

Gun Ownership Legality and Its Power in American Society

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article Received 29th October 2020 • Article Accepted 5th November 2020 <p>Keywords</p> <p>gun ownership gun ownership laws american legality power</p>	<p>This research is under a descriptive qualitative method. Therefore, library research was used to compile primary data. The primary data was taken from the documentary film, and the secondary data was taken from sources such as books, articles, and journals. Method of American studies or interdisciplinary approach was also applied with theories to analyze the problem formulation in this research. They were American politics towards gun laws, sociological theory, and popular culture. The result shows that American policy towards gun legality is less tight and it gives bad impacts to American society. The rules that have been made by the American government still considered weak and make American justify any illegal way to get their own gun easily. Therefore, the American government is supposed to improve the laws of gun ownership legality to decrease the impacts of gun problems.</p>



I. INTRODUCTION

Gun violence is a phenomenal issue in America. The firearms homicides rate in US is twenty times highly than 22 other countries that similar income level[1]. The reasons of this things can happen are because the owner of guns are dominant and the law of weapons is less stringent. These gun death are the big reason America has a much higher overall homicide rate[2].

In America to own guns is not too difficult because in America guns ownership is legal. There are some rules that need to fulfil to get the license but there are a lot of people who get their own gun unqualified or by black access. These guns are concentrated among a radical minority, those are the people who criticize hardly to all form of gun control and to scare the legislator into voting against such measure[3].

American violence caused by gun causes many types of criminal cases. It is not just homicide cases, but also suicide, domestic violence, and violence against police. According to some police report, American violence caused by gun happens because of many personal factors such as poverty, urbanization, and alcohol consumption[4]. But, there are some researchers that rejected that. They, the researchers, believe that the more prominent and the worse factor that many case of gun violence in America is gun ownership. UC Berkeley's Franklin Zimring and Gordon Hawkins, some of the researchers, analyze that gun ownership policy even make the criminality in America becomes worse.

The analysis of the researchers that gun policy led the increasing American criminality rates shows the legislation about gun ownership legality in America is not stringent enough. Gilson[3] states that "...and the clear evidence that the problem is America's high gun ownership rates, there hasn't been significant legislation to help solve the problem". In other words, the American legislation on gun ownership legality cannot solve the problem of gun criminality cases itself.

The lack of legislation on gun ownership legality in America makes the effortless of illegal gun ownership. The rising of black market and illegal gun

dealer led the simplicity of having gun. Gun ownership itself truthfully aims as the self-security device, but in the wrong hand it causes a problem, even criminal act. In worth impact, it allows the high rates of homicide cases in America.

American criminality caused by gun ownership legality is interested to be discussed. The researcher chose one of American documentary film by Michel Moore, *Bowling for Columbine* to see the reflection of the crime in it. *Bowling for Columbine* illustrates that crime in America is a fact. Therefore, the researcher was interested in analyzing the American policy toward gun legality and their impacts to the crime rate which were wrapped in a research entitled *The Impacts of Gun Ownership Legality as Seen in Bowling for Columbine: A Documentary Film By Michael Moore*.

The first review is found in journal by O'Brien, Forrest, Lynott, and Daly[4] explaining that gun ownership and gun control in US with one focuses on Racism. His study tells that racism is also related to gun ownership and opposition to gun control in US and biased attitude. There are several reasons for the absence of multivariate association between the stereotype of blacks as violent and race-IAT, and gun outcomes.

The second review is a journal by Lemieux[5]. He tells the effect or the impacts of gun culture in America. In this article, there are people have argued that mass shooting is due to a violent culture but not due to the ownership of firearms, they have advocated for armed guards in public spaces, armed teacher in schools, and an armed general population to deter or to prevent shooting rampages in public places. This essay demonstrates the whole series of analysis in the international and national levels, which shows that the best predictor of death by firearms is the possession of guns' ownership.

The last review is by Cook and Ludwig[6]. This essay tells about gun ownership with special focus on social costs of gun. Based on reasonable assumptions of this essay, the average annual marginal social costs of household ownership are in the range \$100 to \$1800. The essay tells that all of the effect of gun prevalence is on gun homicide rates and also provides

the estimates use a superior proxy for gun prevalence, the percentage of suicides committed with a gun. This essay tells that the positive elasticity estimates imply that an increase in the prevalence of gun ownership has positive marginal social cost.

Those three journals above explain the topic of gun problem in America. They give the statement that gun homicides or gun violent is caused not only by the legality of gun that makes gun death but there are also many reasons and problems make more death of gun violence. Points that he researches paper focuses on the impacts of gun ownership legality as seen in the documentary film *Bowling for Columbine*.

The writer takes American studies approach, which suggest the use of interdisciplinary analysis by Meredith that American studies is an interdisciplinary which utilizes social scene, literature, history, politics, economic structure, etc.[7]. More fully developed and most useful to our purpose is the division of the United States into its regions as charted by geography, economics, sociology, history, literature, painting, domestic architecture, and folk music. The study or national culture may therefore very properly be supported (and if necessary corrected) on the one hand by the regionalism and on the other by internationalism. Thus American studies move toward the reconciliation on the tense, the reconciliation of the academic disciplines, and a third long-range goal, namely a reconciliation of region, nation, and the world. Based on those states can be conclude that American studies are affected from many factors.

Bowling for Columbine contains some tragedies happening in US and several of them are criminal act involving guns. "Criminology today in United States is mainly oriented toward sociological explanation of the causes of crime and juvenile delinquency. Such explanations are based on the belief that crime is caused by the interrelationships among people, group and the society in which they live and function". Sociology or sociological is correlated with that states and it is the other theoretical approach that researcher use to in this study[8].

This approach is known as Weberian Social Action with title of the book *The Nature of Social Action*. Weber said that "Sociology' is a word which is used

in many different senses. The sense means the science whose object is to interpret the meaning of social action and thereby give a casual explanation of the way in which the action proceeds and the effects produces[9]. By 'action' in this definition is meant human behavior when and to the extent that the agent or agents involves a relation to another person's behavior and in which that relation determines the way in which the action proceeds"

Popular culture is a term that coined in the 19th century to connote 'the world surrounding us'. Film and television are being part of our world today as them inform about our contemporary world[10]. Popular culture is mass produced. It is delivery in large quantities through the mass media. Similarly, television sets, programs and films are produced by machine in large quantities to miss audience. Television and film also qualify as popular culture because they are not for free[11].

All of those theories, approaches and methods were used to analyze and resolve the problems in this thesis. Even though every approach apparently has different point of views, they are related and support each other.

Sociological Theory

1. Social Influence

The researcher use sociology approach because sociology is very supportive in this analysis and because of sociology is a very related science also can merge with another sciences, this film tells about tragedies that happened because of gun problem and all those tragedies involve social condition and social act from the perpetrators of those criminal case. Most of the perpetrators of these crimes suffer from mental disorders from social or environmental forces, and added by the weakness of gun ownership legality, that is make it as an outlet of their emotions. It is corresponds to Comte's theory about sociology that was explained by Pet'ko, "The final science which Comte claimed to have discovered and one which had not yet entered its positive stage, was sociology. It was sociology, he claimed, that would give ultimate meaning to all the other sciences – it was the one science which held the others together. Only sociology would reveal that man is a developing

creature who moves through three stages in each of his sciences. With this profound assertion, Comte argued that we could finally understand the true logic of mind. And in the 47th lesson of the fourth volume of the *Course of Positive Philosophy*, Comte proposed the word sociology for this new science rather than the current expression, *physique sociale* (or social physics)"[8].

2. Sociology Towards Crime

Social condition or interaction between individual makes a new form of act. Bad influence of interaction between individual is one cause that make such a criminal act, as Shiller, Black, and Patrick said that, Criminal behavior is the product of a systematic process that involves complex interactions between individual, societal, and ecological factors over the course of our lives[12].

Tragedy of criminality caused of gun legality happened since 50s. The tragedies was horrible, there are thousand of people killed. Such as on 1953 U.S. overthrows Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq of Iran. U.S. installs Shah as dictator and on 1954: U.S. overthrows democratically-elected President Arbenz of Guatemala. 200,000 civilians killed. It is not those tragedies only. Many gun violence that happened in America. In the next years the problems not decrease but increase as the number of the victims[13].

Film as Popular Culture

Popular culture is a term that coined in the 19th century to connote 'the world surrounding us'. Film and television are being part of our world today as their inform about our contemporary world. Popular culture is mass produced. It is delivery in large quantities through the mass media. Similarly, television sets, programmes and films are produced by machine in large quantities to mass audience. Television and film also qualify as popular culture because they are not for free[11].

Type of the film that the researcher want to analyze is documentary film. The film directed by Michel Moore *Bowling for Columbine*, this film tells about the primary causes for the Columbine High School massacre in 1999 and other acts of violence with guns. Moore focuses on the background and

environment in which the massacre took place and some common public opinions and assumptions about related issues..

Besides to entertain the audience film is also media to studies as Kevin said, "*The Basics* provides an accessible introduction to the key theorists, concepts, and debates that have shaped the study of moving images".. "Film theory has since become an important sub-field in film and media studies, but it also remains a contentious subject with many detractors questioning its intellectual worth[10]. All kind of film made with message inside, from the message and the picture audience can learn anything that the film tells about. Such as in *Bowling for Columbine* that tells about gun problem and the impact of gun ownership legality in America, it should be a learning for American government to fix the rules of gun ownership legality and people can better understand about the negative impact of private gun ownership.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted under qualitative research method as a way to accumulate the data and to analyze them[14]. The discussion of the methods is divided into some sections; method of collecting data, the source of data, technique of collecting data, and data analyzing technique. The researcher collects the data by finding some articles and journals from the internet and watching the documentary film *Bowling for Columbine*. In order to collect the data, the writer uses the qualitative method. The primary data source of this research is a documentary film *Bowling for Columbine* by Michael Moore. The writer applies 2 ways of collecting data, which are library searching and website searching. Here, the writer finds some theory book and other guide book in relating to the research paper. The second way in collecting data is website searching, where the researcher finds some journals, articles, and eBooks in relating to the topic of the research paper through the internet. This information that is taken from is used to help the writer to find articles that is related to the study. The data analysis is started by watching the documentary film *Bowling for Columbine* and continued by analyzing the scenes with the data from the internet. The next steps were arranging and

organizing the data with related theories in this research.

The theoretical framework of research project relates to the philosophical basis on which the research takes place, and forms the link between the theoretical aspect and practical components of investigation undertaken. The theoretical framework, therefore, “has implications for every decision made in the research process”. The theoretical framework is a structure that identifies and describes the major elements, variables, or constructs that organize your scholarship. It is used to hypothesize, understand, or give meaning to the relationships among the elements that influence, affect, or predict the events or outcomes you specify. Theoretical framework grows out of the research focus, guides the design of individual studies, and structures your research presentations and publications. It is important to begin assemble the theoretical framework and the other pieces you will need to solve the research puzzle rather than racing around in scattered attempt to produce a few disjointed products[15].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

America has legislation in allowing gun legality for ordinary people. The government also has the laws or regulation to people who want to get ownership of gun. Because of the rules that less tight many ways to people to get their own gun by another way without follow the regulation before. As describe in Gun Control in the United States, “As project of the Open Society Institute’s Center on Crime, told that America has another link to get firearm easier “Public opinion polls indicate that Americans recognize a link between gun violence and easy access to firearms. National surveys show consistently high levels of public support – over 70% – for tougher restrictions on the manufacture, sale and ownership of guns.6 In this regard the public is far ahead of its legislators.”

The weakness of American laws regarding gun ownership legality can be seen from the number of people who easily get license of gun ownership legality through the illegal ways. It is explained in the analysis by Open Society Institute that “Seven states have no legal minimum age for a child buying rifles or shotguns from a private seller. 18 states have no

minimum age for possession of these guns, and 13 states have a minimum age between 12 and 16.”

The weakness of gun laws is not only in one country, based on the data before there are many countries that has high rank in gun problem, The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence analysis shows that eight of these states are among the 25 states with the weakest gun laws. While the strength of a state’s gun laws is just one factor in the prevalence of gun related violence in the state and cannot alone account for gun violence, there is a clear link between weak gun laws and high levels of gun violence across the United States[16].

American Policy towards Gun Legality

America has legislation in allowing gun legality for ordinary people. The government also has the laws or regulation to people who want to get ownership of gun. As describe in Gun Control in the United States, as project of the Open Society Institute’s Center on Crime, told that America has another link to get firearm easier “Public opinion polls indicate that Americans recognize a link between gun violence and easy access to firearms. National surveys show consistently high levels of public support – over 70% – for tougher restrictions on the manufacture, sale and ownership of guns.6 In this regard the public is far ahead of its legislators.

There are rules that Open Society Institute tells about gun laws to people as a buyer and to the dealer as a seller, “Importation of small, poor quality handguns (“junk guns”), and of some overseas assault weapons is banned” ... “Fully automatic machine guns may not be manufactured, imported, bought or sold. (Pre-1986 weapons can continue to be owned and sold.)” But those rules ignored by people who knows that they can get their own gun without through the rules, as James said that he gets his own gun under arm.

The dealers who wants to sale the gun to people needs to through the rules of American laws on gun legality that made by American government. In this documentary film of Michael Moore tells that although the dealer has a license to sale the gun people still obtain their own personality gun only by open the account in that bank, and the bank will offer

you the list of gun that they have so you can choose every free gun that you want.

American government must be focus on his problems because America make the problems by the own laws of guns. American government attention is less to the laws so there are many problems caused by gun. The problems are not because of the weakness of the laws; the problems can happen by other reasons that support the perpetrators to do the criminal acts. The reasons can be the in influence, video games, social condition around the perpetrators, bullying, drugs, and depressions.

Social Influence On Crime

Criminal act that involves complex interactions between individual, societal, and ecological factors over the course of our lives. It means society is influential to people to do the criminal act. If the perpetrator has a problem with people around him, it will be a reason why he did the criminal act.

The impacts of gun are too horrible. America is a country that has many problems of gun violent. There is criminal case that caused by guns.

From those tragedies Michael Moore analysis its all prove that America is a country with the highest rank of death by gun each year. And from the data that found by the researcher conclude that in Germany, 381. In France, 255. In Canada, 165. In the United Kingdom, 68. In Australia, 65. In Japan, 39 and in the United States, 11,127. Those tragedies explain that the impacts of gun ownership legality were horrible, but those tragedies are born because of one factor that supported by many things such high school cliques, subcultures, bullying, social conditions, culture, gun culture, social outcasts, the use of pharmaceutical anti-depressants by teenagers, teenage Internet use, and violence in video games.

Social Influence Towards Criminality Case

The researcher use sociology approach because sociology is very supportive in this analysis and because of sociology is a very related science also can merge with another science, social condition is very influential on the mental and behavior of everyone to others. Circumstances is very influential to anything that related with people life which is need to interact

with others around them. As Diana said that, “Sociologist look at social location, the corners in life that people occupy because of where they are located in a society. Sociologist look at how jobs, income, education, gender, age, and race-ethnicity affect people’s ideas and behavior.”

As quotation of Skidmore in Cross’s analysis that sociology as a discipline emerged out of a series of debates begun during the period of the Enlightenment between philosophers, scientists and other intellectuals about the origins and nature of human societies. Explain that sociology is merge because the interact of people to each other, that is why the social condition is very influential to human mental and human behavior.

The most tragedy that Michael Moore focuses on is Columbine High School Massacre. It was happened on April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School in Columbine, an unincorporated area of Jefferson County in the American state of Colorado. In addition to the shootings, the complex and highly planned attack involved a fire bomb to divert firefighters, propane tanks converted to bombs placed in the cafeteria, 99 explosive devices, and car bombs. The perpetrators, senior students Harris and Klebold, murdered 12 students and one teacher. They injured 21 additional people, and three more were injured while attempting to escape the school. The pair subsequently committed suicide.

The perpetrators of columbine high School massacre is not because the legality of gun laws but their supported by other reasons such as from internet contain and video games that they had watch before. The perpetrators also made the gun by themselves, “Harris had noted on his site that he had made pipe bombs, in addition to a hit list of individuals (he did not post any plan on how he intended to attack targets)”. The perpetrators of that massacre supported by bullying, games, internet, and get the gun easier. That is prove that social condition also can be influential towards the problems. “Sociologist look at social location, the corners in life that people occupy because of where they are located in a society. Sociologist look at how jobs, income, education, gender, age, and race-ethnicity affect people’s ideas and behavior[17].

IV. CONCLUSION

Gun problem in America was big problem, there are many victims because of many criminal act caused by gun. These tragedies are caused by rules of Gun ownership legality which is made by the American government itself. Even, there is a bank which offers gun for its people who make account. That is why, gun ownership legality must be tightened because its impact because of the weakness of gun ownership legality which is fatal, some sources are found from the data analysis about the bad impact of gun ownership legality in America, proves that America is a progressive country with the highest rate of gun violence compared to the other countries that has the same level.

There are laws for the buyer to have gun and the dealer to sale the guns. There is a bank in America, North Country Bank with the dealer license that give free gun to the people who make account in that bank. Michael Moore proves that how easy to have gun in America. Another fact which is prove the weakness of gun ownership laws in America can be seen in one tragedy of two students as the perpetrators of massacre in Columbine High School, Harris and Klebold, they are easy to get four pieces of firearms. Their got the guns from their friends that old enough and easy to buy the guns. As the rules that person under 18 can have their own gun, U.S.C. Federal Firearms Act. From that problem we know that American gun ownership legality laws is very weak.

The impacts of the weakness of the laws can be seen in the number of the dead people by gun violent in America. It also tells that gun give very bad impacts to the people. American government has ended up as a country with the highest number of gun-related killings on Earth by fixing the regulation of gun ownership legality. Lack of attention of the government also affects the increase in crime act, because of the government's neglect of the regulation can be used by bad people to do the crime. Massacre in Columbine High School is one of many tragedies that caused by gun ownership legality with the perpetrators under 18 that caused many students died.

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