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#### Private ownership of handguns is rooted in securitized logic of self-defense that creates more insecurity, a domestic arms race, and police militarization.

Robert Spitzer 95 [American political scientist, commentator, and author. Spitzer is the author of numerous books, articles, essays, papers, and op-eds on many topics related to American politics], “The politics of gun control”, Chatham House, 1995, BE

Students of international relations concern themselves with how nations behave and interact. Not surprisingly, a central concern of these analysts is armed conflict-in particular, the causes and prevention of war. Throughout history, nations have been forced to rely on themselves, sometimes with the help of allied nations, to ward off the aggressions of other nations. Unlike citizens or communities within a nation, sovereign nations usually operate within an international framework of anarchy, meaning that nations must look out for themselves.15 (Note that this definition of anarchy is not the one popularly used, in which indiscriminate disorder, confusion, and mayhem are the norm.) The international relations expert Kenneth Waltz notes that “self-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order.”16¶ Anarchy in the international system prevails because of the absence of any authoritative governing body or structure. As the international security expert Bruce Russett writes, “There is no higher authority, such as a world government, to which they [nations] can appeal for protection. Rather, they must try to provide security through policies that heavily emphasize military strength and military deterrence.”l7 International politics is, quite simply, “politics in the absence of government.”18¶ The great dilemma of this behavior among nations is that, as nations arm and fortify themselves in an effort to stave off conflict, they in turn fan the flames of insecurity in other nations. Emphasizing the universality of this problem, international expert John Herz wrote of the “security dilemma” of men, or groups, or their leaders:¶ Groups or individuals .. . concerned about their security from being attacked, subjected, dominated, or annihilated [s]triving to attain security from such attack . . . are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the impact of the power of others. This, in turn, renders the others more insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Since none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious circle ofsecurity and power accumulation is on.” As the security analyst Robert Jervis says, “the means by which a state tries to increase its security decrease the security ofothers.”0 This, in a nutshell, is the “security dilemma.”¶ When a nation takes actions that it considers to be purely defensive (and therefore not threatening to other nations), other nations may perceive some of those actions as an offensive threat to their security. If, for example, a nation builds up its army to deter an attack from a neighboring nation, the neighboring nation is likely to assume that the buildup is designed for attack, not defense, and is therefore likely to respond by increasing its forces, an action that may accelerate the first nation’s buildup, and so on, until war breaks out. A classic example of such a cycle is that preceding World War I, as described in Barbara Tuchman’s revealing book The Guns of August.¶ One might suppose that such a cycle could be prevented if nations developed solely defensive weapons. But there are two problems with this solution. First, virtually all weapons can be construed as having an offensive purpose (although some defensive actions may avoid this problem). Second, even those weapons considered purely defensive, such as antimissile missiles, can be considered threatening to other nations because they suggest that the nation developing them may use them to defend its territory against retaliation in the aftermath of an initial offensive strike. For this reason, defensive weapons are often considered destabilizing in a balance-of-power situation.”¶ Thus, the classic response to the security dilemma is for nations “to expand their individual power.”22 Yet the cumulative consequence of this seemingly rational response to international anarchy is the escalation of arms races and an ever-increasing likelihood of war.¶ Arms races are problematic for three reasons: they are costly and wasteful, they ratchet up the degree of destruction likely to occur if conflict does break out, and they are a primary cause of war. Although arms races are not necessarily the sole causes of war, the historical correlation between the two is high. And arms races are undeniably a bad way to prevent conflict. These threats to security have driven nations to form alliances, make treaties, and engage in other actions to reduce the likelihood of war. The most prominent such example is the formation of the United Nations at the end of World War Il. Central to this effort in recent years has been negotiation of arms control agreements designed to limit the development and spread of nuclear arms, although the security dilemma is not unique to the nuclear age. In fact, arms control is "virtually as old as weapons themselves."24¶ As international security Specialists well understand, the constant threat the security dilemma poses would be no threat at all If a powerful international authority existed that could impose order and accompanying standards of behavior on the nations of the world. It is precisely because international sys- tems are “decentralized and anarchic,” whereas domestic POhncal systems are “centralized and hierarchic,”25 that one does not find anarchy to be a prevalent mode of interaction within most nations. Obviously, such an authorlty €XlSts within the borders of the United States. ¶ The Security Dilemma and the Gun Debate ¶ The startling parallels between the behavior of nations and that of citizens within the United States is less surprising when one considers the fulfillment of the primeval need for order, described at the start of chapter 1, as the first purpose of governments. The desire of citizens to own guns for the purpose of self-defense underscores the government’s inability to provide a greater degree of public order. The domestic “anarchy” many fear is the anarchy of elements of the inner city, the darkened lonely street, the random killer, the vicious rapist.¶ The problem of widespread gun ownership and proliferation in society lies precisely in the seemingly rational desire of the individual to own a gun for self-defense, even though the cumulative consequence of such ownership is likely to be more detrimental than helpful to societal order, and in the reality that guns can be used as easily for offense (e.g., to commit a robbery) as for defense (e.g., to thwart a robbery). Although the purpose of a gun purchase may be defensive, it is impossible for others to feel secure unless they already trust the gun owner. No matter how defense-minded the gun owner, the very act of gun ownership and especially that of gun display are invariably offensive in nature. As a Spanish diplomat noted between the two world wars: “A weapon is either offensive or defensive according to which end of it you are looking at.”26 As one international security expert observed, the only way to ensure that others would interpret gun ownership as purely defensive in nature would ,be somehow to chain the gun to one’s house.27 Even then, the dangers of suicide and accident would persist. ¶ Bearing in mind the differences between international and domestic political systems, the standoff and conflagration that consumed the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas, in early 1993 dramatically illustrates the applicability of the security dilemma to the American gun situation. The fringe group had amassed an enormous quantity of arms and explosives, in- sisting that they were for defensive purposes only. One can accept their claim of defense and still understand why the mere acquisition of these materials aroused alarm among government officials and others. This is admittedly an extreme example, but it almost precisely parallels the security dilemma in international politics.¶ Offense versus Defense ¶ The mere “act of gun possession, then, is offensive regardless of intent because weapons are inherently offensive and because it is “hard to convince most people that they [through weapons acquisitions] may be inadvertently threat- ening others.”8 Bearing this in mind, one can still refine the distinction by borrowing from international relations the principle that weapons may be distinguished by their relative degree of offensive or defensive capability, ap- plying the distinction to different types of guns.¶ Handguns pose an even greater offensive risk than long guns because of their concealability, portability, and ease of use. Supporting this proposition is the fact that handguns are more than three times as likely to be used in violent crime as long guns, even though long guns are easier to obtain and outnumber handguns nationwide by a ratio of roughly two to one. About 15 percent of the 2.1 million handguns made in the United States in 1995 were used in a violent crime within the next five years. In 2006, for example, guns were used to commit about four hundred thousand crimes. Also in 2006 68 percent of all murders, 42 percent of robberies, and 22 percent of aggravated assaults involved guns. The vast majority of these crime guns were handguns.29 Moreover, the most frequently cited reason for handgun ownership is self-protection, whereas those who own long guns cite hunting and sporting purposes as the primary reason for ownership. Obviously, long guns may have offensive and defenswe purposes as well, but just as international relations specialists distinguish between weapons that have more versus less offensive capabilities, one may do the same when considering types of weapons owned by Americans.¶ Following this line of logic, assault weapons may be considered to pose a greater offensive threat than other long guns. Even though assault weapons are infrequently used by criminals and constitute a relatively small percent- age of total firearms, they have gained in popularity among drug traffickers, urban gangs, extremist groups, and others in recent years and have also gained considerable notoriety when used in highly publicized mass killings. Especially popular among criminals are assault-style semiautomatic pistols, such as the THC-9.“0 Sales to law-abiding citizens have also increased in recent years. As discussed in chapter 5, assault weapons are distinguishable from other semi- automatic weapons, and they are generally considered to have no legitimate hunting or sporting use. Yet the firepower they deliver (i.e., the ability to fire a bullet per trigger pull from magazines holding thirty rounds or more and to do so by laying down “spray fire”) makes them useful for offensive purposes, as reflected in the military reason for their development."1 Moreover, physicians report more serious injuries from assault weapons than from handguns (because of the greater muzzle velocity of bullets fired from assault weapons, the bullets’ tendency to tumble and thus cause more damage, and the assault weapons’ ability to fire more bullets before requiring reloading) and an upsurge of such wounds requiring treatment in urban hospital emergency rooms.¶ Further, for the defense-minded citizen, gun acquisition is not the only avail- able means of defense. The citizen seeking self-protection can instead turn to an array of indisputably defensive actions designed to increase personal safety and yet, unlike guns, pose no offensive capability or threat. As discussed in chapter 3, these include installing better outdoor lighting, bars on windows, and home alarm systems; using guard dogs; and forming neighborhood alliances.¶ Based on the security dilemma principle, a national policy that encourages and implements weapons ownership as a recognized means of self-defense invites a domestic arms race. Of the three problems with arms races mentioned earlier, the first, cost, is probably the least significant for the American gun issue. A government policy encouraging civilian gun possession could easily make weapons available at prices affordable to most. The second and third problems, however-escalation of the degree of destruction and increase in the likelihood of conflict-are severe problems for the domestic arms race advocates.¶ Escalation¶ As the security dilemma posits, arms proliferation among citizens would inexorably lead to an escalation of gun-related violence, injuries, and deaths.32 Those who emphasize the desirability of widespread weapons ownership and carrying among the civilian population never consider, for example, that aside from a likely rise in incidental injuries and deaths, such a policy would invite criminals, as well as law-abiding citizens now more fearful of their safety, to carry increasingly destructive weapons."3 The security dilemma predicts this pattern of mutual escalation.¶ Such a phenomenon is observable in the rearming of police forces around the country, where the traditional six-shot service revolver has been replaced by higher-capacity semiautomatic handguns, notably 9mm pistols capable of holding fifteen- to nineteen-round magazines. From the mid-19805 to 1990 nearly half of America’s police forces made the switch. By 1995 the 9mm gun was found in nearly all police forces. The reason for the switch is that police have found themselves increasingly outgunned, especially as street violence and semi-automatic weapons have proliferated. Echoing the parallel to inter- national relations, the executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum said, “We’ve got a full-blown arms race going on in the streets today.” Yet police authorities have been concerned about the consequences of this arms escalation. Police in New York City have been “firing too many shots” with the new semiautomatic pistols, according to authorities, which in turn has led to increased training. In an eleven-year study of the thirty-six thousand-mem- ber New York City Police Department (the nation’s largest city force), officers who fired their weapons in the line of duty hit their targets about 34 percent ofthe time.“¶ Some might be tempted to cite this phenomenon as a justification for arm- ing citizens to assist the police. Yet it must be noted that the great majority of police officers nationwide never fire their guns in the line of duty, so to exaggerate the actual threat to the police and the public would be a mistake. Beyond this, containment is a key to arms control, and unlike the international sphere, as a means of limiting the arms race, the powers of the state can be brought to bear against those who either own or use weapons improperly. That is, to escalate a domestic arms race beyond law-enforcement officers, whose specific and professional function is the maintenance of societal order, to the general population is to make a quantum leap in the abnegation of govern- ment authority. The option ofarms escalation among the general population also invites comparable escalation by the criminal population, and it widens the scope of those participating in the escalation process and therefore also the scope of gun-related mayhem. As Jervis notes, “there is no policy and level of arms that is mutually satisfactory [to opposing sides] 3’35 Such an approach would feed, not reduce, the security dilemma. This does not mean that citizens have no role in the law enforcement process, but rather that widespread gun carrying is neither the only nor the most desirable option. Indeed, that police organizations have lined up consistently in favor of gun control in recent years provides clear evidence that police are not sanguine about more widespread gun ownership, even among the most law-abiding segments of the population.¶ To summarize, despite the difficult plight law enforcement agencies face, to bring citizens into a domestic arms race against crime would, as the security dilemma predicts, (I) invite and broaden an arms race that could only result in the escalation of violence (both intentional and unintentional) and cultivate anarchy of the sort found in the international system and in some inner cit- ies, and (2) undercut the legitimate role of the state as arbiter of public order. The Hobbesian world within nations such as Lebanon in the 19805, Somalia in 1992, and Rwanda in 1994 are extreme, if exemplary, cases in which the state’s responsibility to maintain order was passed on de facto to its respective citizens. The resulting chaos and carnage are adequate testimonials to the virtue of leaving the maintenance of public order to the state.

#### The role of the ballot is to vote for the debater whose advocacy best breaks down domestic securitization.

Anthony Burke 2 [Australian political theorist and international relations scholar. He is Associate Professor (Reader) of Politics and International Relations in the University of New South Wales], “Aporias of Security”, Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2002, BE

It is perhaps easy to become despondent, but as countless struggles for freedom, justice, and social transformation have proved, a sense of seriousness can be tempered with the knowledge that many tools are already available - and where they are not, the effort to create a productive new critical sensibility is well advanced. There is also a crucial political opening within the liberal problematic itself, in the sense that it assumes that power is most effective when it is absorbed as truth, consented to and desired - which creates an important space for refusal. As Colin Gordon argues, Foucault thought that the very possibility of governing was conditional on it being credible to the governed as well as the govern- ing.60 This throws weight onto the question of how security works as a technology of subjectivity. It is to take up Foucault's challenge, framed as a reversal of the liberal progressive movement of being we have seen in Hegel, not to discover who or what we are so much as to refuse what we are.61 Just as security rules subjectivity as both a totalizing and individualizing blackmail and promise, it is at these levels that we can intervene. We can critique the machinic frame- works of possibility represented by law, policy, economic regulation, and diplomacy, while challenging the way these institutions deploy language to draw individual subjects into their consensual web.¶ This suggests, at least provisionally, a dual strategy. The first as- serts the space for agency, both in challenging available possibilities for being and their larger socioeconomic implications. Roland Bleiker formulates an idea of agency that shifts away from the lone (male) hero overthrowing the social order in a decisive act of re- bellion to one that understands both the thickness of social power and its "fissures," "fragmentation," and "thinness." We must, he says, "observe how an individual may be able to escape the discur- sive order and influence its shifting boundaries. ... By doing so, discursive terrains of dissent all of a sudden appear where forces of domination previously seemed invincible."62¶ Pushing beyond security requires tactics that can work at many levels - that empower individuals to recognize the larger social, cultural, and economic implications of the everyday forms of desire, subjection, and discipline they encounter, to challenge and rewrite them, and that in turn contribute to collective efforts to transform the larger structures of being, exchange, and power that sustain¶ (and have been sustained by) these forms. As Derrida suggests, this is to open up aporetic possibilities that transgress and call into question the boundaries of the self, society, and the international that security seeks to imagine and police.¶ The second seeks new ethical principles based on a critique of the rigid and repressive forms of identity that security has heretofore offered. Thus writers such as Rosalyn Diprose, William Con- nolly, and Moira Gatens have sought to imagine a new ethical rela- tionship that thinks difference not on the basis of the same but on the basis of a dialogue with the other that might allow space for the unknown and unfamiliar, for a "debate and engagement with the other's law and the other's ethics" - an encounter that involves a transformation of the self rather than the other.63 Thus while the sweep and power of security must be acknowledged, it must also be refused: at the simultaneous levels of individual identity, social order, and macroeconomic possibility, it would entail another kind of work on "ourselves" - a political refusal of the One, the imagi- nation of an other that never returns to the same. It would be to ask if there is a world after security, and what its shimmering possi- bilities might be.

#### Tangible action is key—pure critical thinking is useless.

Henry A. Giroux 14 [American scholar and cultural critic. One of the founding theorists of critical pedagogy in the United States, he is best known for his pioneering work in public pedagogy], “Neoliberalism's War on Democracy”, Truthout, 26 Apr 2014, BE

In this instance, understanding must be linked to the practice of social responsibility and the willingness to fashion a politics that addresses real problems and enacts concrete solutions. As Heather Gautney points out, ¶ We need to start thinking seriously about what kind of political system we really want. And we need to start pressing for things that our politicians did NOT discuss at the conventions. Real solutions—like universal education, debt forgiveness, wealth redistribution, and participatory political structures—that would empower us to decide together what's best. Not who's best.75¶ Critical thinking divorced from action is often as sterile as action divorced from critical theory. Given the urgency of the historical moment, we need a politics and a public pedagogy that make knowledge meaningful in order to make it critical and transformative. Or, as Stuart Hall argues, we need to produce modes of analysis and knowledge in which "people can invest something of themselves . . . something that they recognize is of them or speaks to their condition."76 A notion of higher education as a democratic public sphere is crucial to this project, especially at a time in which the apostles of neoliberalism and other forms of political and religious fundamentalism are ushering in a new age of conformity, cruelty, and disposability. But as public intellectuals, academics can do more.

#### Security studies comes prior to our understanding of the world – it’s necessary to frame our discussions

De Larrinaga 9 (Miguel de Larrinaga holds a PhD from the University of Ottawa. He is currently Assistant Professor at the University of Ottawa, Securing Outer Space, ed. Bormann and Sheehan, p. 132-134)

Within the context of security studies, and informed by the above, this approach is also intimately associated with an understanding of security as a speech act as developed by Ole Weaver and the Copenhagen School (Buzan et al. 1998). In short, and in relation to the above discussion on essence, treating security as a speech act means, as Ole Weaver explains, that you do not understand it as "a sign that refers to something more real, the utterance its elf is the act." (Waever 1995: 55). In other words, what makes a security issue a security issue is not the fact that the threat is itself intrinsically a security threat, but that it is framed as such by calling it one. However, this does not simply mean that making an issue a security issue occurs solely in the ideational realm. On the contrary, by making an issue a security issue, certain practices and technologies associated with security are deployed in order to neutralize what has been deemed a "security threat." Understanding something as a security issue is thus never a neutral enterprise. Furthermore, Between blind faith and deep skepticism 1 3 3 through this understanding of security, more security is not always a good thing. Understanding security in this way has thus led to calls to either desecuritize certain issues or to not make an issue a security issue in the first place - e.g. immigration (Huysmans 1 995) or the environment (Deudney 1 990). In understanding security as a speech act, one understands the deployment of a security discourse as a way to bring a certain issue under the realm of state decision and control. As Weaver suggests, "(i}n naming a certain development a security problem the 'state' can claim a special right, one that will, in the final instance, always be defined by the state and its elites" ( 1 995: 54). In securitizing an issue, therefore, one fundamentally shifts it into a specific realm. For Buzan et a!., this process is one of politicization, in that it becomes part of public policy and government decision or, at its extreme, it is deemed an existential threat which would require emergency measures. As the authors note: "Security" is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization. ( 1 998: 23) However, this is premised upon an understanding of the political as having to do with state policy - i.e. an issue becomes political once government decision and resource allocation is involved. If, however, we understand the political, as adumbrated above then making an issue a security issue is a depoliticizing move in that one removes this issue from social contestation. In this, my position on the relationship between securitization and the political is closer to that of Jenny Edkins who understands securitization in the following terms: When issues are "securitized" they are even more firmly constrained within the already accepted criteria of a specific social form . . . . Issues of "security" are more removed from public debate and decision than issues of "politics"; in most cases these issues are secret, and even the existence of such matters are concealed. Decisions about them are taken in technical terms, following the advice of experts in military affairs or defense. Securitization is technologization par excellence. (Edkins 1 999: 1 1)The issue of securitization has been primarily addressed in terms of the broadening of security - i.e. of expanding the agenda of security beyond military security to include economic, environmental and/or societal "threats." From this standpoint, this type of broadening should be always treated with suspicion since securitizing such issues can lead to their depoliticization and their treatment through exceptional measures. In turn, taken as a whole, this can lead to securitizing and depoliticizing wider and deeper spheres of social and political space. However, how does this relate to the present issue? How can the insights of (de)securitization and (de)politicization be brought to bear in the case of the weaponization of space discourse in its relation to the Canadian debate on Ballistic Missile Defense? After all, this is not really a question of broadening the security agenda in the sense of securitizing issues from outside the traditional understanding of security understood in military terms. On the contrary, BMD can precisely be seen as being part and parcel of this traditional military understanding of security that was born at the end of World War II, and monopolized the political imagination for most of the Cold War.

#### False promises of security propagated by the gun industry drive private ownership and a politics of disposability.

Giroux 16 (Henry, American scholar and cultural critic. One of the founding theorists of critical pedagogy in the United States, he is best known for his pioneering work in public pedagogy, “Gun Culture and the American Nightmare of Violence,” 10 January 2016, http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/34349-gun-culture-and-the-american-nightmare-of-violence)//ghs-VA

**The predominance of a relatively unchecked gun culture and a morally perverse and politically obscene culture of violence is** particularly **evident in the power of the** gun lobby and its political advocates to pass laws in eight states to allow students and faculty to carry concealed weapons "into classrooms, dormitories and other buildings" on campuses. In spite of the rash of recent shootings on college campuses, Texas lawmakers, for instance, passed one such "campus carry bill," which will take effect in August 2016. To add insult to injury, they also passed an "open carry bill" that allows registered gun owners to carry their guns openly in public. Such laws not only reflect "the seemingly limitless legislative clout of gun interests," but also a rather irrational return to the violence-laden culture of the "Wild West."¶ As in the past, individuals will be allowed to walk the streets, while openly carrying guns and packing heat as a measure of their love of guns and their reliance upon violence as the best way to address any perceived threat to their security. This return to the deadly practices of the " Wild West" is neither a matter of individual choice nor some far-fetched yet allegedly legitimate appeal to the Second Amendment. On the contrary, **mass violence in the United States has to be placed within a broader historical, economic and political context in order to address the totality of the forces that produce it**. Focusing merely on mass shootings or the passing of potentially dangerous gun legislation does not get to the root of the systemic forces that produce the United States' love affair with violence and the ideologies and criminogenic institutions that produce it.¶ **Imperial policies that promote aggression all across the globe are now matched by increasing levels of lawlessness and state repression,** which mutually feed each other. On the home front, **civil society is degenerating into a military organization, a space of lawlessness** and warlike practices, **organized** primarily **for the production of violence**. For instance, as Steve Martinot observes at CounterPunch, **the police now use their discourse of command and power to criminalize behavior**; in addition, **they use military weapons and surveillance tools as if they are preparing for war, and create a culture of fear in which** militaristic principles replace legal principles. He writes:¶ This suggests that **there is an institutional insecurity that seeks to cover itself through social control ... the** cops act out this insecurity by criminalizing individuals in advance. **No legal principle need be involved. There is only the militarist principle**.... When police shoot a fleeing subject and claim they are acting in self-defense (i.e. threatened), it is not their person but the command and control principle that is threatened. To defend that control through assault or murderous action against a disobedient person implies that the cop's own identity is wholly immersed in its paradigm. There is nothing psychological about this. Self-worth or insecurity is not the issue. There is only the military ethic of power, imposed on civil society through an assumption of impunity. It is the ethos of democracy, of human self-respect, that is the threat.¶ The rise of violence and the gun culture in the United States cannot be separated from a transformation in governance in the United States. Political sovereignty has been replaced by economic sovereignty as corporate power takes over the reins of governance. The more money influences politics, the more corrupt the political culture becomes. Under such circumstances, holding office is largely dependent on having huge amounts of capital at one's disposal, while laws and policies at all levels of government are mostly fashioned by lobbyists representing big business corporations and financial institutions. Moreover, such lobbying, as corrupt and unethical as it may be, is now carried out in the open by the National Rifle Association (NRA) and other individuals, groups and institutions invested in the militarization of US society. This lobbying is then displayed as a badge of honor - a kind of open testimonial to the lobbyists' disrespect for democratic governance.¶ But money in politics is not the only major institutional factor in which everyday and state violence are nourished by a growing militarism. As David Theo Goldberg has argued in his essay "Mission Accomplished: Militarizing Social Logic," the military has also assumed a central role in shaping all aspects of society. Militarization is about more than the use of repressive power; it also represents a powerful social logic that is constitutive of values, modes of rationality and ways of thinking. According to Goldberg,¶ The military is not just a fighting machine.... It serves and socializes. It hands down to the society, as big brother might, its more or less perfected goods, from gunpowder to guns, computing to information management ... In short, while militarily produced instruments might be retooled to other, broader social purpose - the military shapes pretty much the entire range of social production from commodities to culture, social goods to social theory.¶ The militarization and corporatization of social logic permeates US society. The general public in the United States is largely depoliticized through the influence of corporations over schools, higher education and other cultural apparatuses. The deadening of public values, civic consciousness and critical citizenship are also the result of the work of anti-public intellectuals representing right-wing ideological and financial interests, a powerful set of corporate-controlled media agencies that are largely center-right and a market-driven public pedagogy that reduces the obligations of citizenship to the endless consumption and discarding of commodities. Military ideals permeate every aspect of popular culture, policy and social relations. In addition, a pedagogy of historical, social and racial amnesia is constructed and circulated through celebrity and consumer culture.¶ A war culture now shapes every aspect of society as warlike values, a hypermasculinity and an aggressive militarism seep into every major institution in the United States, including schools, the corporate media and local police forces. The criminal legal system has become the default structure for dealing with social problems. More and more people are considered disposable because they offend the sensibilities of the financial elite, who are rapidly consolidating class power. Under such circumstances, violence occupies an honored place.¶ Militarism provides ideological support for policies that protect gun owners and sellers rather than children.¶ It is impossible to understand the rise of gun culture and violence in the United States without thinking about the maturation of the military state. Since the end of the Cold War the United States has built "the most expensive and lethal military force in the world." The defense budget for 2015 totaled $598.5 billion and accounted for 54 percent of all federal discretionary spending. The US defense budget is both larger than the combined G-20 and "more than the combined military spending of China, Russia, the United Kingdom, Japan, France, Saudi Arabia, India, Germany, Italy and Brazil," according to an NBC report. Since 9/11, the United States has intensified both the range of its military power abroad while increasing the ongoing militarization of US society. The United States circles the globe with around 800 military bases, producing a massive worldwide landscape of military force, at an "annual cost of $156 billion," according to a report by David Vine in The Nation.¶ Moreover, Vine adds, "there are US troops or other military personnel in about 160 foreign countries and territories, including small numbers of Marines guarding embassies and larger deployments of trainers and advisers like the roughly 3,500 now working with the Iraqi army." Not only is the Pentagon in an unprecedented position of power, but also it thrives on a morally bankrupt vision of domestic and foreign policy dependent upon a world defined by terrorism, enemies and perpetual fear. Military arms are now transferred to local police departments, drone bases proliferate, and secret bases around the world support special operations, Navy SEALs, CIA personnel, Army Rangers and other clandestine groups, as Nick Turse has shown in Tomorrow's Battlefield. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising, as Andrew Bacevich points out, that "war has become a normal condition [and the] use of violence has become the preferred "instrument of statecraft."¶ **Violence feeds on corporate-controlled disimagination machines that celebrate it as a sport while upping the pleasure quotient for the public.** Americans do not merely engage in violence; they are also entertained by it. **This kind of toxic irrationality and lure of violence is mimicked in the** United States' **aggressive foreign policy, in the sanctioning of state torture and in the gruesome killings of civilians by drones**. As my colleague David L. Clark pointed out to me in an email, voters' support for " bombing make-believe countries [with Arab-sounding names] is not a symptom of muddled confusion but, quite to the contrary, a sign of unerring precision. It describes the desire to militarize nothing less than the imagination and to target the minutiae of our dreams." State repression, unbridled self-interest, an empty consumerist ethos and an expansive militarism have furthered the conditions for society to flirt with forms of irrationality that are at the heart of everyday aggression, violence and the withering of public life.¶ Pushback Against Gun Control Efforts¶ Warlike values no longer suggest a pathological entanglement with a kind of mad irrationality or danger. On the contrary, they have become a matter of common sense. For instance, the US government is willing to lock down a major city such as Boston in order to catch a terrorist or prevent a terrorist attack, but refuses to pass gun control bills that would significantly lower the number of Americans who die each year as a result of gun violence. As Michael Cohen observes, it is truly a symptom of irrationality when politicians can lose their heads over the threat of terrorism, even sacrificing civil liberties, but ignore the fact that "30,000 Americans die in gun violence every year (compared to the 17 who died [in 2012] in terrorist attacks)." It gets worse.¶ As **the threat of terrorism is used by the US government to construct a surveillance state, suspend civil liberties and accelerate the forces of authoritarianism**, the fear of personal and collective violence has no rational bearing on addressing the morbid acceleration of gun violence. In fact, **the fear of terrorism appears to feed a toxic culture of violence produced**, in part, **by the wide and unchecked** availability of guns. The United States' fascination with guns and violence functions as a form of sport and entertainment, while **gun culture offers a** false promise of security. **In this logic, one not only kills terrorists with drones, but also makes sure that patriotic Americans are individually armed so they can use force to protect themselves against the apparitions whipped up by right-wing politicians**, pundits and the corporate-controlled media.¶ Rather than bring violence into a political debate that would limit its production, various states increase its possibilities by passing laws that allow guns at places from bars to houses of worship. Florida's "stand your ground" law, based on the notion that one should shoot first and ask questions later, is a morbid reflection of the United States' adulation of gun culture and the fears that fuel it. This fascination with guns and violence has infected the highest levels of government and serves to further anti-democratic and authoritarian forces. For example, **the US government's warfare state is propelled by a military-industrial complex that cannot spend enough on weapons of death** and destruction. Super modern planes such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter cost up to $228 million each and are plagued by mechanical problems and yet are supported by a military and defense establishment. As Gabriel Kolko observes, such **warlike investments "reflect a pathology and culture that is expressed in spending more money**," regardless of how it contributes to running up the debt, and that thrives on what anthropologist João Biehl has described as "the energies of the dead."¶ Militarism provides ideological support for policies that protect gun owners and sellers rather than children. The Children's Defense Fund is right in stating, "Where is our anti-war movement here at home? Why does a nation with the largest military budget in the world refuse to protect its children from relentless gun violence and terrorism at home? No external enemy ever killed thousands of children in their neighborhoods, streets and schools year in and year out."¶ There is a not-so-hidden structure of politics at work in this type of sanctioned irrationality. **Advocating for gun rights provides a convenient discourse for ignoring what** Carl **Boggs has described as a "harsh neoliberal corporate-state order that routinely generates pervasive material suffering, social dislocation, and psychological despair** - worsening conditions that ensure violence in its many expressions."¶ As the United States moves from a welfare state to a warfare state, state violence becomes normalized. The United States' moral compass and its highest democratic ideals have begun to wither, and the institutions that were once designed to help people now serve to largely suppress them. Gun laws matter, social responsibility matters and a government responsive to its people matters, especially when it comes to limiting the effects of a mercenary gun culture. But more has to be done. The dominance of gun lobbyists must end; the reign of money-controlled politics must end; the proliferation of high levels of violence in popular culture, and the ongoing militarization of US society must end. At the same time, it is crucial, as participants in the Black Lives Matter movement have argued, for Americans to refuse to endorse the kind of gun control that criminalizes young people of color.¶ **Moderate calls for reining in the gun culture** and its political advocates do not go far enough **because they fail to address the roots of the violence** causing so much carnage in the United States, especially among children and teens. For example, Hillary **Clinton's much publicized call for controlling the gun lobby and improving background checks**, however well intentioned, **did not include anything about a culture of lawlessness and violence reproduced by the government, the financial elites and the defense industries, or a casino capitalism that is built on corruption** and produces massive amounts of human misery and suffering. Moreover, none of the calls to eliminate gun violence in the United States link such violence to the broader war on youth, especially poor youth of color.¶ A Culture of Violence¶ It would be wrong to suggest that the violence that saturates popular culture directly causes violence in the larger society. Nevertheless, it is arguable that depictions of violence serve to normalize violence as both a source of pleasure and as a practice for addressing social issues. **When young people** and others begin to **believe that a world of extreme violence,** vengeance**, lawlessness and revenge is the only world they inhabit, the culture and practice of real-life violence is more difficult to scrutinize, resist and transform**.¶ Many critics have argued that a popular culture that endlessly trades in violence runs the risk of blurring the lines between the world of fantasies and the world we live in. What they often miss is that when violence is celebrated in its myriad registers and platforms in a society, a formative culture is put in place that is amenable to the pathology of fascism. That is, a culture that thrives on violence runs the risk of losing its capacity to separate politics from violence. A.O. Scott recognizes such a connection between gun violence and popular culture, but he fails to register the deeper significance of the relationship. He writes:¶ ... it is absurd to pretend that gun culture is unrelated to popular culture, or that make-believe violence has nothing to do with its real-world correlative. Guns have symbolic as well as actual power, **and the practical business of hunting, law enforcement and self-defense has less purchase in our civic life than fantasies of righteous vengeance or brave resistance**.... [**Violent] fantasies have proliferated** and intensified **even as our daily existence has become more regulated** and standardized - and also less dangerous. Perhaps they offer an escape from the boredom and regimentation of work and consumption.¶ Popular culture not only trades in violence as entertainment, but also it delivers violence to a society addicted to a pleasure principle steeped in graphic and extreme images of human suffering, mayhem and torture. While the Obama administration banned waterboarding as an interrogation method in January 2009, it appears to be thriving as a legitimate procedure in a number of prominent Hollywood films, including Safe House, Zero Dark Thirty, G.I. Jane and Taken 3. The use of and legitimation of torture by the government is not limited to Hollywood films. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump announced recently on ABC's "This Week" that he would bring back waterboarding because it "is peanuts compared to what they do to us." It appears that moral depravity and the flight from social responsibility have no limits in an authoritarian political landscape.

#### Gun culture replicates patriarchal nationalism and neoliberalism—men get guns to “protect their families” from those marked as criminal.

Levi Gahman 14 [Centre for Social, Spatial, and Economic Justice, University of British Columbia], “Gun rites: hegemonic masculinity and neoliberal ideology in rural Kansas”, Gender, Place and Culture, 2014, BE

This valorization of the gun, and its association with exerting control over the rural frontier and ‘nation’, still resonates within the many men in Southeast Kansas. Over the span of a few generations, owning guns has produced a shared national identity that extols the virtues of defending individualism, freedom, property, and religion, and has thus become labelled ‘American’. Such discourses, while appearing noble and well intentioned, have paradoxically been used to carry out brutal assimilation projects and acts of war. In turn, the community members I spoke to in Southeast Kansas often noted that ‘doing the right thing’ and being a ‘good American’ was attained by making individual decisions that followed paternalistic moral traditions and adhered to market-based notions of personal work ethic in a fictive nation that is perceived to be meritorious.¶ Over the course of several interviews it became clear that the notion of being a ‘good American’ is a powerful influence for men in Southeast Kansas. From a feminist perspective, it is evident that these narratives are rife with patriarchal overtones; however, these hierarchical discourses often go unnoticed. Several participants performed their ‘American Pride’ by noting an acute distrust of the government. They often pointed to gun control laws, paying taxes, welfare programmes, and restrictions placed on Christian teaching in schools as ‘unfair’, ‘not right’, and being ‘discrimination against good, hardworking, Americans’.¶ A review of past literature shows that notions of white male victimization are quite prevalent when men seek to justify the oppressive and marginalizing practices they engage in (Kimmel and Ferber 2000; McIntosh 2003). These allegations of persecution, while simultaneously claiming innocence from the privileges that interlocking systems of masculinist white supremacy afford white men in settler nations, have been noted by many critical scholars and were present in many conversations that I had in Kansas (Collins 2005; Razack 1998). Harold, a 68-year-old participant, aptly summed up the widespread disillusionment and sense of victimization some men feel:¶ . . . I pay my fair share of taxes, and that is my hard earned money. I busted my ass for it and I need to feed my family with it. I don’t think it should be given to some lazy freeloaders on welfare who are working the system and looking for a handout . . . and the same people taking our money are the ones saying we shouldn’t have guns. Its in our Constitution, we have the right to bear arms, its what the Founding Fathers wanted . . . They were looking to freely practise their Christian beliefs. That’s why they came over here. And now you see ‘under God’ being taken out of the Pledge of Allegiance, you see the Ten Commandments being removed from schools, you see abortion, what I would call murder, being no big deal, and you see the government trying to take our guns – its communist . . . and don’t get me wrong, I love my country, but I don’t trust the government.¶ The emphasis on being a liberal subject, or being ‘individuals who are free to fail or succeed’ as described by one participant, thus serves as a guiding ideal for many men in the community. Such neoliberal subjectivities do not come without repercussions. As Foucault emphasized in his comprehensive analysis of technologies of the self and biopower, nothing is more suited to become influenced and molded by disciplinary power than extreme individualism (Foucault 1998, 1977). As a result, the productive capacities of the USA’ historical pillars of colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchal nationalism (that continue to be maintained predominantly by white, heterosexual, enabled, Christian, male, citizens) create ‘individuals’ who in perceiving themselves as such are paradoxically much more likely to unknowingly submit, conform, and obey. Such accounts can readily be seen in the comments of David, a 30-year-old single male, who when asked to describe his thoughts on the history of gun use in the area stated:¶ Well, the priests came here to help people – they built the church, started educating people, and shared their way of life. I’m sure the guns they had were mainly for protection and hunting. And its still like that to this day . . . we have a safe, tight-knit community. It’s a great place to raise kids and have a family. Its what our country was founded on. The pioneers that came over here were not being treated too well, they were looking for freedom, and they needed guns to protect themselves from some of the Indians and criminals that would attack them. And I know not all the Indians were dangerous, but you cannot say that some innocent Caucasian people were not attacked. Our ancestors were looking for a place to be free, work hard, and own some land to live off of. You can’t fault a guy for that.¶ . . . and when we got here its not like the Indians were all living peacefully with each other anyway . . . it’s a fact. There were tribes stealing and attacking other tribes, and if you look at how big the country is I think they could have done a better job of living with each other. It wasn’t like it was some paradise before our Founding Fathers got here. In the end, pioneers were protecting their families and defending what they believed in.¶ Several scholars have noted how the symbol of the gun is prominently woven into the historical tapestry of the USA (Brown 2008; Slotkin 1973, 1992; Wright 2001). The perceived threat of aggression from Indigenous people on the open plains meant that from its genesis, America was a society that depended upon a populace that was heavily armed (Cornell 2006). Recently, scholars have written how the conception of ‘frontier masculinity’ as a gendered narrative reinforces constructions of American nationalism by emphasizing the gun as a signifier of manhood (Melzer 2009; Via 2010). This point is particularly salient in Southeast Kansas as it was not uncommon to hear participants speak of playing ‘Cowboys and Indians’, or pretending to be admirable heroes from war movies and Westerns they watched growing up. Currently, there is an increase in research noting how the image of the gun is tied to power, security, and independence, and how such representations serve to perpetuate misleading historical accounts of white settlers conquering the frontier (Carrington, McIntosh, and Scott 2010; Melzer 2009; Via 2010).¶ Critical research also points out that the white settler myths of defending property, carrying out Manifest Destiny, and ‘civilizing Indians’ via homesteading, establishing churches and schools, and assimilation projects still permeate much of the cultural landscape of the Great Plains (Smith 2006, 2012; Via 2010). Additionally, recent discussions have suggested that the rationale behind promoting guns for community safety contradictorily erodes away a population’s sense of security (Cornell 2006). This is due to the fact that as gun possession rates increase, it creates a more defensive, heavily armed, and fractured populace that is governed by fear and suspicion, rather than by the free will it claims (Cornell 2006).¶ Despite the semantics that many participants used as being part of a ‘safe’ community, countervailing perspectives regarding the history of area suggests otherwise. The benevolent Christian narratives that dominate Southeast Kansas’ historical record, when viewed through a decolonial lens, show that ‘safe’ may not necessarily be the most accurate descriptor of the region. This can be recognized due to the region’s ongoing marginalization of historical perspectives from the Osage Nation, the chronological attempts at cultural assimilation that took place locally, and the fact that less than 0.03% of the county population identified as Native American (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). Given this information, it is apparent that the local community has been primarily exposed to masculinist narratives of colonial white supremacy at both institutional and cultural levels. Consequently, the practices and ideals that exist in the region reproduce hierarchies along lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, age, and nationality; which serve to covertly, and oftentimes unintentionally, shore up imperialistic discourses of disposses- sion, enclosure, and violence.¶ In looking at the gender regimes that are produced in Southeast Kansas, I borrow from Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity that suggests that the discourses surrounding manhood in local contexts produce marginalized, subordinated, and complicit masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Given the particular (local) version of hegemonic masculinity that permeates most spaces in the area (white, heterosexual, Christian, enabled, citizens), such marginalizing and subordinating processes can be readily observed in routine interactions.¶ Several scholars have noted that the processes of ‘othering’ that exist in settler societies serve to reinforce structural white supremacy and predominantly take place along lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality (de Leeuw, Greenwood, and Lindsay 2013; hooks 1989; Mohanty 1984; Pease 2010; Razack 2002; Smith 1999). Consequently, discursive formations of who are defined as ‘bad’ guys, and who are marked as ‘criminals’, operate as regulatory measures that allow certain men to attain hegemonic status while prohibiting others from doing so. This policing of masculine status can readily be seen in the statements made by Jeffrey, a 22-year-old participant, when asked about news stories pertaining to gun violence:¶ I mean hell, look at all these crazy people doing all these shootings here lately. The ones I hear about are done by guys from the city, you don’t see a bunch of farmers murdering each other. Most of the people doing the killing are psychopaths or terrorists who hate America. You can’t tell me they had good Christian upbringings. The guns ain’t the problem, it’s the criminals who get them that fuck things up. And think about it, if guns were outlawed, those crazy assholes would still find a way . . .¶ One interesting discursive formation to note in the statement above that is particularly salient to geographers is the positioning of violence being perpetuated by ‘guys in the city’ Jeffrey suggests that being ‘from the city’ is in direct opposition to what many participants referred to as ‘being from the country’. Several critical scholars have noted how the way in which ‘difference’ is constructed can lead to oppressive effects (Berg 2012; Goldberg 2009; Kobayashi 2013; Sibley 2002). While not explicitly stated outright, the connotation of what being ‘from the country’ versus being ‘from the city’ means is often times loaded with racialized undertones. This subordinating rhetoric is further highlighted by a follow- up statement Jeffrey made when asked to elaborate upon what type of people he thought were responsible for gun violence:¶ Its not that I’m a racist, but most those guys are niggers. The others are fucked up in the head, or Mexican drug dealers, or gang bangers from the ghetto. Probably grew up on welfare, came from broken homes, and were never really taught how to treat a gun . . . And when I say nigger I don’t mean all black guys, I’ve worked with some good black guys, so when I say nigger I mean that anyone can be a nigger. It’s more of how someone acts, you know? A white guy can be a nigger, a Mexican can be nigger, an Asian can be a nigger, its not just skin colour . . . its like when you hear the word faggot or bitch – those are not always about homos or women, they are just ways to describe how a guy goes about the way he acts.

#### Gun rights fuel suspicion of the collective—they atomize individuals and amplify fear and prejudice.

Firmin DeBrabander 15 [associate professor of philosophy at Maryland Institute College of Art, has written social and political commentary for numerous publications, including the Baltimore Sun, Common Dreams, Counterpunch, and the New York Times] “Do Guns Make Us Free?: Democracy and the Armed Society”, Yale University Press, 19 May 2015, BE

Rousseau and Tocqueville maintain that democracies, like all states, devolve through political concentration. Viewing the young American democracy, Tocqueville deduces that extreme individualism greases the wheels of this process. Materialism sharpens our individualism and makes us devoted to personal gain, as opposed to personal glory, which is more amenable to civic participation. Egalitarianism ironically urges us to dissociate from others, Tocqueville suggests; if my neighbors and compatriots are neither above me nor below me, what need do I have for them? In the ancien régime, people in different stations relied on one another, and the pieces of society fit together into a seamless whole. Not so in the new world: here, I may be self-determining and self-sufficient. Tocqueville offers a vision of aristocracy that is too rosy. He suggests that the masses should rely on the expertise of the nobility, who are bred and trained for leadership. But the American instinct to reject expertise and authority in favor of self-reliance is, for Tocqueville, at least equally disastrous. It is wonderful so long as it inspires the political attention and interest he witnessed in New England town meetings, but civic involvement is ultimately bound to lose out to capitalistic endeavors and the seductive joys of consumerism. Civic involvement has become a casualty in our own era, when we suffer from “time poverty,” as sociologist Juliet Schor put it: Americans put in long work days, combined with increasingly long commutes, and have little time or energy to interact with their peers, work for their communities, or even think much about politics. 88 This state of affairs is fueled by personal ambition, but also by plain greed. As Tocqueville presciently saw, Americans have little interest, and are left with little energy, to be political creatures, and to devote time to thoughtful and concerted political action and interaction. This fragmentation of society into atomistic individuals, each pursuing his or her own endeavor in isolation or in contention with others, renders us vulnerable and ripe for oppression: “What resistance can be offered to tyranny in a country where each individual is weak and where citizens are not united by any common interest?” 89 There is perhaps no individualism more extreme than that put forth by the contemporary gun rights movement. The NRA argues against the collective reading of the Second Amendment and insists instead upon the individual citizen’s right to amass a colossal private arsenal. The organization toils on behalf of individuals’ right to shoot intruders in their private abodes without accountability or social judgment. It works to ensure that individuals can act impulsively in private arguments, according to their personal whims, passions, and prejudices. It demands that they be permitted ammunition capable of piercing bulletproof vests worn by police. None of these advances a collective right or concern. It is to further the interests of each individual in being armed to the teeth, with whatever tools, for whatever purpose (provided it is within the law), and to have greater leeway in wielding and employing them. These arms represent a suspicion of the collective, and of the government that would represent the collective good. I argued in the previous chapter how these weapons are a mark of suspicion, and deepen the suspicion of the armed. A gun fundamentally severs its bearer from the community of his peers; it causes others to treat [them] him with trepidation and fear— if they approach him at all. As open carry proponents proudly assert, their weapons are intended to serve as a warning. Saul Cornell chides contemporary gun rights ideology for promoting gun ownership primarily as “a means for repulsing government or other citizens, not a means for creating a common civic culture.” 90 This, he argues, is at odds with the aims and intentions of our Founders. He believes they did envision an individual right to bear arms, but it was never meant to be a right in isolation. It was to be linked to a civic function and to collective obligation. Cornell writes, The original version of a well-regulated militia was premised on the notion that rights and obligations were inseparable. Arms bearing was a public activity, a way of nurturing and demonstrating one’s capacity for virtue. The militia was viewed by the Founders as a vital political and social institution, part of a seamless web that knit the locality, the state, and the national government together into a cohesive political community. 91 Cornell’s argument aptly depicts how the current gun rights movement undermines civic life. Gun rights, as they are currently conceived and championed by the NRA, are the ultimate go-it-alone rights. If our Founders felt that the Second Amendment would help oppose tyrannical government, it is reasonable to wonder how such opposition was ever to be mobilized. It could hardly happen in a nation of armed, isolated individuals, each in charge of a private arsenal. This purpose requires a trained, organized— regulated— force; it implies collective action, purpose, will, and commitment. George Washington grew tired of militias to the extent that they were loose collections of individuals. He wanted a fighting force with cohesion, identity, and organization because he was a warrior, and he knew what war— or the toppling of tyrannical regimes— required. The gun rights movement pits the individual against society. Collectives are suspect, groups weak, their members sheeplike, obedient, pliant, and ultimately subservient. Collectives breed collective behavior, which is reprehensible to the movement’s bold, assertive, fearless, and morally certain adherents. People mired in collective sensibilities wait for the police to bail them out of threatening situations. Free, confident, strong individuals go it alone. Collectives are corruptible, their members easy to manipulate and herd. Only the independent individual is pure and inviolate. Political freedom thus stems from the uncorrupted and incorruptible sovereign individual. To gun rights advocates, that is the center and foundation of liberty. This much is clear from the political vision put forth by Napolitano and LaPierre: the principal political battlefield, anticipated by the Founding Fathers who knew tyranny firsthand, is between the individual fighting to retain his sovereignty, and the collective that would strip it away. This stripping-away takes place through, among other things, government efforts to regulate guns, abetted by those who would cede their freedom for the short-term prospect of personal safety. In the process, such people unwittingly empower tyranny. Dan Baum writes Guns are the perfect stand-in for one of the fundamental, irresolvable, and recurring questions we face: to what extent should Americans live as a collective, or as a nation of rugged individuals? We have the same fight over health care, welfare, environmental regulations, and a hundred other issues. The firearm, though, is the ultimate emblem of individual sovereignty, so if you’re inclined in that direction, protecting gun rights is essential. And if you’re by nature a collectivist, the firearm is the abhorrent idol on the enemy’s altar. 92 Baum articulates the dichotomy aptly, at least as it is viewed by the gun rights movement. Tyranny has also been invoked in recent debates over health care and environmental regulation. It follows from, and is symptomatic of, collectivism and anything that points in that direction. The gun rights movement offers us radical individualism— the sovereign individual— as the requisite remedy. But its advocates do not perceive, or refuse to admit, how politically debilitating their agenda is. Contrary to what they assert, their sovereign individuals, even armed to the teeth, are no match for the brute power of tyrants. Instead, the NRA and company unwittingly assist tyrants with their (as Cornell puts it) radically “anti-civic vision.” 93 The gun rights movement undermines the collective or popular organization that alone might prove effective in countering a government bent on oppression.

#### Thus, the plan: The state governments of the United States ought to ban the private ownership of handguns.

Kleck 86 (Gary, criminologist and is the David J. Bordua Professor of Criminology at Florida State University,” 1986, http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3824&context=lcp)//ghs-VA

Yet, many advocates of federal controls go far beyond such measures. In their report to the National Violence Commission, Newton and Zimring recommended a federal restrictive licensing standard amounting to a virtual ban on private ownership of handguns. 67 Rather than simply supplementing state measures and thus making it possible for states effectively to apply whatever gun control measures they regard as necessary, such a far-reaching proposal is a substitute for state controls, a way of overriding state legislatures' unwillingness to pass more restrictive laws of their own. There are several good reasons to reject this approach. First, the concept of federalism implies that the states should have as much autonomy as possible in drafting their criminal law and other statutes. Second, federal controls are less satisfactory because traditionally there has been a very limited federal law enforcement apparatus in the area of ordinary crime. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) regards itself more as an investigatory than a law enforcement agency. Nothing at the federal level corresponds to a street police force, and local police agencies, where most law enforcement personnel are concentrated, have generally been reluctant to devote their limited resources to the enforcement of federal laws. Third, the need for gun control differs sharply from one state to another. Some states have almost no violent crime, with or without guns, while others have a great deal. For example, in 1981 South Dakota had only twelve murders and nonnegligent manslaughters and 122 robberies (1.8 and 17.8 per 100,000 population, respectively), while Nevada, with only twenty-three percent more people, had 148 homicides and 3,867 robberies (17.5 and 64.9 per 100,000, respectively). 68

#### Handgun bans are key—Americans view them as the quintessential weapon—the 1AC is a stand against a culture of violence.

Eugene Volokh 9 [American law professor, the Gary T. Schwartz Professor of Law at the UCLA School of Law], “IMPLEMENTING THE RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS FOR SELF-DEFENSE: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND A RESEARCH AGENDA”, UCLA LAW REVIEW 1443, 2009, BE

And the Court’s explanation of why the handgun ban is unconstitutional even if long guns are allowed is likewise consistent with an inquiry into how substantially a law burdens the right to bear arms:¶ It is no answer to say, as petitioners do, that it is permissible to ban the possession of handguns so long as the possession of other firearms (i.e., long guns) is allowed. It is enough to note, as we have observed, that the American people have considered the handgun to be the quintessential self-defense weapon. There are many reasons that a citizen may prefer a handgun for home defense: It is easier to store in a location that is readily accessible in an emergency; it cannot easily be redirected or wrestled away by an attacker; it is easier to use for those without the upper-body strength to lift and aim a long gun; it can be pointed at a burglar with one hand while the other hand dials the police. Whatever the reason, handguns are the most popular weapon chosen by Americans for self-defense in the home, and a complete prohibition of their use is invalid.49¶ The Court is pointing out that handguns are popular for a reason: For many people, they are the optimal self-defense tool, and bans on handguns make self-defense materially more difficult. The handgun ban, then, is a material burden on the right to bear arms in self-defense.

#### Mere possibility of concealed guns chills discourse on controversial issues in schools—halting democracy.

Firmin DeBrabander 15 [associate professor of philosophy at Maryland Institute College of Art, has written social and political commentary for numerous publications, including the Baltimore Sun, Common Dreams, Counterpunch, and the New York Times] “Do Guns Make Us Free?: Democracy and the Armed Society”, Yale University Press, 19 May 2015, BE

Freire and Dewey remind us that democracy takes root in our schools. As we render them forbidding places, we are likely to see the results in the kind of citizens— and human beings— we produce. We must not take this prospect lightly. What is especially disturbing about this development is that it is not necessary— our schools don’t need to be fortresslike. We are choosing to take this route rather than regulate gun ownership, limit the number of weapons out there, and make it harder for people to acquire them. We have chosen instead to turn our schools into bunkers, at great expense— while education funding dwindles— in order to accommodate an alleged absolute right to own guns. It is also a key feature of democracy, a guiding principle of our Founding Fathers, that rights that unduly infringe upon the lives and interests of some, or many, must be curtailed. People may engage in the pursuit of happiness however they like, provided that whatever they deem necessary to that pursuit does not inflict harm or intrude forcefully on the lives of others. Guns do that. Gun rights, as the NRA currently champions them, are greatly intrusive. The proliferation of guns in our society leads to much collateral damage— innocent bystanders are literally killed. Further, as is evident in their schools, their proliferation alters the way all of us must live. It is necessary to consider, as well, the impact of guns on college campuses. While it is true that guns on campus would be concealed, their legalized presence, perhaps in great numbers, would change things, and not for the better. Their presence certainly won’t help advance the goals of the college classroom and may well hinder them. The mission of the liberal arts college is to foster creativity and intellectual courage among students; it is to make them open, curious, outgoing citizens. Accordingly, the college classroom is a refuge of sorts— alternatively, a laboratory— where controversial, sometimes incendiary ideas are aired. Ideally, there are no banned books in the college classroom. If someone endorses a reprehensible idea, he or she must be defeated in argument and persuasion. College classrooms are supposed to be lively, sometimes raucous, though I realize that is less often the case than it should be. Nevertheless, colleges remain specially zoned places for intellectual experimentation, and moral and political questioning. Guns are inimical to this project and spirit. Sometimes emotions run high in the college classroom, when ideas are tested and opinions championed or disputed. Sometimes offense is taken, and given. Is it outrageous to consider that some individuals might reach for a gun? One college in Texas recently witnessed a gunfight between arguing students. 70 Perhaps it is not such an outrageous concern after all. Guns in the classroom might encourage professors to keep the conversation tepid, or incite students to watch what they say, how they say it, and to whom. To that extent, guns reveal a troubling ability to chasten speech.

#### The 1AC ruptures the mindset of guns as necessary for self-defense—people are no longer constantly reminded of guns as a means of solving problems.

John Donohue 15, “Ban guns, end shootings? How evidence stacks up around the world”, CNN 27 Aug 2015, BE

In the wake of the massacre, the conservative federal government succeeded in implementing tough new gun control laws throughout the country. A large array of weapons were banned -- including the Glock semiautomatic handgun used in the Charleston shootings. The government also imposed a mandatory gun buy back that substantially reduced gun possession in Australia.¶ The effect was that both gun suicides and homicides (as well as total suicides and homicides)fell. In addition, the 1996 legislation made it a crime to use firearms in self-defense.¶ When I mention this to disbelieving NRA supporters they insist that crime must now be rampant in Australia. In fact, the Australian murder rate has fallen to close to one per 100,000 while the U.S. rate, thankfully lower than in the early 1990s, is still roughly at 4.5 per 100,000-- over four times as high. Moreover, robberies in Australia occur at only about half the rate of the U.S. (58 in Australia versus 113.1 per 100,000 in the U.S. in 2012).¶ How did Australia do it? Politically, it took a brave prime minister to face the rage of Australian gun interests.¶ John Howard wore a bullet-proof vest when he announced the proposed gun restrictions in June 1996. The deputy prime minister was hung in effigy. But Australia did not have a domestic gun industry to oppose the new measures so the will of the people was allowed to emerge. And today, support for the safer, gun-restricted Australia is so strong that going back would not be tolerated by the public.¶ That Australia hasn't had a mass shooting since 1996 is likely more than merely the result of the considerable reduction in guns -- it's certainly not the case that guns have disappeared altogether.¶ I suspect that the country has also experienced a cultural shift between the shock of the Port Arthur massacre and the removal of guns from every day life as they are no longer available for self-defense and they are simply less present throughout the country. Troubled individuals, in other words, are not constantly being reminded that guns are a means to address their alleged grievances to the extent that they were in the past, or continue to be in the US.

#### Australia’s a good model for the US.

Chapman and Alpers 13, Philip Alpers [runs GunPolicy.org, which has current or recent funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, York, United Kingdom; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague, The Netherlands; Oxfam Australia, Melbourne, Australia; Small Arms Survey, Geneva, Switzerland; Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Bern, Switzerland] and Simon Chapman [involved with the Coalition for Gun Control (Australia) for several years in the 1990s], “Gun-Related Deaths: How Australia Stepped Off “The American Path””, American College of Physicians, Annals of Internal Medicine, 21 May 2013, BE

Australia and the [US] United States share many characteristics. Both are English-speaking democracies of multicultural immigrants. The 2 nations have been allies for nearly a century. Australians and Americans consume similar diets of movies, video games, popular music, recreational drugs, and alcohol. Both have vast interiors, early histories of armed European settlers mistreating native populations, plenty of feral pests to shoot, and many firearm enthusiasts. Yet the 2 countries differ dramatically on the issue of gun violence. The U.S. population is 13.7 times larger than that of Australia, but it has 134 times the number of total firearm-related deaths (31 672 vs. 236 in 2010) and 27 times the rate of firearm homicide (11 078 [3.6 per 100 000] vs. 30 [0.13 per 100 000] in 2010) (1).

#### The gun debate is a question of culture—not empirics.

Dan M. Kahan 3 [Professor of Law, Yale Law School], “The Gun Control Debate: A Culture-Theory Manifesto”, Washington and Lee Law Review Vol 60 Issue 1, 1 Jan 2003, BE

The problem with this reasoning, I want to suggest, is that it misconceives the relationship between cultural orientations and beliefs about empirical facts, such as whether gun control reduces or in fact increases crime. Beliefs about the causes and effective responses to societal risks, I want to argue, derive from cultural world views. As a result, we cannot reach agreement about the consequences of gun control unless we have first come to some common ground about what values gun laws ought to express.¶ This is the lesson of the cultural theory of risk perception, a model of belief formation first used to explain differences in opinion relating to environ- mental regulation. 6 As with gun control, members of the public disagree intensely with one another about the hazards posed by various forms oftech- nology, like nuclear power, and the merits of trying to abate them through government regulation. The cultural theory of risk perception relates these differences in view to individuals' allegiance to competing clusters of values, which construct alternative visions-egalitarian and hiearchist, individualist and communitarian-of how political life should be organized. The selection of certain risks for attention and the disregard of others affirm (symbolically as much as instrumentally) certain of these visions over others. Thus, in line with their commitment to fair distribution of resources, egalitarians are predict- ably sensitive to environmental and industrial risks, the minimization of which reinforces their demand forthe regulation of commercial activities that produce disparities in wealth and status. In contrast, individualists, precisely because they are dedicated to the autonomy of markets and other private orderings, tend to see environmental risks as low-as do hiearchists, in line with their confi-¶ dence in and deference to institutions of social authority. Hiearchists and individualists have their own distinctive anxieties-the dangers of social deviance, the risks of foreign invasion, or the fragility of economic institu- tions-which egalitarians predictably dismiss. These conclusions are based on sophisticated survey techniques that show that differences in cultural orientations explain differences in individual risk perception more completely than any other set of factors, including wealth, education, personality type, and even political ideology.17¶ It turns out that the gun control debate maps perfectly onto the cultural- theory-of-risk framework. Like debates over dangers of various environmen- talhazards,the gun control debate turns on competing perceptions of risk: the risk that too many of us will become the victims of lethal injury in a world that fails to disarm the vicious (or the merely careless), on the one hand, versus the risk that too many of us will be unable to defend ourselves from violent predation in a world that disarms the virtuous, on the other. Just like divergent perceptions of environmental risk, these competing perceptions of gun risk correlate with opposing clusters of values: egalitarianism and social solidarity, on the one hand; honor, deference to lawful authority, and individ- ual self-sufficiency, on the other. These competing values construct alterna- tive visions of the good society. And in advancing policy positions in line with their respective perceptions of risk, individuals involved in the gun control debate-like citizens involved in the environmental debate-promote their preferred vision and discredit that of their cultural adversaries.¶ These, at least, were the hypotheses that anthropologist Don Braman and I decided to investigate. We designed our own study to determine whether cultural orientation measures can explain attitudes toward gun control. And we found that they do-the more egalitarian and communitarian a person's outlook, the more supportive of control, but the more hierarchical and individ- ualistic a person is, the more opposeed to it. Indeed, it turned out that individuals' cultural orientations furnished stronger predictions of their attitudes toward guns than any other facts about them, including whether they were male or female, black or white, Southern or Eastern, urban or rural, and even liberal or conservative."'

#### The aff is a war against propaganda—vote aff because banning handguns is the right thing to do.

Nicholas Dixon 99, (“Handguns, Violent Crime, and Self-Defense,” *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 13.2 (1999):239-260)

To allow considerations of realpolitik to influence our judgments about the morality of a practice or policy would effectively lock us into the status quo, and sabotage the role of applied ethics as a vehicle for proposing social change. Absurd consequences are easy to find. For instance, when the abolitionist¶ movement first began, little doubt exists that it had no realistic chance at that time of persuading Congress to abolish slavery. Does this mean that its members were wrong to morally condemn slavery and call for its abolition? Similar comments apply to the suffragette movement in its early days. Worse¶ still, if applied ethicists are to confine themselves to defending positions that have a realistic chance of currently being legally enacted, prolife philosophers will have to stop writing papers in which they condemn abortion, since, given the current composition of the Supreme Court, legislation banning¶ "regular" abortion is virtually impossible to enact and defend against constitutional challenges. ¶ Granted, the abolitionist movement did indeed take heed of political realities and worked incrementally to restrict slavery to certain states before finally pushing for its complete abolition. This is because it, like the suffragette movement, was a political movement, whose goal was to bring about concrete social change. Nonetheless, underlying both movements were moral arguments that made no compromise for political realities in their condemnation of slavery and the oppression of women. And this is precisely the role that applied ethicists should play in discussing handgun control: providing a moral¶ vision of the handgun policy that would best reduce violence and respect rights. How to realize that moral vision is an important question, but a secondary one, and one that is best left to political organizations that are more knowledgeable about political realities. It may well tum out that Handgun Control, Inc.'s strategy of proposing moderate restrictions on handgun ownership is a shrewd first step that is a necessary prelude to the more radical proposal advanced here. But moral arguments for handgun prohibition are¶ needed to guide and motivate even incremental change to achieve that goal.¶ Nor is guiding and motivating those who already share a movement's goal the only role for applied ethicists. Even more important is the ability of cogent moral arguments to convince opponents and the uncommitted of the desirability of social change. The abolitionist, suffragette, and civil rights¶ movements all illustrate this phenomenon. So another error made by those who reject as unrealistic my proposal to ban handguns is to regard one of the realities that do indeed make it difficult to achieve at present-i.e., the widespread belief that handguns make law-abiding citizens safer against crime as¶ engraved in stone. They overlook the power of striking empirical evidence and clearly presented arguments to persuade the American public that the widespread ownership of handguns is a major cause of violent crime. We need to continue to present this evidence and these arguments until we convince¶ enough people that handgun prohibition is desirable that it will eventually become eminently attainable (256-257).