

Belmont University

Belmont Digital Repository

Belmont University Research Symposium
(BURS)

Special Events

Spring 4-19-2023

The Right to Bear: Measuring Gun Control Policies Against Violent Crime

Balazs Varga
balazs.varga@pop.belmont.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.belmont.edu/burs>



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Models and Methods Commons](#), [Other Political Science Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Varga, Balazs, "The Right to Bear: Measuring Gun Control Policies Against Violent Crime" (2023). *Belmont University Research Symposium (BURS)*. 322.
<https://repository.belmont.edu/burs/322>

This Oral Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Events at Belmont Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Belmont University Research Symposium (BURS) by an authorized administrator of Belmont Digital Repository. For more information, please contact repository@belmont.edu.

The Right to Bear: Measuring Gun Control Policies Against Violent Crime

Balázs Bence Varga

Undergraduate Thesis

Department of Political Science

Belmont University

Nathan Griffith

April 19, 2023

Abstract

Especially in United States politics, gun control legislation is a controversial topic, with much debate dedicated to which gun control policies are implementable as a countermeasure to violent crime rates, if any. In American public discourse on the topic, U.S. gun control doctrine, which is characterized by an individualistic gun culture engrained in the Second Amendment of the Constitution, is one which is described as lax in comparison to gun control measures implemented by other nations. These gun control policies include a wide array of measures, such as automatic firearms regulation, a state-mandated national firearms registry, and background checks, among many others. However, which gun control policies actually correlate with lower violent crime rates? There have already been many studies focused on the effects of gun control on violent crime rates. One example is a study by Lott (2010), which observed scattered relationships between specific gun control measures and crime rates throughout the United States. Another study by Chapman and Alpers (2013) observed the effects of stricter gun control policies enacted by the Parliament of Australia in 1996 and found a statistically significant relationship between the Australian ban on automatic and semi-automatic firearms and lower firearms-related violent crime rates. Yet, there has not been enough research which compare national gun laws across different nations against violent crime rates in those nations, and how any possible relationship might be affected by economic and social development. This study will observe correlations between the implementation of specific gun control measures and violent crime rates across 43 cases, including 29 nations and territories and 14 U.S. states and territories. This study employs the Pearson correlation coefficient to measure relationships between gun control legislation and violent crime rates. The gun control measures observed in this study include types of firearm bans, safety training, background checks, concealed carry regulation, and rates of civilian firearm ownership, among others. This study also tests any possible relationships between gun control and violent crime rates against economic and social development. While there are some relationships between certain gun control policies and lower crime rates, this study does not find that gun control is a panacea for reducing violent crime, with development playing a major role in the overall success or failure of gun control policies. The research provided by this study will add to the conversation around gun control by bringing attention to the success of certain gun control policies in nations across the world, and how this success may be affected by development.

Key words: gun control, violent crime, background checks, firearms, measure, development