



Gun Control Advocates Resort to Synthetic Numbers

What happens when real numbers do not help gun control? They use synthetic numbers.

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July 19, 2017

What happens when real numbers, as reported by the FBI and other law enforcement agencies do not match your agenda?

Let's post the facts, then we will get to the "synthetic" number part.

The Cato Institute published an article in May of 2000 that states,

"States that allow registered citizens to carry concealed weapons have lower crime rates than those that don't.

True. The 31 states that have "shall issue" laws allowing private citizens to carry concealed weapons have, on average, a 24 percent lower violent crime rate, a 19 percent lower murder rate and a 39 percent lower robbery rate than states that forbid concealed weapons. In fact, the nine states with the lowest violent crime rates are all right-to-carry states. Remarkably, guns are used for self-defense more than 2 million times a year, three to five times the estimated number of violent crimes committed with guns."

Let's take my home states of Texas for example. In 1995, Governor George W. Bush signed the concealed carry bill into law.

Next, let's look at murder rates in Texas before and after the concealed carry law was passed.

- 1984, there were 2,132 murders in Texas.
- 1994, there were 2,022 murders in Texas.
- 1995, there were 1,693 murders in Texas.
- 2015, there were 1,316 murders in Texas.

For a decade before the concealed carry law was passed in Texas, the murder rate was steady with slightly more than 2,000 murders a year.

The year after passing the concealed carry law, the Texas murder rate had dropped to the lowest point since the 1970s.

The murder rates for 2011, 2012 and 2013 were the lowest since the 1960s.

If we look at per capita stats, the numbers get even more impressive.

In 2014 there were 4.4 murders for every 100,000 people. That is the lowest rate since data started being collected in 1960.

Those are firm numbers as compiled by the Disaster Center from FBI statics, and they can be independently verified.

Synthetic Numbers

In the 1990s, when states pushed to get concealed carry permits passed into law, various gun control advocates said that carrying guns would bring the United States back to the wild west. They used every fear tactic in the book. Gun control groups claimed there would be shootouts in the streets and thousands of people would die.

What actually happened was this: Crime took a nosedive.

A recent study (called “Right-to-Carry Laws and Violent Crime: A Comprehensive Assessment Using Panel Data and a State-Level Synthetic Controls Analysis”) uses synthetic numbers, presumably because the real numbers don’t help the anti-gun cause.

The opening paragraph:

The 2004 report of the National Research Council (NRC) on Firearms and Violence recognized that violent crime was higher in the post-passage period (relative to national crime patterns) for states adopting right-to-carry (RTC) concealed handgun laws,

There is no link to a 2004 report. As with the Texas example above, we know crime goes down when concealed carry permits are issued. The Texas numbers are real numbers as reported by the FBI.

Rather than using firm numbers as reported by the FBI or other law enforcement agencies, the study states:

We then use the **synthetic control approach** of Alberto Abadie and Javier Gardeazabal (2003) to generate **state-specific estimates** of the impact of RTC laws on crime.

Our major finding is that under all four specifications (DAW, BC, LM, and MM), RTC laws are associated with higher aggregate violent crime rates, and the size of the deleterious effects that are associated with the passage of RTC laws climbs over time.

(Emphasis added)

Independent Verification

Anyone can review the FBI statics. We can look at the numbers and the reporting protocols.

How would someone independently review a “synthetic control approach” and verify the “state-specific estimates?”

Why would anyone use synthetic numbers and estimates at all, when we have real numbers that can be verified?

Final Thoughts

I heard about this study back in June when it was published on the Stanford website.

On June 22, 2017, I sent an email to the author of the article requesting more information.

Specifically, I asked,

Are numbers from the projections available? Also, how did the projections compare to real numbers of documented murders?

As of July 19, 2017, I have not received a reply.

I would like to compare the real numbers to the synthetic numbers. The real numbers say crime goes down. So, why do the synthetic numbers say crime goes up? Hmmm...