**Gun Control Influence on Crime Control**

Student Name:

Institutional Affiliation:

Course Full Title:

Instructor Full Name:

Due Date:**Gun Control Influence on Crime Control**

**Introduction**

The prevention of gun violence and associated crime is paramount for the government and the criminal justice system. Gun control laws aimed at alleviating crime regulate the type of firearm one can purchase, the requisite qualifications to purchase, own and store the firearm, and the restrictions on the use of the gun. Since the mid-1960s, guns have been used to facilitate crimes like assault, robbery, murder, and rape in America. America’s gun policy predicated on the Second Amendment has made guns readily available for use, even for untrained and amateur users. As a result of the widespread availability of guns with loose control measures on access, rogue elements have found refuge to perpetrate heinous crimes unabated.

The increase in cases of crimes perpetrated with by guns justify gun control legislation to limit offending. While various proposals have been put forth to legislate on gun control, little has been done to link such control to crime trends. Exemplar countries with strict gun control policies like Japan experience very minimal gun-related crimes due to reduced and controlled gun ownership (Markozashvili, 2021). In contrast, although the United States has codified gun laws, it experiences high crime rates and lousy mass shootings resulting from increased, unregulated gun ownership. Research (Stell, 2014) has argued that gun control has no known impact in crime reduction, particularly due to its lack of influence on one’s criminal behavior. Yet, the subject remains amassed in controversy, with proponents on one side advocating for stringent gun possession laws and critics on the other side arguing against gun control legislation as a crime alleviation method. This paper explores the link between gun control and crime trends. It connects the arguments established sources on the issue have put forth, relying on secondary literature to argue that gun control is ineffective in controlling crime.

**The Gun Control Influence on Criminal Behavior and Intention**

Gun control does not regulate an individual's criminal behavior. Gun legislation only extends to establishing a policy on permits and legal access to firearms. Such regulation covers the registration of the guns, safety training, background checks to certify eligibility, safe storage, and age restrictions (Moorhouse & Warner, 2006). The measures are meant to limit the number of permitted guns and deny unqualified personnel access to firearms. However, the legislation on gun control has failed to ensure that only persons with the requisite capacity own and possess a firearm. Although gun permits envisage enhancing civilian’s capacity to self-defend, they are vulnerable to exploitation by people of ill-will. There is a strong nexus between unregulated gun possession and violence. This nexus is most evidenced by criminals who despite lacking the legal capacity to own guns have unrestricted access to them (Kleck et al. 2016). The increased homicide rates resulting from firearm-related violence shows the link between the gun possession and crime. The public's interpretation of gun control goes beyond the goal of permitting concealed guns to lawful citizens but also to crime-oriented persons whose intention is hard to predict.

Second, gun control threatens the safety of untrained civilians with little or no knowledge on self-defense from gun violence. Notably, as envisaged in the Second Amendment, a well-regulated militia is necessary to America’s security. However, America’s security starts with the individual. Gun possession is an ideal way of the average citizen to protect themselves from gun threats by other owners. However, gun control denies an average American access to this valuable defense weapon. According to Cook et al. (2011), untrained civilians and gun holders have a high probability of clashing, fatal or not. As such, untrained gun holders with ill motives have high chances of committing homicide or inflicting grievous harm on unarmed citizens.

**Political Influence on Gun Control**

Politics is unignorably a force in gun control policies. Ideological differences in American politics have long hindered the development of a comprehensive gun policy that can curb crime. The ideological divide into proponents and opponents creates two competing factions, the loser being gun control legislation. First, the divide manifests in self-interest-motivated politics growing among the electorate, with gun owners and non-owners falling in respective divides. According to Burton et al. (2021), gun control politics have heavily shaped election results. Candidates’ opinions about gun control secures or denies them votes based on the electorate’s perception of the ideology. Second, the resultant political decision by either the pro-gun control or the opponents reflects social identity among the leaders who, in return, legislate, not on objectives of curtailing crime but their campaign promises to voters. Also, pro-gun movements such as the National Rifle Association have occasionally funded pro-gun control candidates, leading to capitalization on gun advocacy rather than focusing on the long-term goals attributed to the policy. In summary, gun control legislation is largely a political endeavor whose target is not crime reduction but rather advancing self-interests. As such, gun control policies cannot be used as a tool to control crime.

In addition, the ideologies on gun control are attributed to the political party affiliation. The division between Republicans and Democrats over gun control has largely affected policy development. According to Burton et al. (2021), the Republican Party, premised on nationalism, strongly advocates for gun rights under the Second Amendment. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to possess guns. Conversely, the Democrat Party, whose support is larger among minority groups, strongly supports gun control to restrict or ban firearms (Burton et al. 2021). According to Markozashvili (2021), the party gun politics are a reaction to the supporters' public sentiments. Party ideologies, rather than the focus on crime alleviation, are therefore more likely to drive legislators in the development of gun control policies. As such, there is a high probability of gun polices being uninformed on crime, making them ineffective in controlling the menace they purport to reduce.

**Conclusion**

Gun control policies are aimed at reducing and regulating access to firearm. The Second Amendment allows Americans to legally own firearms regardless of their training background. With gun control, such access will only be limited to selected, qualifying people. Yet, research has shown high probability of gun owners clashing with non-gun owners. With gun control, non-owners will be exposed to an increased threat from gun owners, with inferiority affecting their ability to self-defend. This imbalance will orchestrate a higher demand for illegal gun ownership, increasing the crimes that gun control aimed to control. In addition, the politics of gun control are filled with self-interests. Political candidates use their stance on the policy to gain followership and votes. Enactment of gun control is intrinsically a political act lacking basis in the criminal justice system. In addition, the heavy play of powerful private organizations supporting different divides on the policy shows the political nature of gun control. Likewise, the influence of party politics in gun control evidences that the policy has higher political value than it is meant to reduce crime. Therefore, gun control is not an effective crime reduction method.

References

Burton, A. L., Logan, M. W., Pickett, J. T., Cullen, F. T., Jonson, C. L., & Burton Jr, V. S. (2021). Gun owners and gun control: shared status, divergent opinions. *Sociological Inquiry*, *91*(2), 347-366.

Cook, P. J., Braga, A. A., & Moore, M. H. (2011). Gun control. *Crime and public policy*, 257-292.

Kleck, G., Kovandzic, T., & Bellows, J. (2016). Does gun control reduce violent crime?. *Criminal Justice Review*, *41*(4), 488-513.

Markozashvili, D. (2021). GUN-CONTROL: INTENTIONS AND RESULTS. *Публични политики. BG/Public Policy. bg*, *12*(2).

Moorhouse, J. C., & Wanner, B. (2006). Does gun control reduce crime or does crime increase gun control. *Cato J.*, *26*, 103.

Stell, L. K. (2004). The production of criminal violence in America: is strict gun control the solution?. *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, *32*(1), 38-46.