More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws

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Does allowing people to own or carry guns deter violent crime? Or does it simply cause more citizens to harm each other? Directly challenging common perceptions about gun control, legal scholar John Lott presents the most rigorously comprehensive data analysis ever done on crime statistics and right-to-carry laws. This timely and provocative work comes to the startling conclusion: more guns mean less crime. In this paperback edition, Lott has expanded the research through 1996, incorporating new data available from states that passed right-to-carry and other gun laws since the book's publication as well as new city-level statistics.

"Lott's pro-gun argument has to be examined on the merits, and its chief merit is lots of data…If you still disagree with Lott, at least you will know what will be required to rebut a case that looks pretty near bulletproof."—Peter Coy, *Business Week*

"By providing strong empirical evidence that yet another liberal policy is a cause of the very evil it purports to cure, he has permanently changed the terms of debate on gun control…Lott's book could hardly be more timely… A model of the meticulous application of economics and statistics to law and policy."—John O. McGinnis, *National Review*

"His empirical analysis sets a standard that will be difficult to match… This has got to be the most extensive empirical study of crime deterrence that has been done to date."—*Public Choice*

"For anyone with an open mind on either side of this subject this book will provide a thorough grounding. It is also likely to be the standard reference on the subject for years to come."—Stan Liebowitz, *Dallas Morning News*

"A compelling book with enough hard evidence that even politicians may have to stop and pay attention. *More Guns, Less Crime* is an exhaustive analysis of the effect of gun possession on crime rates."—James Bovard, *Wall Street Journal*

"John Lott documents how far 'politically correct' vested interests are willing to go to denigrate anyone who dares disagree with them. Lott has done us all a service by his thorough, thoughtful, scholarly approach to a highly controversial issue."—Milton Friedman

More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws Details

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Jeff says

I didn't actually finish reading this book. First, because the writing is academic style, which made it a bit tedious. And second, because I found other sources discrediting the research claims in this book.

Werner says

One of my sons-in-law is an Aussie, and shares the currently (though not historically) typical British/Canadian/Australian horror of civilian gun ownership, and particularly of civilian gun use in self-defense. Since my views on the subject are very dissimilar, we have some interesting discussions. :-) (As Christians, we both would prefer a world where nobody owned weapons, nor wanted or needed any --but that's unfortunately not the case in the world we're stuck with.) When the library where I work discarded this edition in favor of the recent new one, I took it to give to him, but decided to read it first.

My decision not to finish reading the book wasn't based on any disparagement of Lott's methodology or conclusions; on the contrary, I think that in its way, it's a solid contribution to the ongoing debate about "gun control," at least for those middle-ground folks for whom the debate isn't about moral first principles, but a pragmatic one about the perceived balances of social benefits and social costs. Obviously, to those who regard lethal self-defense as morally wrong, and/or as an existential threat to the existence of State and social order, preventing it is a moral duty, just as the prevention of cannibalism would be, regardless of any nutritional benefits that might be claimed for it. But for those who don't view lethal self- defense as a priori morally equivalent to cannibalism, the conclusions of this study are important empirical evidence bearing on the social benefits of civilian gun ownership -- which is why I departed here from my normal practice of not writing any "review" of a book I haven't read completely.

However, while most people would enjoy a drink of cool water from a well, few enjoy chewing on the rope tied to the bucket. The conclusions of many landmark statistical studies may be likened to a bracing drink of healthy clear water for policymakers and citizens, but the technical mathematical operations of the study and data analysis have more in common with the rope and bucket; and a heavy dose of the latter is what's offered here along with the conclusions. Lott is a Univ. of Chicago social scientist steeped in the rigorous statistical method of the modern academic world, and writing largely for that milieu; he was determined to make the study and analysis methodologically impeccable. He succeeded in that; by the canons of social science, his work is impervious to objective criticism for the most part, which is what makes it valuable as a policy resource. As a book for lay people, however, it also makes it deadly dull, heavy reading; what I read left me glassy-eyed. If you're a Math major specializing in statistical method, who just loves page after page of tables and graphs and would look forward to an appendix explaining "statistical significance" and "regression coefficients," then I could confidently recommend this book to you. If you're more like the rest of us, I wouldn't!

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John says

Another behavioral economics book. This one analyzes the impact of concealed carry legislation on crime. Pretty heavy analysis over many decades. In ALL cases, for every county in the United States, conceal carry means less crime.

This book is the reason that virtually all free states have implemented Shall Issue laws.

This book makes bed wetting liberals heads explode.

Jacob Greenmyer says

Absolutely incredible. Without doubt the most in depth statistical analysis of concealed carry guns and their relation to crime.

Amongst many excellent points that are the result of careful scholarship, 3 main points are made very

obvious to the reader by the end of this empirical study:

1. Concealed handgun permit holders are extremely law abiding (permit holders commit murders at 1/182nd the rate of the general population). Therefore, permit holders are much more trustworthy to not commit murders than non permit holders
2. Concealed handguns without a doubt deter violent crime including murder, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery. This is a statistical fact, and contrary anecdotal evidence is exactly that: anecdote. Opening all states to non-discretionary laws could decreased annual murders by 1500 and rapes by 5000. In 1996, 17 children aged 5 and under died as a result of accidental firearm use. In that same year, 40 children under age 5 drowned in 5 gallon buckets and 80 in the bathtub. The use of firearms in defense greatly out ways the accidental deaths or misuse of such firearms: firearms are used defensively between 760,000 and 2.5 million times per year in the United States.
3. Making legislation to prevent people from having access to guns, including supposed "gun show loopholes" (that don't exist anymore although they are constantly referred to in the media) , limit the use of defensive weapons by law abiding citizens. A survey of 20000 inmates in state prisons demonstrated that 0.7% of guns used in illegal activity were acquired from a gun show, and 1.2% were from a flea market. However, 40% of guns were acquired from family members and an additional 39% were acquired from the streets or from illegal activity. While the closing of acquisition loopholes lowered the amount of gun shows by 24%, which limits the protection the general public gets from access to protection from firearms.

FINAL NOTICE: Michael Storandt should not read this book because he would find it boring and complain there are too many facts in the book.

Greg Linster says

In this book, the economist John Lott stirs the pot by asking some tough questions. He's more interested in what the data says when it comes to the following questions: Will gun control increase or decrease the number of lives lost? Will these laws improve or degrade the quality of life when it comes to violent crime?

Considering the title of the book, I'm sure you can take a guess as to what his research findings conclude. Despite mounds of sound empirical evidence, opponents of guns can't seem to fathom the idea that more gun ownership may in fact reduce crime. There is also the aft forgotten Second Amendment (Amendment II) to the United States Constitution which is an important piece of the debate. The problem, of course, is that it's far easier to argue against guns using a fallacious argument that appeals strictly to emotion.

Parts of this book are worth reading, but I'm skeptical of some of the econometric techniques that were used to support the author's claims.

Jim Knight says

If true, the statistics are pretty compelling. Lott makes a counterintuitive argument that more conceited carriers makes for a safer society and he bases it on statistics. I've also read a lot of counter arguments about it and people who question his statistics. He does a good job in the book of aggressively answering the critics and arguing mathematically against the counter-arguments. He does also make the point that most concealed

carriers are statistically more law abiding than the public.

This is a book where it's easy to let your confirmation bias run away with you. If you are anti-gun, you will probably hate it and pro-gun will love it.

If you are interested in the pro-gun argument, this is probably the best book for reading that case.

Giovani Facchini says

A leitura deste livro não poderia ter sido realizada em momento mais propício: quando se acirram os debates sobre o PL 3277/2012 (http://www.camara.gov.br/proposicoesW...) que visa diminuir os absurdos perpretados contra a liberdade dos Brasileiros e contra um PEBLISCITO realizado onde 2/3 (64%) da população votou CONTRA as proibições. Tudo isso com peso total de tota a mídia em favor do desarmamento.

Nesta abrangente pesquisa que coletou mais de 20 anos de dados americanos sobre criminalidade (FBI, informações diretas de condados e outras fontes) sobre todos os estados, condados e cidades americanas, o Doutor Lott mostrou como as leis não descriminatórias (onde basta preencher alguns requisitos legais para PORTAR uma arma de fogo) DIMINUÍRAM todas as categorias de crimes violentos (assassinato, estupros, assalto a mão armada, entre outros) assim que foram postas em prática. A análise dos dados é tão profunda que pode deixar o leitor cansado.

Ele observou muitas variáveis que são tomadas como importantes nesse debate como liberação dos portes, renda per capita, desemprego, dureza das leis, investimento em polícia e muitas outras variáveis estudadas pelos criminologistas.

As conclusões?
1 - Quais são as pessoas que mais se beneficiam das liberações: NEGROS, POBRES e MULHERES. Simplesmente porque essas são as principais vítimas. No caso de mulheres a diminuição dos estupros é a mais impressionante. E para terem noção de como as propagandas (de desarmamento) são efetivas em criar medo nessa população, eles são os que são mais favoráveis ao desarmamento (sendo os mais prejudicados).
2 - Que as pessoas que obtêm uma licença são as maiores cumpridoras das leis. No pior caso registrado em um estado, apenas 0.6% das pessoas tiveram as licenças cassadas e isso, na maioria das vezes, por motivos não relacionado as armas em si, mas problemas com pagamento de pensão e multas de trânsito.
3 - Que a medida que as vendas de armas aumentavam, a criminalidade diminuia com ritmo mais forte.
4 - Que as cidades grandes eram os lugares onde a liberação das armais reduzia mais os crimes (e eram os lugares mais restritivos de possuir armas).
5 - Que os assassinatos em massa DIMINUÍRAM (ao contrário do que os desarmamentitas tentam vender) e que o número de vítimas totais por evento diminuíram porque quando um atentado acontecia, existia uma pessoa armada no local que abatia o atirador

É por isso que o direito ao porte de armas sempre foi negado para escravos, dissidentes e qualquer pessoa que estivesse na presença de um governo (ou pessoas) opressor.

Atualmente, é praticamente impossível tentar se provar através de números e pesquisas nos EUA que mais armas sequer mantém a quantidade de crimes no mesmo nível. Sempre declinam. Mesmo as pesquisas encomendadas pelo Obama (esquerdista com forte inclinação pelas proibições de armas) mostraram que as

armas estão diminuindo a criminalidade americana ano após ano.

Dentro desse tema, pretendo estudar outros países que aplicaram leis desarmamentistas como Inglaterra e Austrália.

"No momento em que o governo e os bandidos tiverem a propriedade total das armas, estes decidirão de quem serão as outras propriedades"

????? ??? ??? says

Everyone who wants to understand the role of guns in violence in America must read this book. The result of heroic research, including data collected from nearly every county in the US over a period of fifteen years, it proves that permitting people to carry concealed handguns reduces the risk of violent crimes, including homicide and rape, while increasing the risk of nonviolent crimes, such as burglary. Furthermore, those who hold licenses to carry concealed guns are not likely to use them except in cases of self-defense—a gun in your purse does not get pulled out to settle an argument.

Elliott says

Consider two books: Arming America and More Guns Less Crime. Published in 1999 and 1998 respectively the former attracted the ire of the gun lobby the latter seduced it but both are a remarkable couple in that neither is at all factual.
Arming America relied on probate records and information that very likely skewed by location, and era. But the main thesis of the book that American gun ownership is a more recent invention remains intact-unproven but intact. Arming America never made any claim to being a book of public policy, only popular history which is remarkable then considering the outrage it produced.
More Guns Less Crime however is far far more damaging.
The book was based upon an article that he had previously written and both article and book had the sole intent of influencing public policy. In that they were successful. Concealed carry is law nearly everywhere based upon Lott's evidence stating that more guns will reduce crime.
Of course intuition would tell you that that's the opposite of what one would expect. More guns by definition would seemingly turn any minor disagreement or crime into a worse crime.
Yes and no.
Yes, your intuition is correct. More guns increases crime:

http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S07...

http://www.livescience.com/1216-homic...

But despite these studies and your intuition the answer is still no.
How?
Simple, you create your own survey, answer those surveys to prove your initial point, "lose" said surveys which likely never existed in the first place, and then post as fictional people online defending this same survey!
The beauty part is that unlike Arming America in this with the NRA behind the author instead of in front lies

become fact and bad ideas become bad policy.

Abby says

I own lots and lots and lots of guns.

Kaitan says

This book was the result of a study on gun control laws, mainly non-discretionary concealed-handgun laws (aka "shall issue laws"), and crime rates. The study is very extensive in that in includes data from all 3,000+ counties in the U.S. over more than a 15 year period. However like any the study isn't complete (he only studies data available i.e. not all counties kept records as detailed as he would have liked, he doesn't look at statistics from other countries) and isn't perfect. One thing good about this book is that he addresses the criticisms lobbied against his study. I do think this is a good book in that it addresses an important issue and encourages debate which I think is always good. I don't know if I agree with his conclusion that non-discretionary concealed-handgun laws result in less crime. I do agree with his conclusion that arrest rates, conviction rates, and longer sentences do have an impact on crime rates. Whether or not one agrees with his conclusion, one cannot dispute that Lott did his homework. If you do choose to read this book, realize that it isn't easy to understand if you don't have an in depth knowledge of statistics. Also realize he can only deal with the statistics available to him.

Greg says

While there will always be people who are opposed to, or in favor of, gun control, I found this book to be a compelling argument in favor of increasing gun ownership and allowing the average citizen to carry a gun if they wish. Those who know me know that I am strongly against gun control, on both philosophical and practical grounds, but I also found Lott's work compelling from a professional and methodological perspective. Certainly there are some flaws...I've never seen a research study that was perfect, but that is no reason to discard it whole cloth. Indeed, this study has since been supported by others taking alternative approaches to the same question.

Craig says

This book explains the detailed studies the author conducted, which show that concealed-carry permit laws reduce violent crime, and to a lesser extent, property crime. He has conducted studies spanning almost 30 years for several US States. The book is bit heavy on statistics, charts and explanations of study methodology, but the study results are clearly explained as well. In this third edition, Lott includes data for states that passed carry laws more recently, as well as his responses to a long list of criticisms that the book has received from gun-control advocates.

Brendan Carry says

This is a great book if you wish to look into the rationale of conservative propagandists. The author in no way contrasts the statistics to other developed countries and utilizes the statistics that represent the minority of gun related defenses.