

---

# Contents

---

Acknowledgments	<i>xi</i>
Preface	<i>xiii</i>
<b>PART I. ISSUES OF GUN CONTROL AND GUN OWNERSHIP</b>	
1. Ideology, Politics, and Propaganda	3
Ideological Ironies and Crosscurrents	3
The Appearance of Reason—Fallacies in Gun Control Reasoning	7
Fallacies in Anticontrol Argumentation	7
Fallacies in Procontrol Argumentation	13
Common Problems of Persuasion	15
2. Ownership and Uses of Guns	17
Size of the Civilian Gun Stock	17
Who Owns Guns?	21
Why People Own Guns	25
Uses of Guns	41
How Are Guns Acquired?	45
Conclusions	47
3. Searching for “Bad” Guns: The Focus on Special Gun Types	65
Introduction	65
Machine Guns	67
Assault Rifles and Assault Weapons	70
Plastic Guns	82
“Cop-Killer” Bullets	82

“Saturday Night Specials”—Small, Cheap Handguns	83
Handguns	91
Conclusions	94

## **PART II. EFFECTS OF GUNS ON VIOLENCE**

<b>4. Guns and Self-Defense</b>	<b>101</b>
The Nature of Defensive Gun Use	103
The Frequency of Defensive Gun Use: Survey Data	104
Problems with the Surveys	108
Shooting in Self-Defense	111
Carrying Guns for Protection	117
Psychological Effects of Keeping Guns for Protection	119
Effectiveness and Risks of Armed Resistance to Criminals	120
Rape and Resistance	126
The Police Chief’s Fallacy	126
An Exercise in Ingenious Speciousness	127
Crimes Involving Defensive Gun Use	128
Deterrence	130
Guns and the Displacement of Burglars from Occupied Homes	138
Conclusions	141
Implications for Crime Control Policy	143
<b>5. Guns and Violent Crime</b>	<b>153</b>
Guns and Power	154
Issues of Assault Outcomes	155
Attack	156
Injury	162
Death	163
Guns in Robbery and Rape	170
Individual-Level Analysis	173
Problems in Analyzing Violent Incidents	175
Methods of the Present Analysis	176
Aggregate-Level Analysis of Gun Ownership and Violence Rates	185
International Comparisons	188
A City-Level Study of Gun Levels and Violent Crime Rates	191
An English Test of the Link Between Guns and Crime Rates	201
Conclusions	202

6. Guns and Suicide	223
Why Do Suicides Use Guns?	223
The Control Hypothesis	227
The Modeling Hypothesis	230
Who is Most Likely to Use Guns in Suicide?	231
Region and Suicide Method Preference	233
Ownership and Acquisition of Suicide Guns	235
Types of Guns Used in Suicides	236
What Suicides Might be Prevented by Reduced Gun Availability?	238
Prior Studies of Method Availability and Suicide Rates	246
The Impact of Gun Ownership Levels on Suicide Rates	248
The Impact of Gun Control Laws on Suicide	251
City-Level Analysis of the Impact of Guns on Suicide Rates	255
7. Firearms Accidents	269
The Frequency of Gun Accidents	270
Trends in Gun Accidents	274
Children and Gun Accidents	276
Gun Types Involved	280
The Victims and Shooters in Gun Accidents	282
Alcohol Involvement	286
Circumstances and Activities Associated with Gun Accidents	287
Defective Firearms	291
The Nature of Accidents and Those Who Cause Them	293
Personality Traits of the Accident-Involved	294
Reducing Gun Accidents	296
City-Level Analysis of Fatal Gun Accident Rates	303
Summary and Conclusions	304

### **PART III. REGULATING GUNS**

8. Types of Gun Regulation	323
Gun-Related Activity Regulated	323
Gun Types Controlled	327
Who Is Controlled?	328
Level of Restrictiveness	331
Level of Government	332
Some Detailed Comments on Specific Control Measures	333

Mandatory Penalties for Unlawful Carrying	342
Prohibition and Other Broadly Targeted Measures	344
Enforcement of Current Gun Laws	347
Administration of Licensing Laws—Two Contrasting Cases	353

9. Public Opinion and the Bases of Support for Gun Control	359
Some Caveats About Interpreting Public Opinion Polls	359
Trends in Public Opinion on Gun Control, 1959–1990	366
What Kinds of Gun Control Do Americans Favor?	368
The Nonutilitarian Nature of Much Gun Control Support	370
Who Supports Gun Control?	372
10. The Impact of Gun Control on Violence Rates	385
Methods of Prior Research	386
Results of Prior Research	390
Cross-National Comparisons	393
A City-Level Study of Gun Control Impact	394
The Toughest Gun Law in America: A Case Study	408
Gun Decontrol: A Case Study	411
Untried Gun Control Strategies	414

## **PART IV. POLICY LESSONS**

11. Conclusions	429
The Shape of Effective Gun Controls	431
A Workable Gun Control Strategy	432

Notes	447
-------	-----

Appendix 1. Production-Based Estimates of the Gun Stock (Chapter 2)	451
Appendix 2. Survey-Based Estimates of the Gun Stock (Chapter 2)	455
Appendix 3. Substitution of Long Guns for Handguns	461
Appendix 4. Alternate Estimates of the Number of Defensive Uses of Guns (Chapter 4)	467
Appendix 5. Legal Classification and Counting of Defensive Homicides (Chapter 4)	469
Appendix 6. Technical Problems in Using National Crime Survey Incident Files Data (Chapter 5)	473

References	477
------------	-----

Index	506
-------	-----