crowd would be honest; but then again, they would probably lose in the attempt. Which makes it clear why they resort to falsehoods instead.

The 2nd Amendment still has boundaries. LWZ


Scalia clearly stated in Heller that the right to bear arms had boundaries. “Like most rights, the Second Amendment right is not unlimited,” he wrote. “It is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose.” For example, he cited laws that prohibit the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or that forbid them in places such as schools and government buildings, or impose conditions on their sale. He also wrote that his decision did not overrule the holding in the 1939 Miller ruling that the sorts of weapons protected are those in common use at the time, and that the “historical tradition of prohibiting the carrying of dangerous and unusual weapons” was still permissible. In other words, even one of the modern era’s most conservative justices says gun enthusiasts are wrong when they claim that any limitation on firearms is unconstitutional. Government can place restrictions on firearms with the intent of protecting society.
Background Checks

*We should use a public health approach to limit, but not eliminate guns. LWZ*


Democrats, including President Obama, emphasize the need to address America’s problems with guns. Republicans talk about the need to address mental health. Both are right. First, guns, the central issue: We need a new public health approach based not on eliminating guns (that simply won’t happen in a land awash with 300 million guns) but on reducing the carnage they cause. We routinely construct policies that reduce the toll of deadly products around us. That’s what we do with cars (driver’s licenses, seatbelts, guardrails). It’s what we do with swimming pools (fences, childproof gates, pool covers). It’s what we do with toy guns (orange tips). It’s what we should do with real guns. Switzerland has guns everywhere because nearly all men spend many years as part-time members of the armed forces (it’s said that Switzerland doesn’t have an army; it is an army). Yet while military weapons are ubiquitous, crime is low.

*We should establish universal background checks to fix gaps. LWZ*


What we should focus on is curbing access to guns among people who present the greatest risk. An imperative first step is universal background checks to acquire a gun. New Harvard research suggests that about 40 percent of guns in America are acquired without a background check — which is just unconscionable. Astonishingly, it’s perfectly legal even for people on the terrorism watch list to buy guns in the United States. More than 2,000 terrorism suspects did indeed purchase guns in the United States between 2004 and 2014, according to the Government Accountability Office and The Washington Post’s Wonkblog. Democrats have repeatedly proposed closing that loophole, but the National Rifle Association and its Republican allies have blocked those efforts, so it’s still legal. While Republicans in Congress resist the most basic steps to curb gun access by violent offenders, the public is much more reasonable. Even among gun owners, 85 percent approve of universal background checks, according to a poll this year. Likewise, an overwhelming share of gun owners support cracking down on firearms dealers who are careless or lose track of guns. Majorities of gun owners also favor banning people under 21 from having a handgun and requiring that guns be locked up at home.
It’s not possible to stop all shootings – but improving mental health and background checks go a long way. LWZ


As for mental health, Republicans are right that it is sometimes related to gun violence. But it’s also true that in some cases their budget cuts have reduced mental health services. To his credit, Representative Tim Murphy, a Pennsylvania Republican, has introduced a bill that would improve our disastrous mental health system, perhaps reducing the number of people who snap and turn to violence. Yet some Democrats are wary of the bill because Republicans like it. That’s absurd: We need better mental health services just as we need universal background checks. It’s not clear what policy, if any, could have prevented the killings in San Bernardino. Not every shooting is preventable. But we’re not even trying. When we tackled drunken driving, we took steps like raising the drinking age to 21 and cracking down on offenders. That didn’t eliminate drunken driving, but it saved thousands of lives.

Ronald Reagan was a huge supporter for increased restrictions. LWZ


For similar reasons, Ronald Reagan, hailed by Republicans in every other context, favored gun regulations, including mandatory waiting periods for purchases. “Every year, an average of 9,200 Americans are murdered by handguns,” Reagan wrote in a New York Times op-ed in 1991 backing gun restrictions. “This level of violence must be stopped.” He added that if tighter gun regulations “were to result in a reduction of only 10 or 15 percent of those numbers (and it could be a good deal greater), it would be well worth making it the law of the land.” Republicans, listen to your sainted leader.
There is a simple solution to curbing gun violence. LWZ


There is, however, a simple solution, a common-sense compromise that will infuriate both sets of extremists in the gun debate, but would place the United States on a saner path: Ban accessories that serve no purpose other than to transform guns into weapons of mass slaughter, such as attachable drums that carry 100 rounds. Adopt rules that make it harder for criminals and the mentally ill to obtain firearms. Outlaw the public display of weapons. Allow the concealed carry of guns using the “shall issue” standard. Stop trying to ban scary-looking add-ons that primarily protect the shooter, but don’t make the gun more dangerous to others. Forget attacks on the “armor-piercing bullets.” Abandon efforts to outlaw “assault weapons”—a politically loaded phrase with a mishmash of meanings that pretty much amount to nothing.
Rights Violations

Banning handguns entails violating other civil liberties like the right to privacy, as gun laws are primarily enforced through illegal searches. PJG.


The most common and, perhaps, the primary means of enforcing present firearms laws are illegal searches by the police. A former Ohio prosecutor has stated that in his opinion fifty to seventy-five percent of all weapon arrests resulted from questionable, if not clearly illegal, searches." A study of Detroit criminal cases found that eighty-five percent of concealed weapons carrying cases that were dismissed, were dismissed due to the illegality of the search. This number far exceeded even the fifty-seven percent for narcotics dismissals, in which illegal searches are frequent." A study of Chicago criminal cases found that motions to suppress for illegal evidence were filed in thirty-six percent of all weapons charges; sixty-two percent of such motions were granted by the court." Pg. 92
Buyback Program

Buyback programs work to get unwanted guns off the streets. SBH.

Katie Mettler June, 2015 [Katie Mettler is a Times Staff Writer] “Tampa police gun buy-back program nets more than 500 firearms” Tampa Bay Times

For the first time in four years, the Tampa Police Department bought back guns from residents Saturday, a preventive effort to keep weapons out of criminal hands in a year marred by an uptick in gun violence and shooting deaths.¶ Funded by a $50,000 donation from the Tampa Bay Lightning, the buyback program offered $50 to residents who handed over unwanted but functioning firearms. They did not have to give their name, just a zip code for data purposes.¶ Tampa police Chief Eric Ward and Mayor Bob Buckhorn arrived at River Tower Park at 9 a.m., an hour into the buy-back. A hundred guns had already been dropped off. By the end of the day, officers received 521 firearms, each exchanged for $50.¶ "Every gun we take off the street is one that doesn't get into a kid's hand," Ward said. "Throughout the nation, there's an increase in violence, and Tampa is not immune."¶ After a bloody start to the new year, with the number of homicides almost doubling that of last year, the mayor, chief and former Chief Jane Castor have been rallying in Tampa's most crime-ridden neighborhoods, pleading for an end to a no-snitch culture they say ties law enforcement's hands.¶ "Cities across the country are just awash with illegal guns," the mayor said. "I can tell you, doing nothing is not an option."¶ Retired Tampa police Capt. Brett Bartlett, a member of the pistol team, ushered gun owners through a car line under shaded trees, inspected their firearms and sent them away, cash in hand. He said most of the people participating support the mission of the department: to keep unused or unwanted guns out of the hands of criminals.¶ The dozens of officers on site collected rifles, shotguns and pistols. A few sawed-off shotguns were turned in.¶ Officers tagged each firearm, ran the serial numbers through a database to see if any had been reported stolen, then set them aside in bins and boxes. Eventually, they'll be melted down and destroyed.¶ That part of the program incensed at least a dozen local residents who set up camp in the park beside the police operation, trying to keep buy-back participants from selling their antique or heirloom firearms for what they considered far too little money.¶ "We're here buying weapons that need to be saved," said Tampa native Walter Sullivan, 59

This evidence can work as solvency for a counterplan that explains that a buy-back program can decrease handguns on the streets in the same way that a ban would.

Australia prime minister explains the buyback program that worked in Australia. SBH.


It is for Americans and their elected representatives to determine the right response to President Obama’s proposals on gun control. I wouldn’t presume to lecture Americans on the subject. I can, however, describe what I, as prime minister of Australia, did to curb gun violence following a horrific massacre 17 years ago
in the hope that it will contribute constructively to the debate in the United States. I was elected prime minister in early 1996, leading a center-right coalition. Virtually every nonurban electoral district in the country — where gun ownership was higher than elsewhere — sent a member of my coalition to Parliament. Six weeks later, on April 28, 1996, Martin Bryant, a psychologically disturbed man, used a semiautomatic Armalite rifle and a semiautomatic SKS assault weapon to kill 35 people in a murderous rampage in Port Arthur, Tasmania. After this wanton slaughter, I knew that I had to use the authority of my office to curb the possession and use of the type of weapons that killed 35 innocent people. I also knew it wouldn’t be easy. Our challenges were different from America’s. Australia is an even more intensely urban society, with close to 60 percent of our people living in large cities. Our gun lobby isn’t as powerful or well-financed as the National Rifle Association in the United States. Australia, correctly in my view, does not have a Bill of Rights, so our legislatures have more say than America’s over many issues of individual rights, and our courts have less control. Also, we have no constitutional right to bear arms. (After all, the British granted us nationhood peacefully; the United States had to fight for it.) Because Australia is a federation of states, the national government has no control over gun ownership, sale or use, beyond controlling imports. Given our decentralized system of government, I could reduce the number of dangerous firearms only by persuading the states to enact uniform laws totally prohibiting the ownership, possession and sale of all automatic and semiautomatic weapons while the national government banned the importation of such weapons. To make this plan work, there had to be a federally financed gun buyback scheme. Ultimately, the cost of the buyback was met by a special one-off tax imposed on all Australians. This required new legislation and was widely accepted across the political spectrum. Almost 700,000 guns were bought back and destroyed — the equivalent of 40 million guns in the United States.

This evidence can function as a solvency advocate for a counterplan that says that an alternative, effective mechanism to reduce hand guns is a buyback program similar to Australia’s.

*Australia’s system worked well and reduced suicides. SBH.*


In the end, we won the battle to change gun laws because there was majority support across Australia for banning certain weapons. And today, there is a wide consensus that our 1996 reforms not only reduced the gun-related homicide rate, but also the suicide rate. The Australian Institute of Criminology found that gun-related murders and suicides fell sharply after 1996. The American Law and Economics Review found that our gun buyback scheme cut firearm suicides by 74 percent. In the 18 years before the 1996 reforms, Australia suffered 13 gun massacres — each with more than four victims — causing a total of 102 deaths. There has not been a single massacre in that category since 1996.

This evidence can work as solvency for a counterplan that explains that a buy-back program can solve suicides from handguns in the same way that a ban would.
Buyback programs have the ability to work inside the United States, as well. SBH.


Brewer’s office did not issue a statement about her approval of House of Representatives Bill 2455, which she signed without fanfare Monday. Firearms groups, however, pushed heavily for the bill. The National Rifle Assn.’s legislative action arm urged members to support the bill, saying, “firearms that are collected would maintain their value and their sale to the public would help recover public funds when budgets are strained.”

Earlier this year, Tucson held a buyback that collected more than 200 weapons. The police department arranged with the Safeway chain of grocery stores to donate $10,000 worth of gift cards for the buyback. “It was tremendously successful,” Councilwoman Regina Romero said. Romero told the Los Angeles Times on Saturday that HB 2455 was “ridiculous,” particularly in light of the rash of mass shootings in the United States over the past few years. Arizona has not been immune: In January 2011, Jared Lee Loughner went on a rampage in a Tucson shopping center, shooting to death six people and wounding 13 others, including then-Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.
Aff Counters
AT: Guns Reduce Crime

The NRA is just wrong – guns don’t reduce crime. LWZ


I've been researching gun violence -- and what can be done to prevent it -- in the U.S. for 25 years. The fact is that if NRA claims about the efficacy of guns in reducing crime were true, the U.S. would have the lowest homicide rate among industrialized nations instead of the highest homicide rate (by a wide margin). The U.S. is by far the world leader in the number of guns in civilian hands. The stricter gun laws of other "advanced countries" have restrained homicidal violence, suicides and gun accidents -- even when, in some cases, laws were introduced over massive protests from their armed citizens.

Simulations show that gun ownership does not stop real crime. LWZ


Another argument you sometimes hear is that these shootings would happen less frequently if even more people had guns, thus enabling them to defend themselves from the shooting. But, again, the data shows this is simply not true. High gun ownership rates do not reduce gun deaths, but rather tend to coincide with increases in gun deaths. And multiple simulations have demonstrated that most people, if placed in an active shooter situation while armed, will not be able to stop the situation, and may in fact do little more than get themselves killed in the process.

Gun ownership escalates into violence. LWZ

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/why-gun-control-is-not-enough/?_r=0>.

Gun advocates have a solution to this: the unarmed must arm themselves. But when more citizens get guns, further problems arise: people who would once have got in a fistfight instead shoot the person who provoked them; people are shot by mistake or by accident.
Gun ownership allows dangerous people access to weapons and undercuts the police. LWZ


And with guns so plentiful, any lunatic or criminally disposed person who has a sudden and perhaps only temporary urge to kill people can simply help himself to the contents of Mom’s gun cabinet. Perhaps most important, the more people there are who have guns, the less effective the police become. The power of the citizens and that of the police approach parity. The police cease to have even a near-monopoly on the use of force.

*Arming more people as a solution is laughable. LWZ*


Gun freaks insist we need to arm more people. They glibly say shooting sprees happen in "gun free zones," like schools and universities, where gunmen could be stopped if everyone had a gun. That theory is absurd. Police and military train for years to use a gun competently in stressful situations – and even they don't always respond correctly. Think Ferguson, Mo. Think Charlotte, N.C. Think New York City in 2012 where two cops shot nine bystanders as they wildly tried to shoot a man who had gunned down a co-worker. The idea of 500 students in a college library or a dozen teachers in an elementary school pulling out guns to shoot a gunman is ludicrous. They would wind up shooting each other.
A total ban would work eventually. LWZ


Gun freaks say if you take away their guns only outlaws will have guns. That's a chance worth taking. Because if we ban guns, eventually the tide will turn. It might take 10 years or 20 years. Hell, it might take 50 years. But if we make it illegal to own a handgun, eventually there will be no handguns. The same gun freaks believe in banning drugs. They believe in banning abortions. They recognize society bans certain things for the good of society. We should ban guns for the good of society. People have romanticized guns. The Founding Fathers. The Old West. Self-defense — and never mind the average American has only a one in 250 chance of being the victim of a violent crime. It's all a delusion. Guns kill. They kill people from a distance. They kill strangers and children who have no relationship with the gunman.
AT: Guns Deter

*Studies find that victims who possessed a gun were likelier to be shot than those who did not.*

*PJG.*

DeGrazia, David (Department of Philosophy, George Washington University).


Even if we had a confident estimate of defensive uses of handguns in households per year, it would be difficult to estimate in how many of those cases the weapons were used appropriately in response to a genuine threat. Another study—which is only partly relevant to our discussion because it considered assaults both in and outside the home—found that assault victims who possessed a gun were far more likely to be shot than assault victims who did not possess a gun—a result that hardly suggests effective self-protection. In order to show that the appeal to physical security is sound, one would need to advance a stronger case than is currently available that gun ownership is the most effective means of protecting household members’ basic right to physical security. And once again, there is strong evidence that handgun ownership is self-defeating in making people, on average and on balance, less safe than they would be in a gun-free household. Pg. 12.

*Widespread gun ownership does not deter and only makes crime worse.* *LWZ*


One would think that if widespread gun ownership had the robust deterrent effects that gun advocates claim it has, our country would be freer of crime than other developed societies. But it’s not. When most citizens are armed, as they were in the Wild West, crime doesn’t cease. Instead, criminals work to be better armed, more efficient in their use of guns (“quicker on the draw”), and readier to use them. When this happens, those who get guns may be safer than they would be without them, but those without them become progressively more vulnerable.
AT: Self Defense

_Guns are very rarely used to stop crimes._ LWZ


For starters, only the tiniest fraction of victims of violent crime are able to use a gun in their defense. Over the period from 2007-2011, when roughly six million nonfatal violent crimes occurred each year, data from the National Crime Victimization Survey show that the victim did not defend with a gun in 99.2% of these incidents -- this in a country with 300 million guns in civilian hands. In fact, a study of 198 cases of unwanted entry into occupied single-family dwellings in Atlanta (not limited to night when the residents were sleeping) found that the invader was twice as likely to obtain the victim's gun than to have the victim use a firearm in self-defense. The author of the study, Arthur Kellerman, concluded in words that Justice Thomas and Scalia might well heed: On average, the gun that represents the greatest threat is the one that is kept loaded and readily available in a bedside drawer. A loaded, unsecured gun in the home is like an insurance policy that fails to deliver at least 95% of the time you need it, but has the constant potential -- particularly in the case of handguns that are more easily manipulated by children and more attractive for use in crime -- to harm someone in the home or (via theft) the public at large.

_The NRA mantra of guns fighting off crime has been refuted by multiple scientific studies._ LWZ


For years, the NRA mantra has been that allowing citizens to carry concealed handguns would reduce crime as they fought off or scared off the criminals. Some early studies even purported to show that so-called right to carry laws (RTC) did just that, but a 2004 report from the National Research Council refuted that claim (saying it was not supported by "the scientific evidence"), while remaining uncertain about what the true impact of RTC laws was. Ten years of additional data have allowed new research to get a better fix on this question, which is important since the NRA is pushing for a Supreme Court decision that would allow RTC as a matter of constitutional law. The new research on this issue from my research team at Stanford University has given the most compelling evidence to date that RTC laws are associated with significant increases in violent crime -- particularly for aggravated assault. Looking at Uniform Crime Reports data from 1979-2012, we find that, on average, the 33 states that adopted RTC laws over this period experienced violent crime rates that are 4%-19% higher after 10 years than if they had not adopted these laws.
NRA studies are entirely wrong – handguns don’t save lives, they actually increase risk of harm. LWZ

“Unsafe in Any Hands” The Violence Policy Center is a national non-profit educational foundation that conducts research on violence in America and works to develop violence-reduction policies and proposals. 2000.
http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

Through the use of dubious methodologies, the National Rifle Association and other pro-gun advocates have created wildly inflated numbers supposedly showing handguns to be an effective means of self defense.24 This claim is false. Although handguns are marketed primarily for their self-defense value, bringing one into the home has exactly the opposite effect, placing residents at a much higher rate of risk. A person living in a home with a gun is three times more likely to die by homicide25 and five times more likely to die by suicide.26 Data from 1997 buttress the point that self-defense handgun uses are rare. In that year there was— A total of 15,690 homicides. Of these, 8,503 (54.2 percent) were committed with handguns, contrasted to 2,207 involving all other types of firearms (14.1 percent). Among handgun homicides, only 193 (2.3 percent) were classified as justifiable homicides by civilians.27 For decades handguns have been marketed and purchased as the strongest bulwark a law-abiding citizen could have against a legion of dangerous strangers. However, of the 8,503 handgun homicides in 1997, only 110 (1.3 percent) were justifiable killings of an assailant previously unknown to the person using a handgun.28 Instances in which a person uses a handgun in self-defense against an unknown attacker do occur, but compared against the total universe of gun crime and violence, they are extremely rare.

Compared to the violence that occurs, self defense is a minute percentage. LWZ

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http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

Handguns are employed extensively in violent crimes such as assaults and robberies. In 1993 there were about 1.3 million such crimes committed with a firearm29—and 86 percent of the time the weapon was a handgun. Conversely, an analysis of four years of National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data indicated that gun owners claim to defend themselves with a firearm of any type approximately 65,000 times in an average year—a minute percentage compared to the total figure for violent crime.30
Gun violence frequently occurs between people who know each other – proves handguns only increase violence. LWZ

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http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

Contrary to the National Rifle Association's standard portrayal of gun violence, most gun deaths do not take place during the course of felony crime.31 Considering what the FBI has been reporting year in and year out— that most homicides result from arguments between people who know each other32—it is clear that a handgun purchased for self-protection poses the gravest danger to the very person it is supposed to protect.

*It doesn’t hurt the right to self defense anyways. LWZ*


Gun advocates sometimes argue that a prohibition would violate individuals’ rights of self-defense. Imposing a ban on guns, they argue, would be tantamount to taking a person’s gun from her just as someone is about to kill her. But this is a defective analogy. Although a prohibition would deprive people of one effective means of self-defense, it would also ensure that there would be far fewer occasions on which a gun would be necessary or even useful for self-defense. For guns would be forbidden not just to those who would use them for defense but also to those who would use them for aggression. Guns are only one means of self-defense and self-defense is only one means of achieving security against attack. It is the right to security against attack that is fundamental. A policy that unavoidably deprives a person of one means of self-defense but on balance substantially reduces her vulnerability to attack is therefore respectful of the more fundamental right from which the right of self-defense is derived.
Owning a handgun does not increase an individual’s safety because there are more outcomes where the gun is used for unjustifiable harm than protection. PJG.


While the potential victim in this case may have a perceived need to immediately obtain a handgun, it does not necessarily mean she has an ethical right to one, nor is there good evidence that her access to a gun will enhance her safety. Several possible outcomes could result from the intention to use a firearm to interrupt or deter an assault, only one of which (self-defense) is beneficial. A domestic violence victim's acquisition of a firearm may prompt the abuser to resort to more lethal methods, including using the victim's firearm against her. Victims of domestic violence are also at increased risk of attempting suicide; thus, access to a firearm increases the lethality of suicide attempts. Firearms also increase the risk of suicide and unintentional shootings among adolescents living in the home. None of these outcomes benefits the victim. Moreover, the potential for protection afforded the victim by acquiring a firearm might also be realized by other actions that pose fewer risks to victims and others (e.g., having the abuser arrested, obtaining a protective order, installing security systems, or seeking outside shelter). Pg. 674.

Citizens don’t need guns for self-defense because they have other effective options. PJG.


Taking handguns from law-abiding citizens does not deprive them of many methods of self-defense. They still have the option of escaping or calling for help, using weapons other than handguns, using their bare hands, reasoning with the criminal, or simply not resisting (which, as I pointed out above, is the next best way to avoid being injured.) It is possible that in some cases a victim would have been able to avoid theft, injury, or even death had she been armed with a handgun. This "cost" of my proposal needs to be weighed against the likely negative results of the defensive use of handguns described above: unnecessary and excessive use of handguns in self-defense; and the deaths shown by Kellermann and Reay to result from the abuse of handguns in the home. Pg. 277.
Owning guns for self-defense is self-defeating because gun owners, on average, face a greater chance of death. PJG.


Regarding the first point, it appears that gun ownership makes household members less safe, on average, than they would be in a gun-free household. First, having a gun at home apparently increases one’s likelihood of dying by suicide. This is hardly surprising considering that many suicide attempts are impulsive, reflecting immediate stressors rather than long-term hopelessness, and that guns used at close range are highly likely to kill rather than merely injure. Second, the risk of death by homicide appears to be much greater in homes with guns than in homes without guns. In homes with domestic violence, the chances that such violence will prove lethal are much higher if guns are present in the home. The risk of accidental death also increases markedly in households with guns. On the whole, having guns at home increases the risk of household members’ suffering a violent death. Thus, owning guns for the purpose of self-defense is apparently self-defeating in this sense: Household members, on average, face a greater chance of suffering a violent death if the house contains one or more guns than if the house is free of firearms. Pg. 10.

Defensive gun uses are very rare. PJG.


A figure commonly cited by gun advocates—2.5 million [defensive gun uses] dgus (whether in the household or in public) per year—is based on a telephone survey of 5,000 American adults. This figure is scarcely credible. Only 1% of respondents reported a dgu during the previous year; given the small sample size, with even a slight proportion of false positives, projections based on these responses could have yielded a grossly inflated estimate of dgus per year. Credible scholars have noted several reasons to expect false positives in this survey. In marked contrast with the 2.5 million figure, a study by the Violence Policy Center, using federally collected data for the years 2007–2011, suggests an average of 67,740 dgus annually. Pg. 11.
Saving many lives from handgun-wielding criminals outweighs the few lost lives from lacking self-defense. PJG.


First, unlike in the case of the executed innocent, we do not know in advance who the unlucky “losers” from handgun prohibition will be. All that we know is that handgun prohibition will cause some people’s death by denying them the means to defend themselves, while saving some lives that would have been taken by handgun-wielding criminals. When we execute the innocent prisoner, we clearly violate the rights of an identifiable person, albeit with the noble goal of preventing equally serious rights violations of even more people. In contrast, we do not know of any one person that she will lose her life, bodily integrity or property as a result of handgun prohibition. Quite the contrary, if my analysis in the previous section is correct, we know in advance of each person that she is more likely to be saved from potential aggressors by a handgun prohibition than she is to be victimized as a result of being denied legal access to handguns. (Similarly, wearing a seat belt is in our best interests, because of the very high probability that it will reduce our chance of injury in accidents, even though we may end up being one of the very small number of unfortunates who end up dying as a result of being pinned in place by a jammed belt in a burning car.) Since prohibition is thus in everyone’s best interests, it does not after all sacrifice a person’s rights for the benefit of others, which is what does happen when the innocent person is executed. Pg. 161.

We live with this reality because easy access to firearms is, we are told, a vital aspect of American liberty. This was the National Rifle Association’s mantra throughout its decades-long push to block or topple gun control laws. This was the Supreme Court’s rationale in declaring gun ownership an individual right protected by the Second and 14th Amendments. This is the response of the pro-gun crowd following every mass shooting, as conservatives take to social media to defend untrammeled gun access without offering any realistic solutions to gun violence. If constant gun massacres are an inevitable result of American liberty—if we cannot be truly free without letting every madman, abuser, and hothead with a grudge get guns, if we cannot send our children to school without fearing they may be slaughtered in a hail of bullets—we need to reconsider what liberty truly means.
The Constitution’s guarantee of liberty may be its most important component. Its Fifth and 14th Amendments state that neither federal nor state governments may deprive any person of “life, liberty or property without due process of law.” On their face, the Due Process Clauses protect procedural fairness for criminal defendants. But the liberty they safeguard includes some fundamental rights that the government may not violate. Justice John Marshall Harlan II, a conservative, famously described the protection of these rights as a balancing test, weighing “respect for the liberty of the individual” against “the demands of organized society”: The balance of which I speak is the balance struck by this country, having regard to what history teaches are the traditions from which it developed as well as the traditions from which it broke. That tradition is a living thing. Gun advocates reject the notion that an individual right to own firearms should be balanced against everyone else’s interest in not getting shot. They point to the Second Amendment’s debatable promise of a right to bear arms. But the Second Amendment, and the 2008 Supreme Court decision interpreting it, binds only Congress. In applying this dubious right against the states in 2010—forbidding state legislatures, counties, and cities from barring access to firearms—a plurality of the Supreme Court cited the liberty component of the 14th Amendment’s Due Process Clause. “It is clear,” the court wrote, “that the Framers and ratifiers of the 14th Amendment counted the right to keep and bear arms among those fundamental rights necessary to our system of ordered liberty.” In those days, child labor was the price we paid for liberty. Perhaps that was true in 1868, when the 14th Amendment was ratified. Perhaps that was even true in 2010—a year with fewer mass shootings than every year since. Is it true today? Here was Justice John Paul Stevens’ response to the court’s blithe likening of gun access to “liberty”: In evaluating an asserted right to be free from particular gun-control regulations, liberty is on both sides of the equation. Guns may be useful for self-defense, as well as for hunting and sport, but they also have a unique potential to facilitate death and destruction and thereby to destabilize ordered liberty. Your interest in keeping and bearing a certain firearm may diminish my interest in being and feeling safe from armed violence. And while granting you the right to own a handgun might make you safer on any given day—assuming the handgun’s marginal contribution to self-defense outweighs its marginal contribution to the risk of accident, suicide, and criminal mischief—it may make you and the community you live in less safe overall, owing to the increased number of handguns in circulation.

There have been at least 351 mass shootings so far this year. Mothers, daughters, brothers, fathers, sisters, husbands, and wives are being slaughtered every day by guns. Their blood is being shed in the name of liberty. It may be, as so many conservative commentators imply, that we cannot stop this horrific violence without infringing on others’ right to bear arms. But for the sake of these victims, and the future thousands upon thousands who will die the same way, we must at least ask: Is this trade-off worth it? As a country, we have adopted, then rejected other rights that we temporarily deemed fundamental.

Infamously, the Supreme Court enforced a “liberty to contract” in the early 20th century, striking down minimum wage and maximum hour laws. Throughout this period, the court maintained that such regulations interfered with “the right of contract between the employer and employees,” depriving workers of the liberty to labor for brutal hours and minimum pay in toxic working conditions. So the justices tossed out health and safety laws, wage and hour laws, even child labor laws. Allowing children to work in dark, dangerous mines for pennies—and, of course, no health insurance to cover their inevitable coal-induced maladies—was seen as an American value. In those days, child labor was the price we paid for liberty.
Liberty must be balanced against societal needs. LWZ


But America grew, and learned, and changed its mind. Today, we view that kind of cruel, hazardous labor as barbaric. And yet, at the same time, we are trapped in our own toxic infatuation with a new “liberty”: The liberty of anyone, anywhere, to access a gun. Many conservatives, and most Republican legislators, want us to believe that this liberty is an age-old one, as fundamental to American ideals of autonomy as freedom of speech. It is not. It is newly invented, firmly rejected by the Supreme Court until 2008, alien to our traditions and jurisprudence. Let us assume, though, that private gun ownership may be an aspect of constitutional liberty. In that case, we must balance “respect for the liberty of the individual” against “the demands on the organized society.” On one side of this equation, we have America today, which is what gun advocates have wanted all along: A freewheeling, disjointed legal framework which ultimately allows virtually anyone to access a gun. It has produced a greater number of mass shootings than this country has ever seen. On the other side, we have the possibility of fewer mass shootings and fewer gun deaths. We could make that possibility a reality, but we could only do so by limiting access to firearms. Gun advocates insist that the trade-off isn’t worth it—that endless mass shootings may simply be the price we pay for liberty. Now the country must decide: Is this liberty worth its cost in human lives?
By lowering society’s risk of gun violence, banning handguns increases autonomy because people have the freedom to live without fear of violence. PJG.


Laws that are designed to reduce gun violence may infringe some individuals' interests in gun possession, but they further the autonomy of a majority of the population that seeks to live in a safer society with a reduced risk of gun-related violence. Lowering a society's risk of gun violence enhances the freedom of individuals to choose where to live, work, go to school, recreate, and interact with others without the fear of violence limiting those choices. Recast in this consequentialist way, restrictive gun laws in Canada actually facilitate the autonomy of many while infringing the choices of a few. Reinforcing this perspective are polling data indicating that even a majority of gun owners in the U.S. would support a variety of enhanced restrictions on the ability to purchase or possess firearms. That U.S. gun policies are often dictated by the gun industry and a small percentage of the population who are gun enthusiasts presents its own set of ethical issues. Pg. 673.
AT: Checks Government

Private guns hurt the power of the government. LWZ


To many devotees of the Second Amendment, this is precisely the point. As former Congressman Jay Dickey, Republican of Arkansas, said in January 2011, “We have a right to bear arms because of the threat of government taking over the freedoms we have.” The more people there are with guns, the less able the government is to control them. But if arming the citizenry limits the power of the government, it does so by limiting the power of its agents, such as the police. Domestic defense becomes more a matter of private self-help and vigilantism and less a matter of democratically-controlled, public law enforcement. Domestic security becomes increasingly “privatized.”

It’s laughable to think handguns check the power of the government. LWZ


There is, of course, a large element of fantasy in Dickey’s claim. Individuals with handguns are no match for a modern army. It’s also a delusion to suppose that the government in a liberal democracy such as the United States could become so tyrannical that armed insurrection, rather than democratic procedures, would be the best means of constraining it. This is not Syria; nor will it ever be. Shortly after Dickey made his comment, people in Egypt rose against a government that had suppressed their freedom in ways far more serious than requiring them to pay for health care. Although a tiny minority of Egyptians do own guns, the protesters would not have succeeded if those guns had been brought to Tahrir Square. If the assembled citizens had been brandishing Glocks in accordance with the script favored by Second Amendment fantasists, the old regime would almost certainly still be in power and many Egyptians who’re now alive would be dead.
Guns don’t check the power of the government and leave us worse off: LWZ


For the police to remain effective in a society in which most of those they must confront or arrest are armed, they must, like criminals, become better armed, more numerous, and readier to fire. But if they do that, guns won’t have produced a net reduction in the power of the government but will only have generated enormous private and public expenditures, leaving the balance of power between armed citizens and the state as it was before, the unarmed conspicuously worse off, and everyone poorer except the gun industry. The alternative to maintaining the balance of power is to allow it to shift in favor of the armed citizenry and away from the police, again making unarmed citizens — including those who refuse on principle to contribute to the erosion of collective security by getting a gun — the greatest losers overall.

It creates a race to the bottom – everyone becomes armed which leaves us worse off: LWZ


The logic is inexorable: as more private individuals acquire guns, the power of the police declines, personal security becomes more a matter of self-help, and the unarmed have an increasing incentive to get guns, until everyone is armed. When most citizens then have the ability to kill anyone in their vicinity in an instant, everyone is less secure than they would be if no one had guns other than the members of a democratically accountable police force.
Private guns gut the rule of law and the government. LWZ

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/19/why-gun-control-is-not-enough/?_r=0>.

But, as with nuclear weapons, we would all be safer if no one had guns — or, rather, no one other than trained and legally constrained police officers. Domestic defense would then be conducted the way we conduct national defense. We no longer accept, as the authors of the now obsolete Second Amendment did, that “a well-regulated militia” is “necessary to the security of a free state.” Rather than leaving national defense to citizens’ militias, we now, for a variety of compelling reasons, cede the right of national defense to certain state-authorized professional institutions: the Army, Navy, and so on. We rightly trust these forces to protect us from external threats and not to become instruments of domestic repression. We could have the same trust in a police force designed to protect us from domestic threats.
AT: 2nd Amendment

Banning handguns would clearly be constitutional. LWZ

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http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

An objection continually raised to gun control is that the Second Amendment to the Constitution somehow forbids it. This is pure myth. No gun control law has ever been overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court on Second Amendment grounds. Federal bans on machine guns as well as city ordinances banning handgun possession have remained on the books for decades—despite vigorous court challenges. For all its posturing, the National Rifle Association has been reluctant to bring its Second Amendment arguments into court. (The last time it did so was in an attempt to overturn the 1981 Morton Grove, Illinois, handgun ban; the organization was roundly rejected on both the federal and state levels.) If Congress or individual states want to ban handguns, they can do so constitutionally—all they need is the will.

The 2nd Amendment self-defense argument doesn’t hold weight today. LWZ


I’m guessing those laws became necessary because of technological advancements in firearms. The culmination of those advances was Samuel Colt, who took advantage of the new technology and pushed the idea that guns are what make you free. It’s no surprise that whenever people start talking about guns, they associate it with frontier democracy — with Davy Crockett. But the Founding Fathers, it’s worth noting, did not live in a frontier society; they lived on the seaboard. The reality is that the 18th century America of James Madison, who drafted the Second Amendment, was not a frontier society, and the rates of interpersonal violence among white Americans of European descent were at their lowest during the period after the Revolution. The idea that the Founding Fathers were thinking about self-defense in the way we think about it now doesn’t really track.
The Second Amendment has been misinterpreted – it does not grant a right to a handgun in and of itself. LWZ


The Second Amendment has been misinterpreted. It says guns are permitted to a "well-regulated militia." That means trained citizen soldiers called into action for emergencies — because in colonial times every able-bodied man was required to be a member of the militia. It does not mean everyone with $50 and a driver's license is entitled to own a gun. That's what former Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger said in 1990, when he called claims of Second Amendment protection of individual gun ownership, "a fraud on the American public." Earlier this year, retired Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens called the Second Amendment one of the six great flaws with the U.S. Constitution. He called for it to be amended to say gun possession was only for state militias, not individuals.
The 2nd Amendment doesn’t necessarily give individuals the right to firearms. LWZ


All gun control debates turn on interpretations of the Second Amendment, the worst written and most bizarre part of the Constitution. For example, did you know there are two Second Amendments, one passed by Congress and a variation ratified by the states and authenticated by Thomas Jefferson when he was secretary of state? Congress’s version—made up of syntactically nonsensical fragments—won the day in the courts, but both versions are grammatical nightmares. Congress’s version reads, “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.” In the version authenticated by Jefferson, the first comma disappears, transforming the words to a more typical—yet still grammatically confusing—dependent clause followed by an independent clause. That might not sound like much of a difference, but under rules of written English, the words of the amendment used by the courts don’t make sense. The confusion has been so great that, in a major Supreme Court case, linguistics professors submitted a brief providing the justices with lessons on the punctuation and grammar. Throughout the 20th century, that first clause has been argued about endlessly. In a 1939 case, United States v. Miller, the Supreme Court held that—because of the opening word fragments of the amendment—the right to weapons (in this case, sawed-off shotguns) had to be read in conjunction with the Militia Clause in Article 1, Section 8. The court wrote, “In the absence of any evidence tending to show that possession or use of a [sawed-off] shotgun…has some reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well regulated militia, we cannot say that the Second Amendment guarantees the right to keep and bear such an instrument.” In other words, gun owners in the United States had no right to buy, sell or possess any firearms unless those weapons were reasonably connected to a militia’s needs.
AT: Can’t Enforce

It’s not impossible – if gun advocates ceased to oppose, prohibition would be possible. LWZ


Gun advocates will object that a prohibition of private gun ownership is an impossibility in the United States. But this is not an objection they can press in good faith, for the only reason that a legal prohibition could be impossible in a democratic state is that a majority oppose it. If gun advocates ceased to oppose it, a prohibition would be possible.

That’s not an argument against prohibition. LWZ


They will next argue that even if there were a legal prohibition, it could not be enforced with anything approaching complete effectiveness. This is true. As long as some people somewhere have guns, some people here can get them. Similarly, the legal prohibition of murder cannot eliminate murder. But the prohibition of murder is more effective than a policy of “murder control” would be.

Guns are not like alcohol and drugs, both of which we have tried unsuccessfully to prohibit. Many people have an intense desire for alcohol or drugs that is independent of what other people may do. But the need for a gun for self-defense depends on whether other people have them and how effective the protection and deterrence provided by the state are. Thus, in other Western countries in which there are fewer guns, there are correspondingly fewer instances in which people need guns for effective self-defense.
AT: Gun Control Measures

*Background checks don’t work – they’re circumvented. LWZ*

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http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/07/23-gun-control-aurora-kaufmann

For instance, undercover sting operations found that 94 percent of licensed dealers at gun shows in Ohio, Tennessee, and Nevada completed sales to people who appeared to be criminals or straw purchasers, and 63 percent of private sellers at those gun shows sold guns to purchasers who stated they probably could not pass a background check. Furthermore, while lethal “assault weapons” (semi-automatic firearms) have no known civilian use benefits whatsoever, the ban on their use in the United States was lifted in 2004.
AT: Mentally Ill

*Blaming gun violence on the mentally ill is stigmatizing and wrong. LWZ.*


Let us also reject the gun lobby's unnecessary stigmatization of the mentally ill. The truth is the majority of individuals with a mental illness diagnosis will never be violent toward others. Only about 4 percent of interpersonal violence in America is caused by mental illness alone (there is, however, a strong correlation with mental illness and suicide). Yet, if you were to focus on media coverage surrounding mass shootings, you'd likely come away with the impression that all mentally ill Americans are violent, crazed maniacs who are moments away from going postal. This is patently untrue, and it diverts us from a productive discourse about true risk factors for violence -- including low socioeconomic status, substance abuse, and history of arrest.

*Mental illness is just an excuse and only banning guns can work. LWZ*


Gun supporters say, "It's not guns that cause gun violence, it's mentally ill people with guns; fix the mentally ill." Even if those same people did not oppose government spending on the mentally ill — which they have for decades — there is no predicting when mental illness will express itself in violence. All of those who knew FSU library shooter Myron May called him the "last person" from whom they would have expected violence. They all knew he was mentally troubled. But they said he didn't even like guns. You can't prevent mental illness. You can prevent humans from having easy access to tools they can use to harm other people.

Opponents of gun control tend to point to other factors to explain America's unusual gun violence: mental illness, for example. Jonathan Metzl, a mental health expert at Vanderbilt University, told me that this is just not the case. People with mental illnesses are more likely to be victims, not perpetrators, of violence. And while it's true that an extraordinary amount of mass shooters (up to 60 percent) have some kind of psychiatric or psychological symptoms, Metzl points out that other factors are much better predictors of gun violence: substance abuse, poverty, history of violence, and, yes, access to guns.
**AT: 2007 Harvard Study**

*This paper wasn’t peer reviewed and misrepresented research. LWZ*

http://www.snopes.com/harvard-flaw-review/

Claim: A 2007 Harvard University study proved that areas with higher rates of gun ownership have lower crime rates. WHAT'S TRUE: Gun rights advocates Gary Mauser and Don Kates jointly authored a 2007 paper in the Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy arguing that higher rates of gun ownership correlated with lower crime rates. WHAT'S FALSE: The paper in question was not peer-reviewed, it didn't constitute a study, and it misrepresented separate research to draw shaky, unsupported conclusions.

*It literally is not a study. LWZ*

http://www.snopes.com/harvard-flaw-review/

While identifying details were curiously absent on the five pages that followed, it was clear the "study" in question was an item titled "Would Banning Firearms Reduce Murder and Suicide?" originally published in the Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy (Volume 30, Number 2) [PDF]. Of primary importance is the subsequent, widely misapplied label of the word "study" with reference to the 2007 item in question. The Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy describes itself as "one of the most widely circulated student-edited law reviews and the nation’s leading forum for conservative and libertarian legal scholarship." Papers published in that journal are (while perhaps competitively sourced) in no way equivalent to peer-reviewed research published in a credible science-related journals as "studies." Use of the term "study" to refer that 2007 article dishonestly suggested that the assertions made by its authors were gathered and vetted under more rigorous study conditions, which didn't appear to be the case.

*The 2007 study is not scientific at all. LWZ*

http://www.snopes.com/harvard-flaw-review/

In a document dated June 2009 [PDF], Director of the Harvard Injury Control Research Center Dr. David Hemenway addressed the 2007 article's flaws in correlating higher rates of gun ownership with lower crime rates thusly: The article appears in a publication, described as a "student law review for conservative and libertarian legal scholarship.” It does not appear to be a peer-reviewed journal, or one that is searching for truth as opposed to presenting a certain world view. The paper itself is not a scientific article, but a polemic, making the claim that gun availability does not affect homicide or suicide. It does this by ignoring most of the scientific literature, and by making too many incorrect and illogical claims.
Actual scientific studies conclude this paper is wrong. LWZ

http://www.snopes.com/harvard-flaw-review/

Incidentally, Hemenway is named as a researcher on a 2007 Social Science and Medicine study titled "State-Level Homicide Victimization Rates in the US in Relation to Survey Measures of Household Firearm Ownership, 2001–2003." That research (carried out by researchers at the Harvard Injury Control Research Center) found: Analyses that controlled for several measures of resource deprivation, urbanization, aggravated assault, robbery, unemployment, and alcohol consumption found that states with higher rates of household firearm ownership had significantly higher homicide victimization rates for children, and for women and men. In these analyses, states within the highest quartile of firearm prevalence had firearm homicide rates 114% higher than states within the lowest quartile of firearm prevalence. Overall homicide rates were 60% higher. The association between firearm prevalence and homicide was driven by gun-related homicide rates; non-gun-related homicide rates were not significantly associated with rates of firearm ownership.

This paper is wrong and biased. LWZ

http://www.snopes.com/harvard-flaw-review/

In short, the purported 2007 Harvard "study" with "astonishing" findings was in fact a polemic paper penned by two well-known gun rights activists. Its findings were neither peer-reviewed nor subject to academic scrutiny of any sort prior to its appearance, and the publication that carried it was a self-identified ideology-based editorial outlet edited by Harvard students. The paper disingenuously misrepresented extant research to draw its conclusions, and researchers at Harvard (among which Kates and Mauser were not included) later objected to the paper's being framed as a "study" from Harvard (rather than a law review paper). The paper wasn't "virtually unpublicized research" (as BeliefNet claimed); rather, it was simply not deemed noteworthy at the time it was published due to the fact it was neither a study nor much more than a jointly-written editorial piece representing its authors' unsupported opinions.
AT: Gun Ban Fuels Black Market

*Greater gun ownership increases illegal gun trafficking because there is a greater prevalence of guns to be stolen for the black market. PJG.*


Our own research also reveals another harm associated with the easy availability of firearms in some U.S. states: illegal gun trafficking. Guns used for crime in cities and states with more restrictive laws are more likely to have first been sold by out-of-state retailers in places with weaker laws. In particular, cities located in states with restrictive licensing, often coupled with firearm registration laws, have a much smaller share of their crimes originating from in-state dealers than other cities. Even guns owned by law-abiding citizens contribute to illegal gun trafficking and gun crime in communities. An estimated 500,000 firearms are stolen from U.S. homes every year, and thus directly enter the criminal market. Some evidence suggests that higher rates of gun ownership within communities actually increase the risk for home burglaries, perhaps because firearms are an attractive item for burglars to steal. Pg. 672.
A handgun ban decreases overall gun supply, making it more difficult for criminals to get them from the black market. PJG.


Another reason why a general ban is preferable to a targeted restriction is that, by virtue of reducing the overall "pool" of guns, it will reduce the real number of guns in the hands of criminals, even if it does increase the percentage of gun owners who are felons. The illegal means by which criminals would have to obtain guns—for instance buying them from unlicensed pawnbrokers, illegal transfers, buying them from friends who originally bought them legally, and outright theft—are all dependent on the presence of a substantial supply of legally purchased handguns on the market. My proposal would shrink this supply, and hence make it increasingly difficult for criminals to obtain handguns. It would also help to keep guns out of the hands of lawbreakers who have so far eluded conviction, and would hence qualify for gun ownership under a "targeted" ban. The "cost" of my proposal is that it does restrict many gun owners who never would have used their guns to commit homicide or any other crime. However, this price is more than justified by its far greater effectiveness than felons-only bans in reducing the number of murders, as it gradually and over the years reduces the number of handguns in circulation in the United States and chips away at the "gun culture" that encourages their use. Pg. 267.
AT: Criminals Will Still Kill

Anyone is capable of losing control and using a gun, not just criminals, so banning guns will still have an effect on gun use. PJG.


Underlying the effort to target gun control at those who have prior convictions is the belief that it is these people who are most likely to misuse firearms in the future, especially in the case of homicide. However, in the case of homicides, this belief is vigorously challenged by advocates of gun control. Murder, the argument goes, is not confined to the ranks of those with criminal records. It is an act of terrible violence of which we are all capable if sufficiently provoked. Only 21% of murders occur during the commission of another felony. In at least 48.8% of 1990 homicides, the victim was either a relative or an acquaintance of the murderer.79 In 1990, 34.5% of all murders resulted from domestic or other kinds of argument. Since we are all capable of heated arguments, we are all, in the wrong circumstances, capable of losing control and killing our opponent. There, but for the grace of God, we all go. Given the ease with which homicide can be committed with a handgun as opposed to other more primitive methods (e.g. clubs or knives), the ease of availability of handguns may well be the factor which transforms a heated argument into a lethal attack. The simple option of running away—which is very seldom mentioned in the anti-gun control literature—will be available far more often in the case of these other kinds of attacks than in the case of a handgun attack. Gun control measures that are targeted solely at those with criminal records fail to protect us from the most likely source of handgun murder: ordinary citizens. Pg. 266.

AT: criminals will still kill: Victims have a better chance of getting away from a criminal without a gun because they have the chance to run away. PJG.


Let us suppose that robbers turn to knives, clubs, other instruments, and their hands and feet to threaten and perhaps injure their victims. This is exactly what gun control advocates want, since these weapons are far less lethal than handguns. While it is true that stabblings and beatings are horribly lethal in their own right, a crucial difference is that running away will at least sometimes be an option for the victim, whereas this tactic will be of little use in the face of a loaded gun. A reduction in robberies and in their degree of violence is a likely result of such a substitution. Pg. 268
Neg Counters
AT: Guns Increase Violence

Arguments that increased gun sales led to increased crime have it backwards. LWZ


In the United States, the murder rate doubled in the ten-year span between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s. Since this rise coincided with vastly increasing gun sales, it was viewed by many as proof positive that more guns equal more death. That conclusion, however, does not follow. It is at least equally possible that the causation was reversed: that is, the decade’s spectacular increases in murder, burglary, and all kinds of violent crimes caused fearful people to buy guns.123 The dubiousness of assuming that the gun sales caused the rise in murder rather than the reverse might have been clearer had it been known in this period that virtually the same murder rate increase was occurring in gun-less Russia.124 Clearly there is little basis to assume guns were the reason for the American murder rate rise when the Russian murder rate exhibited the same increase without a similar increase in the number of guns.
The argument that the US has the highest murder rate is politically biased and factually incorrect. LWZ


http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

Since at least 1965, the false assertion that the United States has the industrialized world’s highest murder rate has been an artifact of politically motivated Soviet minimization designed to hide the true homicide rates. Since well before that date, the Soviet Union possessed extremely stringent gun controls that were effectuated by a police state apparatus providing stringent enforcement. So successful was that regime that few Russian civilians now have firearms and very few murders involve them. Yet, manifest success in keeping its people disarmed did not prevent the Soviet Union from having far and away the highest murder rate in the developed world. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the gun-less Soviet Union’s murder rates paralleled or generally exceeded those of gun ridden America. While American rates stabilized and then steeply declined, however, Russian murder increased so drastically that by the early 1990s the Russian rate was three times higher than that of the United States. Between 1998-2004 (the latest figure available for Russia), Russian murder rates were nearly four times higher than American rates. Similar murder rates also characterize the Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and various other now independent European nations of the former U.S.S.R. Thus, in the United States and the former Soviet Union transitioning into current day Russia, “homicide results suggest that where guns are scarce other weapons are substituted in killings.”

While American gun ownership is quite high, Table 1 shows many other developed nations (e.g., Norway, Finland, Germany, France, Denmark) with high rates of gun ownership. These countries, however, have murder rates as low or lower than many developed nations in which gun ownership is much rarer. For example, Luxembourg, where handguns are totally banned and ownership of any kind of gun is minimal, had a murder rate nine times higher than Germany in 2002.
More guns equal more death isn’t true based on cross-national comparisons. LWZ

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Startling as the foregoing may seem, it represents the cross-national norm, not some bizarre departure from it. If the mantra “more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death” were true, broad based cross-national comparisons should show that nations with higher gun ownership per capita consistently have more death. Nations with higher gun ownership rates, however, do not have higher murder or suicide rates than those with lower gun ownership. Indeed many high gun ownership nations have much lower murder rates. Consider, for example, the wide divergence in murder rates among Continental European nations with widely divergent gun ownership rates. The non-correlation between gun ownership and murder is reinforced by examination of statistics from larger numbers of nations across the developed world. Comparison of “homicide and suicide mortality data for thirty-six nations (including the United States) for the period 1990–1995” to gun ownership levels showed “no significant (at the 5% level) association between gun ownership levels and the total homicide rate.”41 Consistent with this is a later European study of data from 21 nations in which “no significant correlations [of gun ownership levels] with total suicide or homicide rates were found.”42
England demonstrates that there is a negative correlation between guns and violence. LWZ

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The same pattern appears when comparisons of violence to gun ownership are made within nations. Indeed, “data on firearms ownership by constabulary area in England,” like data from the United States, show “a negative correlation,” that is, “where firearms are most dense violent crime rates are lowest, and where guns are least dense violent crime rates are highest.”

Many different data sets from various kinds of sources are summarized as follows by the leading text: [T]here is no consistent significant positive association between gun ownership levels and violence rates: across (1) time within the United States, (2) U.S. cities, (3) counties within Illinois, (4) country sized areas like England, U.S. states, (5) regions of the United States, (6) nations, or (7) population subgroups . . . .

Europe’s low homicide rates cannot be causally attributed to gun control. LWZ

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A second misconception about the relationship between firearms and violence attributes Europe’s generally low homicide rates to stringent gun control. That attribution cannot be accurate since murder in Europe was at an all time low before the gun controls were introduced. For instance, virtually the only English gun control during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the practice that police patrolled without guns. During this period gun control prevailed far less in England or Europe than in certain American states which nevertheless had—and continue to have—murder rates that were and are comparatively very high.
Evidence concludes that the US crime rate has fallen regardless of other factors. LWZ


Although the reason is thus obscured, the undeniable result is that violent crime, and homicide in particular, has plummeted in the United States over the past 15 years.34 The fall in the American crime rate is even more impressive when compared with the rest of the world. In 18 of the 25 countries surveyed by the British Home Office, violent crime increased during the 1990s.35 This contrast should induce thoughtful people to wonder what happened in those nations, and to question policies based on the notion that introducing increasingly more restrictive firearm ownership laws reduces violent crime. Perhaps the United States is doing something right in promoting firearms for law-abiding responsible adults. Or perhaps the United States’ success in lowering its violent crime rate relates to increasing its prison population or its death sentences.36 Further research is required to identify more precisely which elements of the United States’ approach are the most important, or whether all three elements acting in concert were necessary to reduce violent crimes.

There is no evidence that guns are the key factor in crime. LWZ


To reiterate, the determinants of murder and suicide are basic social, economic, and cultural factors, not the prevalence of some form of deadly mechanism. In this connection, recall that the American jurisdictions which have the highest violent crime rates are precisely those with the most stringent gun controls.49 This correlation does not necessarily prove gun advocates’ assertion that gun controls actually encourage crime by depriving victims of the means of self-defense. The explanation of this correlation may be political rather than criminological: jurisdictions afflicted with violent crime tend to severely restrict gun ownership. This, however, does not suppress the crime, for banning guns cannot alleviate the socio-cultural and economic factors that are the real determinants of violence and crime rates. 50
Ordinary people are not responsible for most gun violence. LWZ

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The “more guns equal more death” mantra seems plausible only when viewed through the rubric that murders mostly involve ordinary people who kill because they have access to a firearm when they get angry. If this were true, murder might well increase where people have ready access to firearms, but the available data provides no such correlation. Nations and areas with more guns per capita do not have higher murder rates than those with fewer guns per capita. Nevertheless, critics of gun ownership often argue that a “gun in the closet to protect against burglars will most likely be used to shoot a spouse in a moment of rage …. The problem is you and me—law-abiding folks;” that banning handgun possession only for those with criminal records will “fail to protect us from the most likely source of handgun murder: ordinary citizens;” that “most gun-related homicides . . . are the result of impulsive actions taken by individuals who have little or no criminal background or who are known to the victims;” that “the majority of firearm homicide[s occur] . . . not as the result of criminal activity, but because of arguments between people who know each other;” that each year there are thousands of gun murders “by law-abiding citizens who might have stayed law-abiding if they had not possessed firearms.” These comments appear to rest on no evidence and actually contradict facts that have so uniformly been established by homicide studies dating back to the 1890s that they have become “criminological axioms.” Insofar as studies focus on perpetrators, they show that neither a majority, nor many, nor virtually any murderers are ordinary “law-abiding citizens.” Rather, almost all murderers are extremely aberrant individuals with life histories of violence, psychopathology, substance abuse, and other dangerous behaviors. “The vast majority of persons involved in life-threatening violence have a long criminal record with many prior contacts with the justice system.” “Thus homicide—[whether] of a stranger or [of] someone known to the offender—‘is usually part of a pattern of violence, engaged in by people who are known . . . as violence prone.’” Though only 15% of Americans over the age of 15 have arrest records, approximately 90 percent of “adult murderers have adult records, with an average adult criminal career [involving crimes committed as an adult rather than as a child] of six or more years, including four major adult felony arrests.” These national statistics dovetail with data from local nineteenth and twentieth century studies. For example: victims as well as offenders [in 1950s and 1960s Philadelphia murders] tended to be people with prior police records, usually for violent crimes such as assault.” “The great majority of both perpetrators and victims of [1970s Harlem] assaults and murders had previous [adult] arrests, probably over 80% or more.”66 Boston police and probation officers in the 1990s agreed that of those juvenile-perpetrated murders where all the facts were known, virtually all were committed by gang members, though the killing was not necessarily gang-directed. One example would be a gang member who stabs his girlfriend to death in a fit of anger.68 Regardless of their arrests for
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other crimes, 80% of 1997 Atlanta murder arrestees had at least one earlier drug offense with 70% having 3 or more prior drug offenses.69 A New York Times study of the 1,662 murders committed in that city in the years 2003–2005 found that “[m]ore than 90 percent of the killers had criminal records.” 70 Baltimore police figures show that “92 percent of murder suspects had [prior] criminal records in 2006.”71 Several of the more recent homicide studies just reviewed were done at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard and found almost all arrested murderers to have earlier arrests.72

Studies indicate that most murders are not committed by ordinary, law-abiding citizens. LWZ


That murderers are not ordinary, law-abiding responsible adults is further documented in other sources. Psychological studies of juvenile murderers variously find that at least 80%, if not all, are psychotic or have psychotic symptoms.73 Of Massachusetts domestic murderers in the years 1991–1995, 73.7% had a “prior [adult] criminal history,” 16.5% had an active restraining order registered against them at the time of the homicide, and 46.3% of the violent perpetrators had had a restraining order taken out against them sometime before their crime.74 This last study is one of many exposing the false argument that a significant number of murders involve ordinary people killing spouses in a moment of rage. Although there are many domestic homicides, such murders do not occur frequently in ordinary families, nor are the murderers ordinary, law-abiding adults. “The day-to-day reality is that most family murders are prefaces by a long history of assaults.”75

One study of such murders found that “a history of domestic violence was present in 95.8%” of cases.76 These findings are a routine feature of domestic homicide studies: “[d]omestic partner homicide is most often the final outcome of chronic women battering”:77 based on a study from Kansas City, 90% of all the family homicides were preceded by previous disturbances at the same address, with a median of 5 calls per address.”78 The only kind of evidence cited to support the myth that most murderers are ordinary people is that many murders arise from arguments or occur in homes and between acquaintances.79 These bare facts are only relevant if one assumes that criminals do not have acquaintances or homes or arguments. Of the many studies belying this, the broadest analyzed a year’s national data on gun murders occurring in homes and between acquaintances. It found “the most common victim-offender relationship” was “where both parties . . . knew one another because of prior illegal transactions.”80 Thus the term “acquaintance homicide” does not refer solely to murders between ordinary acquaintances. Rather it encompasses, for example: drug dealers killed by competitors or customers, gang members killed by members of the same or rival gangs, and women killed by stalkers or abusers who have brutalized them on earlier occasions, all individuals for whom federal and state laws already prohibit gun possession.81

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Certainly some people should not own firearms, but that is not a reason to ban it for all citizens. LWZ


Obviously there are certain people who should not be allowed to own any deadly instrument. Reasonable as such prohibitions are, it is unrealistic to think those people will comply with such restrictions any more readily than they do with laws against violent crime. In any event, studies analyzing acquaintance homicide suggest there is no reason for laws prohibiting gun possession by ordinary, law-abiding responsible adults because such people virtually never murder. If one accepts that such adults are far more likely to be victims of violent crime than to commit it, disarming them becomes not just unproductive but counter-productive.
Socio-economic factors explain the difference between US and European homicide rates.

LWZ


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Moreover, if the deterrent effect of gun ownership accounts for low violence rates in high gun ownership nations other than the United States, one wonders why that deterrent effect would be amplified there. Even with the drop in United States murder rates that Lott and Mustard attribute to the massive increase in gun carry licensing, the United States murder rate is still eight times higher than Norway’s—even though the U.S. has an almost 300% higher rate of gun ownership. That is consistent with the points made above. Murder rates are determined by socio-economic and cultural factors. In the United States, those factors include that the number of civilian-owned guns nearly equals the population—triple the ownership rate in even the highest European gun-ownership nations—and that vast numbers of guns are kept for personal defense. That is not a factor in other nations with comparatively high firearm ownership. High gun ownership may well be a factor in the recent drastic decline in American homicide. But even so, American homicide is driven by socio-economic and cultural factors that keep it far higher than the comparable rate of homicide in most European nations.
Guns aren’t key for determining murder rates. LWZ


Thus both sides of the gun prohibition debate are likely wrong in viewing the availability of guns as a major factor in the incidence of murder in any particular society. Though many people may still cling to that belief, the historical, geographic, and demographic evidence explored in this Article provides a clear admonishment. Whether gun availability is viewed as a cause or as a mere coincidence, the long term macrocosmic evidence is that gun ownership spread widely throughout societies consistently correlates with stable or declining murder rates. Whether causative or not, the consistent international pattern is that more guns equal less murder and other violent crime. Even if one is inclined to think that gun availability is an important factor, the available international data cannot be squared with the mantra that more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death. Rather, if firearms availability does matter, the data consistently show that the way it matters is that more guns equal less violent crime.
Geographic, demographic, and historical evidence indicates that guns do not increase violence. LWZ

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If more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death, it should follow, all things being equal, (1) that geographic areas with higher gun ownership should have more murder than those with less gun ownership; (2) that demographic groups with higher gun ownership should be more prone to murder than those with less ownership; and (3) that historical eras in which gun ownership is widespread should have more murder than those in which guns were fewer or less widespread. As discussed earlier, these effects are not present. Historical eras, demographic groups, and geographic areas with more guns do not have more murders than those with fewer guns. Indeed, those with more guns often, or even generally, have fewer murders. Of course, all other things may not be equal. Obviously, many factors other than guns may promote or reduce the number of murders in any given place or time or among particular groups. And it may be impossible even to identify these factors, much less to take account of them all. Thus any conclusions drawn from the kinds of evidence presented earlier in this paper must necessarily be tentative.
Gun ownership does not determine gun violence – France and Germany prove. LWZ


The second issue, allied to the burden of proof, regards plausibility. On their face, the following facts from Tables 1 and 2 suggest that gun ownership is irrelevant, or has little relevance, to murder: France and neighboring Germany have exactly the same, comparatively high rate of gun ownership, yet the French murder rate is nearly twice the German; France has infinitely more gun ownership than Luxembourg, which nevertheless has a murder rate five times greater, though handguns are illegal and other types of guns sparse; Germany has almost double the gun ownership rate of neighboring Austria yet a similarly very low murder rate; the Norwegian gun ownership rate is over twice the Austrian rate, yet the murder rates are almost identical.

A comparison between Slovenia and Slovakia demonstrates gun ownership does not directly influence gun violence. LWZ


And then there is Table 3, which shows Slovenia, with 66% more gun ownership than Slovakia, nevertheless has roughly one-third less murder per capita; Hungary has more than 6 times the gun ownership rate of neighboring Romania but a lower murder rate; the Czech Republic’s gun ownership rate is more than 3 times that of neighboring Poland, but its murder rate is lower; Poland and neighboring Slovenia have exactly the same murder rate, though Slovenia has over triple the gun ownership per capita.
We can’t make causal claims of gun ownership to gun violence. LWZ

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On their face, Tables 1, 2, and 3 and the comparisons gleaned from them suggest that gun ownership is irrelevant, or has little relevance, to murder. Historical and demographic comparisons offer further evidence. Again, all the data may be misleading. It is conceivable that more guns do equal more murder, but that this causation does not appear because some unidentifiable extraneous factor always intervenes. That is conceivable, but ultimately unlikely. As Hans Toch, a senior American criminologist who 35 years ago endorsed handgun prohibition and confiscation, but then recanted based on later research, argues “it is hard to explain that where firearms are most dense, violent crime rates are lowest and where guns are least dense, violent crime rates are highest.”90

Patterns of gun ownership disprove the increased gun violence thesis. LWZ

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Contrary to what should be the case if more guns equal more death, there are no “consistent indications of a link between gun ownership and criminal or violent behavior by owners;” in fact, gun ownership is “higher among whites than among blacks, higher among middle-aged people than among young people, higher among married than among unmarried people, higher among richer people than poor”—all “patterns that are the reverse of the way in which criminal behavior is distrib- uted.”91
Black homicide rates are higher than white homicide rates, but this does not coincide with gun ownership rates, so more deaths don’t correlate with more guns. PJG.


Consider, incidentally, what the more-guns-equal-more-murder myth would imply if anyone, including its propagandists, took it seriously. Black homicide rates are eight-to-ten times higher than white homicide rates; therefore, if guns are a cause of murder, guns must be many times more common among blacks than whites. However, in general, urban blacks are less likely to own guns than are urban whites." Those who are more likely to own guns are the tiny minority of black criminals. Rural blacks do own guns as frequently as whites. Thus, if the anti-gun myth were correct, rural blacks would have far higher murder rates than urban blacks. But the reverse is true. The gun murder rate among young black urban males is 9.3 times higher than among the well-armed young black rural males. Pg. 1689.
AT: Guns Cause Accidental Deaths

The accidental gun death rate is insignificant. PJG.


Consider the principle that one lacks a right to do things that impose unacceptable, though unintended, risks on others. Since life is replete with risks, to be plausible, the principle must use some notion of excessive risks. But the risks associated with normal ownership and recreational use of firearms are minimal. While approximately 77 million Americans now own guns, the accidental death rate for firearms has fallen dramatically during the last century, and is now about .3 per 100,000 population. For comparison, the average citizen is nineteen times more likely to die as a result of an accidental fall, and fifty times more likely to die in an automobile accident, than to die as a result of a firearms accident.

Normal people are unlikely to use handguns to accidentally or purposefully commit a murder; most murderers had prior criminal records. PJG.


Some may think that the firearms accident statistics miss the point: the real risk that gun ownership imposes on others is the risk that the gun owner or someone else will "lose control" during an argument and decide to shoot his opponent. Nicholas Dixon argues: "In 1990, 34.5% of all murders resulted from domestic or other kinds of argument. Since we are all capable of heated arguments, we are all, in the wrong circumstances, capable of losing control and killing our opponent." In response, we should first note the invalidity of Dixon's argument. Suppose that 34.5% of people who run a 4-minute mile have black hair, and that I have black hair. It does not follow that I am capable of running a 4-minute mile. It seems likely that only very atypical individuals would respond to heated arguments by killing their opponents. Second, Dixon's and McMahan's claims are refuted by the empirical evidence. In the largest seventy-five counties in the United States in 1988, over 89% of adult murderers had prior criminal records as adults. This reinforces the common sense view that normal people are extremely unlikely to commit a murder, even if they have the means available. So gun ownership does not typically impose excessive risks on others.
AT: Suicide

Suicide will happen with other means. LWZ


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However unintentionally, the irrelevance of focusing on weaponry is highlighted by the most common theme in the more guns equal more death argument. Epitomizing this theme is a World Health Organization (WHO) report asserting, “The easy availability of firearms has been associated with higher firearm mortality rates.”43 The authors, in noting that the presence of a gun in a home corresponds to a higher risk of suicide, apparently assume that if denied firearms, potential suicides will decide to live rather than turning to the numerous alternative suicide mechanisms. The evidence, however, indicates that denying one particular means to people who are motivated to commit suicide by social, economic, cultural, or other circumstances simply pushes them to some other means.44 Thus, it is not just the murder rate in gunless Russia that is four times higher than the American rate; the Russian suicide rate is also about four times higher than the American rate.45
Multi-national studies disprove the relationship between suicide and gun ownership. LWZ


The mantra more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death is also used to argue that “limiting access to firearms could prevent many suicides.”141 Once again, this assertion is directly contradicted by the studies of 36 and 21 nations (respectively) which find no statistical relationship. Overall suicide rates were no worse in nations with many firearms than in those where firearms were far less widespread.142 Consider the data about European nations in Tables 5 and 6. Sweden, with over twice as much gun ownership as neighboring Germany and a third more gun suicide, nevertheless has the lower overall suicide rate. Greece has nearly three times more gun ownership than the Czech Republic and somewhat more gun suicide, yet the overall Czech suicide rate is over 175% higher than the Greek rate. Spain has over 12 times more gun ownership than Poland, yet the latter’s overall suicide rate is more than double the former’s. Tragically, Finland has over 14 times more gun ownership than neighboring Estonia, and a great deal more gun-related suicide. Estonia, however, turns out to have a much higher suicide rate than Finland overall.
Guns do not increase suicide. LWZ


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There is simply no relationship evident between the extent of suicide and the extent of gun ownership. People do not commit suicide because they have guns available. In the absence of firearms, people who are inclined to commit suicide kill themselves some other way.143 Two examples seem as pertinent as they are poignant. The first concerns the 1980s increase in suicide among young American males, an increase that, although relatively modest, inspired perfervid denunciations of gun ownership.144 What these denunciations failed to mention was that suicide of teenagers and young adults was increasing throughout the entire industrialized world, regardless of gun availability, and often much more rapidly than in the United States. The only unusual aspect of suicide in the United States was that it involved guns. The irrelevancy of guns to the increase in American suicide is evident because suicide among English youth actually increased 10 times more sharply, with “car exhaust poisoning [being] the method of suicide used most often.”145 By omitting such facts, the articles blaming guns for increasing American suicide evaded the inconvenience of having to explain exactly what social benefit nations with few guns received from having their youth suicides occur in other ways.

People will switch to other methods. LWZ


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Guns are just one among numerous available deadly instruments. Thus, banning guns cannot reduce the amount of suicides. Such measures only reduce the number of suicides by firearms. Suicides committed in other ways increase to make up the difference. People do not commit suicide because they have guns available. They kill themselves for reasons they deem sufficient, and in the absence of firearms they just kill themselves in some other way.
AT: Police Will Provide Protection

Police protection is not good enough for victims to rely on. PJG.


The argument that victims should be disarmed and should rely on police protection conflates two errors. First, police protection is generally unavailable. No matter how dedicated police may be, fewer than one million officers cannot protect more than 300 million Americans from crime. Police might intervene in crimes they observe, so criminals take care to strike when police are not observing. In less than 3% of reported serious crimes, police arrived in time even to arrest offenders, much less protect victims. Furthermore, as Professor Johnson's article shows, all too often police will not protect minority victims. Consider what happens when police are sued for not protecting victims: police lawyers invoke the universal principle that police prevent crime only indirectly—by patrolling the streets and by apprehending criminals after their crimes. Pg. 1692.

People shouldn’t rely on police for protection because the police are not legally responsible for protecting victims. PJG.


Police are not legally responsible for protecting victims. The laws of every state exonerate police from suit for non-protection. Thus, the second error in relying on police protection is that protecting individuals is not the job of police. As an example, California's Government Tort Liability Act provides that a police department and its officers are not liable for injury caused by failure to enforce an enactment, nor for failure to provide police protection or failure to provide sufficient police protection, nor for failure to make an arrest or failure to retain an arrested person in custody. Literally dozens of cases from the fifty states agree as a matter of common law. Pg. 1692.
Cases
Aff Case

Introduction:

I affirm. Resolved: In the United States, private ownership of handguns ought to be banned.

I offer the following definitions for use in the debate round.

Private ownership is defined by the Collins dictionary as, “the fact of being owned by a private individual or organization, rather than by the state or a public body,” (Colling Dictionary).

A handgun is defined by Merriam Websters Dictionary as, “a small gun (such as a revolver or a pistol) designed to be held and shot with one hand,” (Merriam Websters).

Ban is defined by Merriam Websters as, “to forbid people from using (something)” as well as is qualified as, “to prohibit especially by legal means” and, “to prohibit the use, performance, or distribution of,” (Merriam Websters).

This means that the affirmative’s advocacy is to remove any ability to get a handgun, use a handgun, or distribute a handgun to private owners.

I value morality as the resolution questions what the United States ought to do.

______________________________

Unlike individuals, states have a duty to protect millions of lives, and thus must weigh costs and benefits. Gary Woller explains,


Appeals to \textit{A priori} moral principles, such as environmental preservation, also often fail to acknowledge that public policies inevitably entail trade-offs among competing values. Thus since policymakers cannot justify inherent value conflicts to the public in any philosophical sense, and since public only general guidance to ethical dilemmas in public affairs and do not themselves suggest appropriate public policies, and at worst, they create a regimen of regulatory unreasonableness while failing to adequately address the problem or actually making it worse. For example, a \textit{Moral obligation[s]} to preserve the environment by no means imply\textit{ the best way,} or any way for that matter, to do so \textit{solve problems}. Just as there is no a priori reason to believe that any policy that claims to preserve the environment will actually do so. \textit{Any number of policies might work, and others, although seemingly consistent with the moral principle, will fail}. Utterly.

That deontological principles are an inadequate basis for environmental policy is evident in the rather significant irony that most forms of deontologically based environmental laws and regulations tend to be implemented in a very utilitarian manner by street-level enforcement officials. Moreover, ignoring the relevant costs and benefits of environmental policy and their attendant incentive structures can, as alluded to above, actually work at cross purposes to environmental preservation. (There exists an extensive literature on this aspect of regulatory enforcement and the often perverse out-comes of regulatory policy. See, for example, Ackerman, 1981; Bartrip and Fenn, 1983; Hawkins, 1983, 1984; Hawkins and Thomas, 1984.) Even the most die-hard preservationist/deontologist would, I believe, be troubled by this outcome.

The above points are perhaps best expressed by Richard Flathman, The number of values typically involved in public policy decisions, the broad categories which must be employed and above all, the scope and complexity of the consequences to be anticipated militate against reasoning so conclusively that they generate an imperative to institute a specific policy. It is seldom the case that only one policy will meet the criteria of the public interest (1958, p. 12). It therefore follows that \textit{If} a
democracy, policymakers have an ethical duty to establish a plausible link between policy alternatives and the problems they address[]. and the public must be reasonably assured that a policy will actually do something about an existing problem; this requires the means-end language and methodology of utilitarian ethics. Good intentions, lofty rhetoric, and moral piety are an insufficient[], though perhaps at times a necessary, basis for public policy in a democracy."

This means that arguments pertaining to how the government works as a democracy will always be utilitarian in nature since it’s a policymaker’s duty to ensure we stop really bad harms. A governmental actor’s primary responsibility is to its citizens, George Kennan explains,

Morality and Foreign PolicyGeorge F. Kennan From Foreign Affairs, Winter 1985/86 George F. Kennan is Professor Emeritus at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. Copyright © 1985 by George F. Kennan.

the functions, commitments and moral obligations of governments are not the same as those of the individual. Government[s] primary obligation is to the interests of the national society it represents, not to the moral impulses that individual elements of that society may experience. The interests of the national society for which government has to concern itself are basically those of its military security, the integrity of its political life and the well-being of its people. These needs have no moral quality. They arise from the very existence of the national state in question and from the status of national sovereignty it enjoys.

Thus, the standard is Maximizing Rights Protection. The standard is comparative, so we decide who meets it based on weighing mechanisms that factor into the state’s cost-benefit analysis like probability, magnitude, and scope.

**Contention One: Murder**

_A. Currently, it is easy to purchase a handgun in the United States. Jens Ludwig explains, Ludwig, Jens [University of Chicago economist whose research focuses on social policy, particularly urban issues such as poverty, crime, and education] “Evaluating Gun Policy” The Brookings Institution. 2003._

In most parts of the United States almost anyone can legally buy a handgun or long gun, except for those prohibited from acquiring firearms by the Gun Control Act (GCA) of 1968: minors; adults under indictment or having any prior felony conviction or (due to a 1996 amendment) misdemeanor conviction for domestic violence; illegal aliens; those confined by court order because of mental illness; and a few other categories. These basic restrictions enjoy almost unanimous support in debates about gun policy. More controversial is what government should do to keep guns away from people in these high-risk categories. The GCA stipulates that licensed dealers must require buyers to show identification and complete a form attesting that they are eligible to obtain a firearm. A number of states stipulated additional requirements for a legal sale of a hand-gun, including a requirement of a criminal-record check on potential buyers. In 1994
background checks in handgun sales by dealers became mandatory in all states as a result of the federal Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, a requirement that was extended to long gun sales in 1998.

**B. Handgun crime is on the rise in the United States. David Kennedy explains,**


The seriousness and key dimensions of the relatively recent youth homicide problem in the United States are well known. Briefly, beginning in the mid-1980s and broadly coincident with the appearance of crack cocaine, youth homicide rates rose abruptly to historic highs. Homicide victimization rates tripled for young black males and doubled for young white males; juvenile handgun homicides increased 418 percent between 1984 and 1994. For minority males in particular, homicides were concentrated in poor inner-city communities, where the combination of high rates of homicide and other violence, street drug activity, and preexisting social and economic difficulties combined to produce severe and perhaps unprecedented stresses. Gang formation and gang activity also increased markedly: Nearly all of the violence involved guns; the rate of homicide committed with knives and by other means stayed essentially flat, while the rate of youth gun crimes—gun homicide, gun assault, gun carrying, and the firing of shots—soared, particularly in troubled neighborhoods.

The impact is that there are large amounts of handgun related violence in the United States that cause physical harm or death to lots of citizens. A ban on handguns would decrease those harms and protect the rights of those who would otherwise be harmed, thus linking back to the criterion.

**Contention Two: Suicide**

*A. Without handguns, there are few methods that can easily lead to suicide. Robin Kelly explains,*
Evidence also suggests that **very few homicides are premeditated**. Rather, **the presence of a firearm often facilitates a deadly outcome** that would otherwise have been unlikely to occur. This is particularly true in many domestic violence cases. Similarly, **a person with fleeting bouts of depression who is in possession of a firearm is more likely to use that gun on impulse rather than seek treatment**. Case in point: An American Journal of Psychology study of **30 people who had attempted suicide by firearm** found that none had left a suicide note, that more than half of them had suicidal thoughts for less than 24 hours and, that two years later, not a single one had attempted suicide again. As is evidenced by the rulings in the D.C. v. Heller, and McDonald v. Chicago Supreme Court decisions, the Second Amendment is a fundamental and individual right for every American and is recognized as a respected part of our national anthology. Many credit the Minute Men of American Revolutionary lore with starting the tradition of keeping arms in the home as a means of self-defense. **Yet** examples from **other nations with a similarly revered and ingrained gun heritage** illustrate that gun laws can strike a balance that respects gun rights while placing sensible limitations on gun use in order to keep citizens safe.

**B. Handguns make suicide attempts readily available. Violence Policy Center explains,**

“Unsafe in Any Hands” The Violence Policy Center is a national non-profit educational foundation that conducts research on violence in America and works to develop violence-reduction policies and proposals. 2000.

http://www.vpc.org/studies/unsafe.htm

Throughout the long and bitter debate over gun violence, the fact that the largest number of gun deaths is suicides, not homicides, **has been consistently overlooked**. For example, **from 1990 to 1997 there were 147,000 suicides committed with a firearm** in contrast to 100,000 firearm homicides.33 **An estimated 90,000 of these suicides were**
accomplished with a handgun—a tribute to the operational simplicity and high lethality that make it the ideal suicide machine. Perhaps because of a lingering sense of suicide as a shameful act, this calamitous by-product of handgun ownership has been largely disregarded by even gun control advocates. Obviously handguns by themselves do not make people suicidal. But their ready availability has increased their use in suicide attempts and the use of a firearm all but guarantees that a suicide attempt will end in a fatality.

The impact is that without handguns, there is one less method of suicide for individuals which creates more barriers to committing suicide. This protects the rights of those individuals who would otherwise be dead and the friends and family of those individuals who would have been harmed, thus linking to the criterion.

Contention Three: Domestic Violence

A. Women are killed by males with handguns in domestic violence situations. The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence shows,

Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence “Domestic Violence & Firearms Policy Summary”

May 11, 2014

Guns pose a particular threat in the hands of domestic abusers. Abused women are five times more likely to be killed by their abuser if the abuser owns a firearm. Domestic violence assaults involving a gun are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force. More than two-thirds of spouse and ex-spouse homicide victims between 1980 and 2008 were killed with firearms. In 2011, nearly two-thirds of women killed with guns were killed by their intimate partners.

Domestic violence also plays a role in mass shootings. A study by Everytown for Gun Safety of every identifiable mass shooting (shooting in which four or more people were murdered) between January 2009 and July 2014 found that 57% of them involved the killing of a family member or a current or former intimate partner of the shooter. The impact of guns in domestic violence situations is not limited to homicides.
shelter residents in California found that more than one third (36.7%) reported having been threatened or harmed with a firearm. In nearly two thirds (64.5%) of the households that contained a gun, the intimate partner had used the firearm against the victim, usually threatening to shoot or kill her. As described below, federal law prohibits abusers who have been convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors and abusers subject to certain domestic violence restraining orders from possessing guns. The federal laws intended to prevent access to firearms by domestic abusers have significant limitations, however, and some states have adopted broader laws to address these problems.

**B. A ban on hand guns helps women because gun control is a feminist issue due to domestic violence situations and increased murder of women. Rain Strickland explains,** Rain Strickland [Rain Strickland writes for two blogs and multiple websites. Being somewhat politically-minded, she often has the temerity to speak out about various injustices she sees in the world. A proud defender of equal rights.] “Why Women Should Be More Involved in the Gun Control Debate” Feminspire 4/18/13

Of course, this comes as little surprise to women in the U.S. American women have been running headlong into that particular wall for some time now. Nearly 700 new pieces of legislation were put forth in the first quarter of 2013 to try to control, restrict and inhibit women’s reproductive rights, many going against Constitutional law. Here’s where gun control becomes a feminist issue: To start, the government listens even less often to its female constituents than it does to its male constituents. Whatever opinion women may have about this issue, it’s not going to be heard in the first place. The second big reason gun control is a feminist issue is because of the domestic violence statistics associated with firearms. Women are 500% more likely to die from a domestic violence situation in a home where there is a firearm. According to the Violence Policy Center, “A 1976 to 1987 analysis of Federal Bureau of Investigation data revealed that more than twice as many women were shot and killed by their husbands or intimate acquaintances than were murdered by strangers using firearms, knives, or any other means.” This same site lists numerous statistics and studies, including the fact that half of the women who were victims of homicide in 2000, where the weapon was known, were killed by firearms. These statistics are not hidden in some dark little hole where no one can find them. These statistics are readily available from a massive number of sites just by using a
search engine and typing in the search string “domestic violence firearm.” The statistics are backed up by numerous academic and government studies, as well as studies done by law enforcement agencies such as the FBI.

The impact is that many women are harmed or killed in domestic violence instances because of hand guns. Hand guns force women to be submissive to their spouses out of fear that they will die. This means that it continues a feeling in the private sphere that males are the head of the house and thus violates the rights of women. Handguns also violate the rights of women physically, thus linking back to the criterion.

Thus, I affirm.
Neg Case

Introduction:

I negate. Resolved: In the United States, private ownership of handguns ought to be banned.

I offer the following definitions for use in the debate round.

Private ownership is defined by the Collins dictionary as, “the fact of being owned by a private individual or organization, rather than by the state or a public body,” (Colling Dictionary).5

A handgun is defined by Merriam Websters Dictionary as, “a small gun (such as a revolver or a pistol) designed to be held and shot with one hand,” (Merriam Websters).6

Ban is defined by Merriam Websters as, “to forbid people from using (something)” as well as is qualified as, “to prohibit especially by legal means” and, “to prohibit the use, performance, or distribution of,” (Merriam Websters).7

I value morality as the resolution questions what the United States ought to do.

Unlike individuals, states have a duty to protect millions of lives, and thus must weigh costs and benefits. Gary Woller explains,


Appeals to [A] priori moral principles such as environmental preservation, also often fail to acknowledge that public policies inevitably entail trade-offs among competing values. Thus since policymakers cannot justify inherent value conflicts to the public in any philosophical sense, and since public only general guidance to ethical dilemmas in public affairs and do not themselves suggest appropriate public policies, and at worst, they create a regimen of regulatory unreasonableness while failing to adequately address the problem or actually making it worse. For example, a [M]oral obligation[s] to preserve the environment by no means imply the best way, or any way for that matter, to do so [solve problems]. Just as there is no a priori reason to believe that any policy that claims to preserve the environment will actually do so. Any number of policies might work, and others, although seemingly consistent with the moral principle, will fail[.]

That deontological principles are an inadequate basis for environmental policy is evident in the rather significant irony that most forms of deontologically based environmental laws and regulations tend to be implemented in a very utilitarian manner by street-level enforcement officials. Moreover, ignoring the relevant costs and benefits of environmental policy and their attendant incentive structures can, as alluded to above, actually work at cross purposes to environmental preservation. (There exists an extensive literature on this aspect of regulatory enforcement and the often perverse out-comes of regulatory policy. See, for example, Ackerman, 1981; Bartrip and Fenn, 1983; Hawkins, 1983, 1984; Hawkins and Thomas, 1984.) Even the most die-hard preservationist/deontologist would, I believe, be troubled by this outcome. The above points are perhaps best expressed by Richard Flathman, The number of values typically involved in public policy decisions, the broad categories which must be employed and above all, the scope and complexity of the consequences to be anticipated militate against reasoning so conclusively that they generate an imperative to institute a specific policy. It is seldom the case that only one policy will meet the criteria of the public interest (1958, p. 12). It therefore follows that [I]n a
democracy, policymakers have an ethical duty to establish a plausible link between policy alternatives and the problems they address. The public must be reasonably assured that a policy will actually do something about an existing problem; this requires the means-end language and methodology of utilitarian ethics. Good intentions, lofty rhetoric, and moral piety are an insufficient basis for public policy in a democracy.

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Morality and Foreign Policy

George F. Kennan
From Foreign Affairs, Winter 1985/86

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the functions, commitments and moral obligations of governments are not the same as those of the individual. Government[s] primary obligation is to the interests of the national society it represents, not to the moral impulses that individual elements of that society may experience. The interests of the national society for which government has to concern itself are basically those of its military security, the integrity of its political life and the well-being of its people. These needs have no moral quality. They arise from the very existence of the national state in question and from the status of national sovereignty it enjoys.

Thus, the standard is Maximizing Rights Protection. The standard is comparative, so we decide who meets it based on weighing mechanisms that factor into the state’s cost-benefit analysis like probability, magnitude, and scope.

**Contention One: Self Defense and Deterrence**

*A. Handguns are great deterrents and self-defense tools. Don Kates explains,*


http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf

More than 100 million handguns are owned in the United States primarily for self-defense, and 3.5 million people have permits to carry concealed handguns for protection. Recent analysis reveals “a
great deal of self-defensive use of firearms” in the United States, “in fact, more defensive gun uses [by victims] than crimes committed with firearms.”

It is little wonder that the National Institute of Justice surveys among prison inmates find that large percentages report that their fear that a victim might be armed deterred them from confrontation crimes. “[T]he felons most frightened ‘about confronting an armed victim’ were those from states with the greatest relative number of privately owned firearms.” Conversely, robbery is highest in states that most restrict gun ownership. Concomitantly, a series of studies by John Lott and his coauthor David Mustard conclude that the issuance of millions of permits to carry concealed handguns is associated with drastic declines in American homicide rates.

The impact is that handguns are a crucial to self-defense and help decrease crimes across the country. This means that there are less rights violated when we allow handguns, thus linking back to the criterion.

Contention Two: Murder

A. Gun bans increase murders. Even if there were fun control laws, only law abiding citizens would give up their arms, criminals would find a way to go around the laws making the affirmative have no solvency. John Blake explains,

And **gun restrictions don't help black people** living in violent neighborhoods, he says. **Every time guns have been banned, Lott says, murder rates have increased.** When the state of Massachusetts increased the costs of gun ownership, the number of registered gun owners in the state plummeted -- and the state's murder rate rose. Other academics say Lott's research is faulty. "The big problem," Lott says, "is that law-abiding good citizens, not criminals, obey the gun control laws."

**B. Of those murders, gun laws inadvertently harm black people. John Blake furthers,**


Some gun rights advocates say contemporary black communities could learn from that tradition of self-defense. **Restrictive gun control laws often victimize black people more than any other group because they suffer disproportionately from violent crime,** says John R. Lott Jr., author of "More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws." **A black person is 6.5 times more likely to become a murder victim than someone who is white; and 92% of black murder victims are killed by members of their own race.** Lott says. "Given the anger about police in many black communities, it might make more sense to let the law-abiding citizens in those communities have a greater chance to defend themselves," says Lott, founder and president of the Crime Prevention Research Center, a group that examines the links between gun control and crime.
The impact is that when there is gun control, murder increases and especially murder of black people. That harms their rights, thus linking back to the criterion.

**Contention Three: Decreases Crime**

**A. Guns deter criminals from committing crimes. Don Kates explains.**


Overwhelmingly when victims draw guns, criminals flee. Criminals flee armed citizens because they want helpless victims, not gunfights with armed ones. Indeed, 36 percent of the respondents in [a study of imprisoned juvenile criminals] reported having decided at least "a few times" not to commit a crime because they believed the potential victim was armed. Seventy percent of the respondents reported having been "scared off, shot at, wounded, or captured by an armed crime victim." Pg. 1693.

**B. Studies show that crimes were less likely to be completed when victims resisted with a gun.**

*Stefean Tahmassebi explains,*

Victimization surveys indicate that for both robbery and assaults, the crime was less likely to be completed against victims, and victims were less likely to be injured, when such victims resisted with a gun, compared to victims who did not resist. A study compiled by the U.S. Department of Justice, noted that where guns or knives are used for protection by potential rape victims, the rape was completed only three percent of the time as opposed to a completion rate of thirty-two percent for rapes where no guns or knives were used by the victim. Pg. 86

The impact is that there are less crimes committed when the threat of a victim having a gun arises. This protects the rights of those who would have otherwise been harmed, thus linking back to the criterion.

Thus, I negate.