

between law enforcement and the public, especially members of the minority community. Racial profiling for purposes of crime control, drug control, and gun control has been widely condemned. Stopping everybody as frequently as minority citizens have been stopped would certainly not be popular. *Perhaps* technology will provide a way to remove illegal guns from the streets without exacerbating police/citizen frictions. But Millivision is not currently an option. Even if it turns out to be technically feasible, its constitutionality is dubious, especially in states with shall issue laws. Thus, it is essential that the police become skilled in carrying out stops and frisks consistent with a citizen's dignity. Of course, to achieve this goal, any taint of racial discrimination in the choice of individuals to stop must be eliminated. VERA's field experiment with a Bronx precinct gives us reason for optimism that progress toward this goal is possible.

The shall issue laws represent an expansion of gun owners' rights and a concomitant setback for rational gun control, especially in our cities. Gun control proponents ought to make repeal of these laws a top priority. Perhaps the best strategy toward that end would be to press for local control over gun regulation. Then urban areas might be able to marshal support to eliminate the shall issue laws or, at a minimum, to require proof of "good character" in the application process.

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Conclusion: The "Problem" Reconsidered

1. America has always been a relatively violent nation. Considering the tumultuous historical forces that have shaped the United States, it would be astonishing were it otherwise.
2. Since rapid social change in America has produced different forms of violence with widely varying patterns of motivation, aggression, and victimization, violence in America has waxed and waned with the social tides. The decade just ending [the 1960s], for example, has been one of our most violent eras—although probably not the most violent.
3. For remedial social change to be an effective moderator of violence, the changes must command a wide measure of support throughout the community.
4. Official efforts to impose change that is resisted by a dominant majority frequently prompt counter-violence.
5. Finally, Americans have been, paradoxically, both a turbulent people but have enjoyed a relatively stable republic. Our liberal and pluralistic system has historically both generated and accommodated itself to a high level of unrest, and our turmoil has reflected far more demonstration and protest than conspiracy and revolution.

—National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1970

As this book draws to a close, it will be useful to return to the beginning: what is the problem for which gun control is the solution? Passing gun con-

trol laws is not an end in itself. Defeating the NRA is not an end in itself. Gun control only makes sense as a means toward reducing accidental and intentional deaths, injuries, and crimes. Most accidental and intentional injuries are not inflicted with guns, although most suicides and homicides are. This statement ought to lead us to think about violence reduction and accident reduction in a broader context.

Violence is a multifaceted and deeply entrenched phenomenon in American society. Violence implicates our history, including slavery and the near genocide of Native Americans, our economic system, including the widening gap between the wealthy and the poor; our social organization, including a multiplicity of ethnic, racial, and religious groups; our culture, including extreme emphasis on individual achievement and material success; our family values, including extremely high rates of teenage pregnancy and families without fathers; our patterns of drug use, including a tremendous amount of alcohol and drug abuse and a close relationship between alcohol, drugs, and violence; our mental health, including high levels of anxiety, stress, depression, and serious pathology; and our criminal justice system, especially penal institutions that breed and amplify violence.

There are many reasons why individuals act violently, ranging from the completely instrumental to completely expressive. There is no single type of violence and no single remedy. Because probing this complex and unsavory phenomenon of American society reveals many unhappy truths about our society and ourselves, it is understandable that many people prefer to blame violence on guns and illicit drugs, inanimate objects that can deflect attention from more troubling "causes." Perhaps it is best to think of guns as both a consequence of the violent strain in our culture, as well as a contributing cause. In any event, gun controls can only be one part, probably only a small part, of remedying the multifaceted violence problem. The broader effort must involve individuals, families, schools, churches, media, corporations and political institutions and especially those neighborhoods that are the locus of the most intense violence. To change the patterns of violence in a violent society will require more than a better gun policy, it will require changing society.

Toward More Responsible Gun Ownership and Use

Gun "control" should be about reinforcing a norm of responsible gun ownership and use. We should approach the use of guns with the same mindset that we approach alcohol consumption and driving. These are danger-

ous activities that must be approached with maturity and caution. We talk about "responsible drinking" and "safe driving," not about drinking and driving controls. Firearms accidents are clearly a gun problem just as automobile accidents are a car problem. It ought to be cause for optimism that accidental firearms deaths have been decreasing for decades, despite a steady increase in the number of firearms. If there were no firearms, no swimming pools, and no automobiles, the number of accidental deaths would greatly decrease. But eliminating swimming pools, cars, or guns are not realistic options.

Consumer safety is an option and should be a priority. Unsafe firearms should not be sold and manufacturers should be held to reasonable and appropriate safety standards. Obviously, firearms' owners, especially those with young children, should be encouraged to store their firearms safely and to maintain them in good condition, which the vast majority do. Requiring manufacturers to provide safety locks with their products is a sound idea, but coercing firearms' owners, by threat of criminal sanction, to keep their guns unloaded or to lock them up would defeat the self-defensive purpose of gun ownership for many owners. It is also unenforceable.

Dealing with Gun Crime

Gun crime is by far our most serious firearms problem. However, gun crime itself is not a single phenomenon or homogeneous category. Breaking gun crime down into several broad categories helps us to think about (1) the extent to which the availability of guns causes crime, and (2) the potential and limits of various gun controls. First, there is gun crime committed by career offenders, including professional bank robbers, members of Cosa Nostra, drug cartels, drug distribution networks, and street gangs. It is simplistic to label guns the cause of this kind of criminality, although guns certainly make such groups more dangerous. There is no possibility that any gun control policy could succeed in denying the members of these groups access to firearms. Indeed, even in Japan, where there is very little private ownership of guns, members of the Yakuza and other organized crime groups have no difficulty obtaining firearms.¹ In the United States, career criminals possess, carry, and use guns, despite the threat of draconian punishment under state and federal felon-in-possession laws and of sentence enhancements for committing crimes with a gun.

Second, there is "disorganized" gun crime, like carjacking and armed robbery of stores, gas stations, and pedestrians, carried out by individuals alone or in twos or threes. This is the kind of street crime that terrifies the

public. The people who commit such crimes are often young, poor, and heavily involved with drugs. They may kill people in botched robberies or for no apparent reason. They often kill one another. Their stray bullets may kill or injure bystanders. From their own experiences in juvenile detention centers, reformatories, adult jails and prisons, and in the criminal subculture, individuals in this category have many sources—family members, friends, gang associates, drug dealers, and professional fences—from whom they can purchase or borrow handguns. It seems highly unlikely that any gun control regime could prevent such individuals from obtaining firearms.² They rarely purchase guns from FFLs, so more stringent regulation of licensed retail sellers would have little, if any, impact. Why would gun controls be any more effective in keeping guns out of the criminal subculture than drug controls in keeping illicit drugs out of the drug subculture?

Professors Cook and Ludwig suggest, almost in passing, that if the price of firearms increased* (via enforcement and regulatory strategies or by taxation), some poor young offenders would not have the money or choose not to spend their money on a gun.³ I have no objection to increasing the tax on handguns, if for no other purpose than to fund victims' services, but I fear that the demand for firearms will prove far more inelastic than Cook and Ludwig imagine. Young men, albeit poor, living in tough neighborhoods will come up with an additional \$10, \$20, or \$30 to purchase a firearm if they perceive that it is essential to their survival, status, or criminal opportunities. Indeed, several researchers, including, most recently, Anthony Braga and his colleagues in Boston, have found that street criminals do not prefer cheap guns. According to Braga et al., gang members in Boston prefer relatively expensive high caliber handguns rather than the cheapest guns.⁴ Guns are not expensive, cost no more than a fancy pair of sneakers, and far less than even casual use of drugs. In any event, an impecunious youth living in a tough neighborhood can likely share or borrow a gun. This kind of criminality must be addressed by targeting gun criminals with vigorous policing, prosecution, and long incarcerative sentences, and by effective social welfare programs and employment and education initiatives. "Supply side" gun strategies hold very little promise.

Third, there are gun crimes committed by friends, spouses, and lovers

*For decades we have heard that enforcing the drug laws more severely could drive up the price of illicit drugs and, in effect, drive poor people out of the market. For all our billions of dollars and massive law enforcement efforts, drugs have not become more expensive, and drug use by poor youth remains high.

against one another. It is here that gun controls have the most promise. Undoubtedly, there are shootings which are predominantly situational; without the presence of a gun, such incidents would not occur or they would result in less injury. But the frequency of spontaneous lethal violence by essentially law-abiding individuals is frequently exaggerated. The great majority of people who kill their "acquaintances" have substantial criminal records. Most of the victims also have criminal records. Some victims coded as "acquaintances" are actually members of rival gangs or drug networks or are rivals within the same group. A high percentage of the "relationships" that spawn lethal violence have been marred by a long history of conflict and violence. The reality of such killings is hardly captured by the term "situational."

Even killings of intimate partners are rarely the product of a mere lover's quarrel or a jealous rage. Most serious and lethal domestic violence is not the result of an argument that got out of hand between an otherwise harmonious couple. Far more frequently, a domestic violence killing is the culmination of months or years of abuse and beatings, that is, the product of a relationship spiraling ever downward.⁵ (One thinks of Nicole Brown Simpson, predicting that her ex-husband would someday kill her.) These are not the kind of situations where absence of a gun means that the conflict will blow over and the marriage return to happy homeostasis. (Nicole Brown Simpson, of course, was stabbed to death.) It would be a mistake to assume that killings between intimates are usually the result of spur-of-the-moment explosions of violence. Some defendants have planned their murderous conduct over a substantial period of time. They may have coolly decided that their spouse or business partner is worth more dead than alive. They may have stalked a former lover for months. They may have harbored a murderous plan for years. Even a momentary murderous rage can be so powerful that the aggressor will not stop short of killing the victim, with or without a gun. People who live in the same household have many opportunities and many weapons to kill one another—for example, with knives, bottles, cords, bats, poisons, or even bare hands.

Of course, men with domestic violence convictions or restraining orders *ought to be prevented* from purchasing and possessing firearms, at least while their relationship with the victim continues to simmer. But this is easier said than done in contemporary American society, where there are so many routes to obtaining a gun. It would not be wise to put much faith in the efficacy of a gun control scheme to protect the vulnerable partner. It makes more sense to invest in safe houses for the victims of domestic violence.

Is there any way to prevent people without a criminal record from obtaining guns? A Brady background check will not exclude people who do

not have a prior criminal record from making purchases in the primary market, much less at gun shows and in the secondary market generally. As we have seen, it would be a tremendous, probably insoluble, logistical and enforcement challenge to regulate secondary firearms sales. And even if that were somehow accomplished, the market in stolen and trafficked guns would remain.

A waiting period could prevent a person in a murderous rage from running out of the house, job site, or bar and, on the spot, purchasing a firearm from an FFL, then rushing back home to use it on his spouse or lover. A waiting period imposes a time period of several days or longer during which tempers can cool, so that by the time the gun is obtained, the motivation to kill will have evaporated. Perhaps a waiting period also makes an important symbolic statement: a gun purchase is a serious matter and it should be undertaken soberly, more slowly, and more deliberately than the ordinary consumer purchase.

My guess is that cases in which an enraged killer runs to a store, buys a gun, and immediately shoots his victim are *extremely rare* (I have never seen any data on the frequency of such events), but the cost of implementing a waiting period is very low. Interim Brady established a *de facto* waiting period of five (business) days. Permanent Brady allows NICS up to three days to approve a sale, but most sales are approved immediately. A person without a disqualifying record can walk into a gun store and leave with a gun in under an hour.

Many states (like California and Florida) have additional waiting periods. But waiting periods do not apply to gun purchases from non dealers. The enraged individual could instantly borrow a gun from a friend or colleague or from someone advertising in the local paper. Of course, a waiting period would have no effect on an enraged individual who already owns a gun or who can lethally deploy a knife, baseball bat, or some other weapon. Moreover, the NRA has a point in noting that, in some cases, a waiting period could deny a firearm to a person under immediate threat who has no other viable means of self-defense. Thus, a waiting period ought to be linked to a law enforcement commitment to protect the individual facing a serious threat.

A fourth category of gun crime involves rampages, such as what happened at Columbine High School and at the Jewish Community Center in Granada Hills, California. The enormity of these tragedies understandably provokes calls to *do something*. But what? Those who commit such atrocities usually develop their plans over many months and may be indifferent to or even hoping for their own death. Thus, they can take whatever time is necessary to obtain a firearm from a dealer or nondealer, or they can steal a gun. The two students who carried out the indiscriminate murder

of classmates at Columbine High School planned to and did kill themselves after shooting as many of their schoolmates as possible. It is difficult to imagine any regulatory regime that could have prevented them from obtaining the firearms necessary to achieve that goal. Probably the only way, if there is a way, to prevent such tragedies is obtaining and acting on information about students or others who are behaving curiously, talking about revenge killings, or otherwise signaling an impending rampage. Sadly, we probably also need armed security personnel and perhaps a few armed teachers able to respond effectively in the event that a rampage occurs.

Concentrating on Armed Offenders

The purpose of this book is to refocus the gun control debate on realistic options. To debate gun control strategies that have no relation to our current predicament is a distraction that triggers divisive argument. By far, the easiest firearms policy for the United States is to provide severe punishment for every defendant who uses a firearm in the commission of a crime. There are no interest groups that oppose tough treatment for gun offenders. Indeed, the NRA, the police, and victims groups all support long prison terms for individuals who commit crimes with guns. We should retrace a line that has been drawn in the sand for a long time: gun crime will be severely punished. Enforcing that message vigorously and consistently in federal and state court should be our top priority in the area of gun violence. Specialized prosecution units and even specialized gun courts (that only deal with defendants charged with gun crimes) would help to assure that no armed offender falls between the cracks. Offenders who use guns should not get probation and not qualify for early release from prison.

Smarter problem-solving policing has the potential to prevent some of the most serious gun crime. Under Operation Ceasefire, the Boston police made it clear to gang members that any armed violence would be met with the strongest possible local, state, and federal law enforcement response. The Harvard team evaluating this initiative concluded that the deterrent message paid large dividends.⁶ Likewise, devoting extra police resources to "hot spot" policing in neighborhoods plagued by gun violence makes a great deal of sense.⁷ The general principle should be to focus and concentrate police resources on the people, situations, and locations where gun violence occurs most frequently rather than to spread law enforcement's anti-violence resources thinly over the whole population and all locations. Investment in ballistic fingerprinting is worthy of serious consideration. It

may assist in apprehending some number of gun-wielding offenders who otherwise would escape arrest. It certainly makes sense to maintain contact and at least limited surveillance over individuals who have abused or threatened their intimate partners. Such people obviously present an enhanced risk of serious violence, especially in the short term.

More vigorous enforcement of the felon-in-possession laws, especially against individuals who have committed violent crimes in the recent past, should be a priority. But there are practical obstacles to severely punishing simple possession. Over the last several decades, federal prosecutors have declined to prosecute the majority of such cases, probably because of excessive caseloads and because some of these cases look like victimless crimes. Upon taking office, Attorney General John Ashcroft promised to make enforcing the gun laws his top priority (of course, that was before the terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center and part of the Pentagon).^{*} Still, the "ex-felon" charged with unlawful possession may, truthfully or untruthfully, claim to have had the gun to protect himself from deadly enemies. Unfortunately, this claim may have a ring of truth. Fear for their personal security is neither uncommon nor unreasonable in some of our worst neighborhoods (and toughest schools). If the unlawful possession laws are viewed as too harsh and are not enforced, it makes sense to reduce the sentences associated with such crimes. *A modest punishment that is routinely enforced is far better than a draconian threat that is rarely applied.*

Preventing Access to Firearms: A Dose of Realism

The most unrealistic control policy for the United States is prohibition of private ownership of firearms or just handguns. Demanding disarmament, as the Communitarian Network, the Surgeon General's Task Force, and others have done, serves no useful purpose and only fans the flames of a culture war between gun owners and gun controllers, who in fighting with one another forget that the violent crime problem is the source of our concern.

^{*}On January 23, 2002, Attorney General Ashcroft officially launched Project Safe Neighborhoods, America's Network against Gun Violence. He announced that nearly \$70 million in Justice Department funding will go to state and local prosecutors' offices to hire additional prosecutors to handle gun violence cases. Ultimately, the administration promises to fund 580 new state and local prosecutors and 94 additional assistant U.S. attorneys to combat gun crime.

Furthermore, talk of disarmament is counterproductive; it reinforces the resolve of gun owners to resist all gun controls because they are steps down a path to involuntary disarmament. Any serious effort to pass a firearms disarmament plan would trigger massive gun acquisition and expand and radicalize a resistance movement. The last thing the U.S. government needs is endless conflict with a huge segment of the citizenry that has never committed a gun crime. A war on civilian gun ownership would undermine crime prevention by unnecessarily diverting resources from preventing and solving crime.

If prohibition must continue to hold a place on the firearms policy agenda, it would make sense to always hold proposed gun prohibition up to the light and compare it with National Alcohol Prohibition and contemporary drug prohibition. Prohibiting manufacture and importation of new guns would be a much easier form of prohibition to implement than disarmament. Assuming that a congressional majority could be achieved (a huge assumption), it would be possible for the federal government to close down firearm or ammunition manufacturers or to achieve the same result through confiscatory taxation. Gun manufacturers could also be put out of business by common law courts if civil juries granted sizeable damage awards in municipal and victims' suits against manufacturers. These options are politically and legally unrealistic, but even if they could be implemented they would substitute a black market for the legal market we now have. As long as there is demand for new firearms and ammunition, a black market forms; indeed, there are such black markets in the United States, Western Europe, and Japan. Like drugs, guns and bullets would be manufactured in clandestine shops and imported from abroad. Unlike drugs, gun ownership enjoys the support of a substantial segment of the population that might view such activity as morally justified. With 300 million guns (my estimate after the mass buying that would occur in the several years while the prohibitionist legislation wended its way to passage) being held lawfully, prosecuting people for selling new guns, rather than used guns, would likely face hostility on grounds of hypocrisy or logic, as well as policy.

The dominant American twentieth-century firearms policy of trying to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals by regulating federally licensed dealers has reached a dead end. It would be very difficult to elaborate this strategy beyond the Brady Law. And the Brady Law itself, passed to give teeth to the Federal Firearms Act and Gun Control Act can be easily circumvented by ineligible purchasers. They need only find a straw purchaser willing to buy a gun for them, or buy a gun themselves at a gun show or from a nondealer who is selling a gun through a newspaper ad or by word of mouth. Closing the gun show loophole, by ex-

tending Brady to all gun show sales, would be another weak measure, if all other secondary sales by nondealers remain unregulated. Extending the Brady background check to ammunition purchases is probably sensible although an ineligible person would have no trouble circumventing the scheme.

National *restrictive licensing* is politically and administratively unrealistic. Congress would have to pass a law making guns available only to people who could demonstrate "good cause" for owning a handgun or a firearm; a huge federal agency would be necessary to administer the scheme. How would a national restrictive licensing system treat the tens of millions of gun owners who do not have "good cause" to own a gun? If these gun owners were required to disarm, the national licensing system would be little different from disarmament and, like disarmament, would present enforcers with monumental problems.

If the federal licensing plan gave a license to all current gun owners, we would have something like a national *permissive licensing* scheme; practically anyone could lawfully purchase a gun and ammunition as long as he or she filled out an application form and paid a small fee. That is more or less the way drivers licensing works. The system initially does not weed out antisocial individuals, including criminals, drug, and alcohol abusers. The auto licensing system only has bite, that is, a suspension or revocation, after the driver has committed serious driving violations. (That's analogous to moving against the gun owner after he has been arrested for committing an armed crime, as we do now.) Moreover, the auto licensing system's bite is not very hard. Denial or revocation of a license to drive does not prevent the denied or revoked individual from continuing to drive. Tens of thousands of dangerous and antisocial drivers continue to drive, even after their licenses have been suspended or revoked. The criminal justice system does not seem to have the will or the capacity to punish or incapacitate such individuals. Would the criminal justice system function differently with respect to unlicensed gun owners? Probably the best strategy would be to make unlicensed gun possession by a nonfelon punishable by a \$1,000 fine, that could be meted out quickly and without a jury trial. Seizure of the unlawfully possessed weapon could also be made part of the punishment.

Registration of firearms would be even more complicated to implement and enforce than licensing because of the difficulty of bringing secondary market transfers into the registration system. People would have to be persuaded to register the guns they currently own, as well as any new guns they receive from their parents or friends. Criminals would certainly not comply. Noncompliance would also be very high among law-abiding gun owners, who perceived the registration system to be the precursor to

general confiscation. Only a Supreme Court decision declaring that the Second Amendment guarantees law-abiding adults a right to keep and bear arms would make significant compliance with a firearms registration system *possible*, and even then success could not be assured; many gun owners, at least for several years, would worry about a future Supreme Court decision reversing the earlier one or that a gun control majority might be able to pass a constitutional amendment.

So what options are we left with? The Brady background check could be extended to ammunition purchases, gun shows, and the secondary market generally. But starting from where we are now, it would be very difficult to bring gun shows, much less all nondealer transfers, into the Brady framework by channeling all gun transfers through an FFL. It would be extremely difficult to enforce such a plan effectively. Evasion would be simple; nondealer sellers and buyers could just ignore the requirement.

It would be much simpler just to outlaw gun shows. Why permit an institution that seems tailor-made for selling stolen guns and for avoiding the Brady background check? Limiting gun purchases to one per month is also a realistic and cost effective idea that would impose little, if any, cost on law-abiding users and might disrupt somewhat the trafficking of guns to the criminal market. We should continue to support the research and development of smart guns that could prevent guns from being used by thieves, minor children, and family members bent on suicide.

The Shall Issue Laws

Rather than cutting back on "keeping and bearing arms," we seem to be moving in the other direction, toward a policy of permitting people who have no disqualifying record to carry firearms with them at all times. Passage of right to carry laws makes implementing some gun controls much more difficult. Facilitating citizens being armed in public is a dangerous experiment, especially for our big cities. True, John Lott's research finds that laws giving private citizens a right to a gun carry permit, as long as they have no disqualifying record, reduces crime. However, at the time he did his research, only a small percentage of citizens in the shall issue jurisdictions had obtained licenses. Lott claims that more gun-carrying citizens means less crime, but in New York City, without a right to carry law, crime fell in the 1990s more than in any other U.S. city.⁸ Indeed, the NYPD tried mightily to get guns off the street. I do not think that Lott's conclusions are well-documented enough to warrant a nationwide hard-to-reverse experiment of encouraging the citizenry to go about armed. Neither, however, should they be scoffed at or ignored. After all, Chicago,

New York, and Washington D.C., which issue very few concealed carry permits, are still plagued by high rates of violent crime. Their laws may be counterproductive if criminals arm themselves with ease, while law-abiding citizens lack adequate self-defense. Perhaps these highly restrictive licensing jurisdictions should issue more permits to "reliable" citizens. But reliable ought to mean "good character," not just "absence of a criminal conviction."

In New York and other big cities, I believe that peoples' insecurity would rise to unbearable levels if they perceived that a good percentage of the people walking next to them on the street, sitting next to them on a subway train, or waiting on line with them at a parking garage were armed with a concealed handgun. This insecurity probably arises from the fact that life in big cities is so anonymous, and that there is little trust among people who do not know one another. The people next to us are strangers who, for all we know, might be dangerous. Trust takes time and confidence to develop. Perhaps, in small towns where people know one another, there is enough assurance in the reliability of one's neighbor and fellow citizen to allay the fear that one's fellow citizen might be a dangerous criminal.

Policy Devolution

One size fits all does not make sense for many social and legal policies, especially firearms. My observations about the unsuitability of shall issue policies for big cities underlines my belief that firearms policy ought to be made at the local level. The firearms traditions in small town and urban America are different. Level of trust and anonymity is different. The level of policing is different. The federal government should certainly support, provide technical expertise, and *evaluate* licensing and registration schemes at the state and local levels.⁸ There is much that could be learned from evaluating the efforts of jurisdictions that have a solid political consensus to implement such initiatives. If it turns out that they can be done well in one jurisdiction, that alone will encourage other jurisdictions to follow suit.

Admittedly, allowing for decentralized gun regulation according to local preference allows negative externalities. Some communities wishing to ban private possession of firearms in public places, for example, will find their ambition undermined by a neighboring community's policy of allowing liberal access to firearms. This criticism can be raised against many decentralized policies, even levels and patterns of police deployments and criminal sentencing. Perhaps the best response is that a com-

munity that wishes to enforce its "no guns on the streets" law is free to do so, aggressively arresting and prosecuting unlicensed gun carriers.

All this might leave some readers with a feeling of despair. But there is more reason for optimism now than there was one or two decades ago. Violence has decreased dramatically in the last decade in the United States, despite the continued increase in the stock of civilian guns. This means that firearms accessibility is not the only thing, and not the most important thing, driving gun crime. Criminologists and policy makers should not be distracted by unrealistic proposals and slogans for "gun control." Rather, they should look to building on other anti-crime strategies and constructive social welfare policies that might be contributing to this unprecedented decrease of violent crime and gun crime.