
American Gun Ownership: A Look at Its Positive Impact

Guns control is a topic that is very misunderstood. Guns, more often than not, get a negative association of death. The majority of the media only focuses on the negatives of guns. The only thing one hears concerning guns is about murder and mass killings. The positives of having guns accessible are many times completely overlooked. This paper compares how the benefits of having guns completely prevails over the claimed benefits of gun control policy.

Citizen Protection

There are roughly over 5,000,000 violent crimes committed every year. Around 8% of these crimes are committed with a visible weapon (Agersti & Smith, 2013). The majority of crimes that are committed with guns though involve illicit guns. The crimes committed are in areas with high gun regulation or gun bans (Sisters, 2002). This evidence shows support to the fact that criminals will find the means to obtain guns regardless of gun bans. Washington D.C. is a great example of this issue; during 1976 to 2008, the period D.C. banned handguns, murder rates there increased on average of 73% while the U.S. murder rate was steadily dropping (Agersti & Smith, 2013). In 1982, Chicago also decided to banned handguns. Five of the surrounding areas followed Chicago's example and also banned handguns. Chicago only had a decrease rate of murder by 17% where as the U.S. has had a average rate of 25% decrease in murder. What is more interesting is that although murder rates went down, gun violence went up in Chicago. This was not just a small change either, the murder rate with handguns, which were completely banned, increased by an average of 40%. Not only that, the National Academy of Sciences' did an exhaustive study in 2004 and found that there was not a single gun control measure that had reduced violent crime, suicide, or accidents (Kates & Moody, 2012).

Culturally Coded

Although basically impossible many people still believe that if guns could be completely done away with that murder rates would fall dramatically (Sisters, 2002). Suzette Grillot states that cultural norms "alter perceptions of appropriate behavior" (Grillot, 2011 p. 535) She states that this is especially eminent in mentalities toward small arms. Don Kates and Gary Mauser take it even further from the studies they conducted. They state that murder is going to happen regardless of the weapon. Kates and Mauser concluded the results of their overall studies this way:

It was not the presence of the rifle that provoked the homicide: Murderous technology is

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available everywhere, in every kitchen and every garage; an axe or a knife, a bottle or a car would have accomplished the same end. It is the will to use that technology that is culturally coded... this is what shapes the number of homicidal assaults in a nation. (Kates & Mauser, 2007)

Kates and Mauser did multiple studies based on murder rates for foreign countries. They first looked at how murder rates corresponded with the number of guns. The murder rates were very skewed and no major correlation for the counties was found (Kates & Mauser, 2007). Although in their second study they did to see if the murder rate corresponded with handgun bans there was a direct correlation. Countries that banned handguns had a murder rate that ranged roughly five to ten times higher than countries that did not. This shows evidence that gun control is completely ineffective (Kates & Mauser, 2007). Five years later Kates did yet another study due to the curiosity of why there was no correlation between the amount of guns and the number of homicides. He found that due to the fact that guns are owned for so many different reasons that were not relevant to crime, such as hunting, that the results of the correlation would be skewed (Kates & Moody, 2012).

The Positive

Anyway it's viewed, guns are a very dangerous tool. They are tools that are used for sporting, recreation, collection, hunting, self-defense, and the most commonly associated, murder. There are over 300 million guns in the United States. This is a number that increased six fold from the amount of guns in 1946. If guns is what is provoking murder, why, with a six fold increase in guns has the murder rate fell over 30%? (Kates & Moody, 2012). This is because in all reality, guns control does nothing more than take away the weapon from the vicim. Areas with high gun control have drastically higher murder rates than areas that have small amounts of gun restriction (Sisters, 2002). As terrible as it is though, guns are responsible for 67% of murders, which is roughly a little more than over 10 thousand per year. That number is shrinking on average every year. There are about 436,000 violent crimes a year that involve a gun. That puts the amount of guns misused in the U.S. per year at about .00145 percent. That means that less than one seventh of one percent of guns are misused. So why is that what is always focused on?

The fact of how many lives are saved per year has not even been considered (Agersti & Smith, 2013). A study done in 1994 estimated that there are between 800,000 and 2.4 million protective uses of guns every single year (Suter, 1994). More recent studies have gone more in depth and broke down the protective uses. Just shy of one million times a year, people use guns to defend themselves or others. Guns are also used about 500,000 times a year to frighten away intruders who are breaking into their homes. Not only that 40% of male felons in different state prisons decided to not commit a crime due to the fact that they "knew or believed

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that the victim was carrying a gun.” To take it even further almost 70% of them knew criminals who had been scared off, wounded by, or captured by a victim with a gun (Agersti & Smith, 2013).

Conclusion

Gun control is something that is relevant to everyone. It is something that affects the crime and murder rates for not only our country as a whole, but also the local communities. The research and studies that have been done clearly suggest that in order to avoid high homicide rates little or no gun control is an absolute must. Other countries also show very similar statistics to the United States in the fact that gun bans have a direct correlation with higher murder rates. Taking all this into consideration it loose or no gun control seems to be the only reasonable answer.

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