



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on October 14, 2015

The “Gun Control” Farce: Part II

The grand illusion of zealots for laws preventing ordinary, law-abiding people from having guns is that “gun control” laws actually control guns. In a country with many millions of guns, not all of them registered, this is a fantasy and a farce.

Guns do not vanish into thin air because there are gun control laws. Guns — whether legal or illegal — can last for centuries. Passing laws against guns may enable zealots to feel good about themselves, but at the cost of other people’s lives.



Why anyone would think that criminals who disobey other laws, including laws against murder, would obey gun control laws is a mystery. A disarmed population makes crime a safer occupation and street violence a safer sport.

The “knockout game” of suddenly throwing a punch to the head of some unsuspecting passer-by would not be nearly so much fun for street hoodlums, if there was a serious risk that the passer-by was carrying a concealed firearm.

Being knocked out in a boxing ring means landing on the canvas. But being knocked out on a street usually means landing on concrete. Victims of the knockout game have ended up in the hospital or in the morgue.

If, instead, just a few of those who play this sick “game” ended up being shot, that would take a lot of the fun out of it for others who are tempted to play the same “game.”

Even in places where law-abiding citizens are allowed to own guns, they are seldom allowed to carry concealed weapons — even though concealed weapons protect not only those who carry them, but also protect those who do not, for the hoodlums and criminals have no way of knowing in advance who is armed and who is not.

Another feature of gun control zealotry is that sweeping assumptions are made, and enacted into law, on the basis of sheer ignorance. People who know nothing about guns, and have never fired a shot in their lives, much less lived in high-crime areas, blithely say such things as, “Nobody needs a 30-shot magazine.”

Really? If three criminals invaded your home, endangering the lives of you and your loved ones, are you such a sharpshooter that you could take them all out with a clip holding ten bullets? Or a clip with just seven bullets, which is the limit you would be allowed under gun laws in some places?

Do you think that someone who is prepared to use a 30-shot magazine for criminal purposes is going to be deterred by a gun control law? All the wonderful-sounding safeguards in such laws restrict the victims of criminals, rather than the criminals themselves. That is why such laws cost lives, instead of saving lives.

Are there dangers in a widespread availability of guns? Yes! And one innocent death is one too many.



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But what makes anyone think that there are no innocent lives lost by disarming law-abiding people while criminals remain armed?

If we are going to be serious, as distinguished from being political, we need to look at hard evidence, instead of charging ahead on the basis of rhetoric. Sweeping assumptions need to be checked against facts. But that is seldom what gun control zealots do.

Some gun control zealots may cherry-pick statistics comparing nations with and without strong gun control laws, but cherry-picking is very different from using statistics to actually test a belief.

Among the cherry-picked statistics is that England has stronger gun control laws than the United States and much lower murder rates. But Mexico, Brazil and Russia all have stronger gun control laws than the United States — and much higher murder rates.

A closer look at the history of gun laws in England tells a very different story than what you get from cherry-picked statistics. The murder rate in New York over the past two centuries has been some multiple of the murder rate in London — and, for most of that time, neither city had strong restrictions on the ownership of guns.

Beginning in 1911, New York had stronger restrictions on gun ownership than London had — and New York still had murder rates that were a multiple of murder rates in London. It was not the laws that made the difference in murder rates. It was the people. That is also true within the United States.

But are gun control zealots interested in truth or in political victory? Or perhaps just moral preening?

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