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Diego Sanjurjo

# Gun Control Policies in Latin America

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## PREFACE

For some time now, the debate over gun control is immediately associated with the United States, with its strong gun culture and with the mass shootings that make headlines every now and then. However, gun control is a contentious and polarizing topic in many parts of the world. Guns preoccupy citizens, public officials, and interest groups in most societies, even in places where its social consequences go unnoticed. The controversy eventually drew the attention of academics as well, who try to provide clarity and scientific rationality to a debate that frequently reaches a fever pitch.

Unfortunately, this is not the case in Latin America. Despite being the region in which the dreadful consequences of gun violence are most notorious, gun control is largely absent from public and political discourses, as the issue is generally subsumed within the public security crisis. Scholars and academics did not even address gun control until very recently, when insecurity became one of the main public concerns in the region. As a result, the literature and overall knowledge on guns, gun violence, and gun control are very limited and usually focus on the particular situation of a given country.

Moreover, whether it is a report, an academic paper or a newspaper article, security matters are often discussed in superficial terms in Latin America and suffer from a strong normative bias. This is particularly true for gun-related issues. Most analyses and evaluations relate to local policies or programs and are written by the same ones who promoted the initiatives or were involved in their implementation. This is a significant

problem for a policy area in which conclusive information is largely unavailable, because it leads to the author's affiliations and personal interests filling the gaps and biasing results.

I wanted to read a book on the subject that did not fall into these errors. That was written with a sincere commitment to independence and intellectual honesty. Since I could not find it, I eventually decided to write it myself. In this vein, I personally do not own guns nor have a particular preference for them. Further, I think guns are dangerous and would prefer not to have them in my house, in particular, if there are kids around or if there is a risk of them being stolen. However, I do not consider guns to be inherently bad either and can understand those who have strong feelings about the subject or feel the need to have a gun around. Especially in Latin America, where criminality is rampant, and states do not have the effective capacity to safeguard most citizens. If I had a small convenience store in a complicated neighborhood, I probably would have a gun. Just in case.

Furthermore, for a while now I have been involved academically with a public policy theory called the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF). This is a fantastic tool for those interested in understanding why certain topics become political issues in the first place. In other words, why some public problems are given significant attention by policy-makers while others never do. The MSF was developed more than thirty years ago by John Kingdon and is now being advanced and improved by a great group of researchers and academics from all over the world. Unfortunately, policy studies are also recent and limited in Latin America and the same is true for the use of the MSF. This book is also an attempt to address this deficit and contribute to the further development of the MSF and of the policy research agenda in the developing world.

That having been said, this book could never have been written without the help of so many relatives, friends, and fellow colleagues, whose influence, motivation, and generous aid gave me the joy and strength to carry on during the past five years and enjoy almost every minute of it. I cannot possibly name them all here, but my deepest thanks and appreciation go to all of them.

A first special thank you must go to Carmen Navarro, whose expertise, guidance, sense of humor, and overall friendship were constant throughout my doctoral years. Thank you for taking me under your wing and, most notably, for convincing me of pursuing this objective. Special appreciation also goes to every colleague at the Dept. of Political

Science and International Relations at the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*. I learned so much from all of you and I am sure that our paths will cross again in the future. For that matter, I cannot fail to mention my overall gratitude to the people of this university and of Spain, who welcomed a foreigner and gave me the unbelievable opportunity of devoting myself full time to this research, while asking so little in return.

I must also thank everyone working at the Small Arms Survey research institute in Geneva, as well as at the Institute of International Relations of the University of São Paulo. I spent three amazing months as a Visiting Researcher in each institution, met wonderful people, and learned more than I could hope for. Special thanks go out to Anna Alvazzi del Frate and Janina Onuki, who were so kind as to comment the first drafts and share their thoughts with me. Also, to all the scholars, practitioners, activists, and politicians who were kind enough to lend me their time for this investigation.

Equally, my deepest gratitude goes to Reimut Zohlnhöfer, who gave me an invaluable review of the first draft, came all the way to Spain to participate in the panel of my dissertation, and was actually the first to suggest that a good book could come out of it. Also, to Nikolaos Zahariadis, who invited me to join this small but great group of people working on the MSF and has always been a major source of advice. Thank you as well to Verna Smith, Kristin O'Donnell, and all the other brilliant members of the group.

The last chapters of this endeavor were finished in what is now my new home, the Institute of Political Science of the *Universidad de la República* in Montevideo. My return would never have been possible without the amazing help of Adolfo Garcé, whose support and deep friendship have been a great gift in this new challenge. My appreciation also goes to all my other talented colleagues and friends at the ICP.

Thank you as well to Jemima Warren and Oliver Foster, my editors at Palgrave Macmillan. It is a great honor to publish my first book in such a famous and renowned publisher, and I just hope the work will live up to the trust that you placed in me.

Finally, but not less important, I want to thank those who always took care of me and supported my endeavors along the way. Thank you to my grandma, my mum, my dad, my brother, their partners, and kids. To my girl Luizy, who always tells me to stop complaining and go back to work: I love you. To all my aunts, uncles, and cousins. To my parents-in-law. To Daniel Amoedo, Esteban Martínez, Pedro López, Salvador Serrano,

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Montevideo, Uruguay

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACOLT	Brazilian Association of Armories, Collectors and Shooters
ALUDEC	Uruguayan Association to Fight for Civil Disarmament
ANIAM	Brazilian National Association of Weapon and Ammunition Industries
ANPCA	Brazilian National Association of Firearm Owners and Storekeepers
APA	Uruguayan Arms Possession Permit
ATT	UN Arms Trade Treaty
AUTRAF	Uruguayan Association of Responsible Firearm Owners
CAN	Community of Andean Nations
CASAC	Central American Program on Small Arms Control
CBC	Brazilian Ammunitions Company
CIAMU	Uruguayan Chamber of Firearm and Ammunition Importers
CIFTA	Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials
FA	Uruguayan party coalition Broad Front ( <i>Frente Amplio</i> )
FHC	Brazilian former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso
GCM	Garbage Can Model
HAC	Humanitarian Arms Control
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
IBOPE	Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics
ICBL	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IELSUR	Uruguayan Institute for Legal and Social Studies
IMBEL	Brazilian War Material Industry

IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISER	Brazilian Religion Studies Institute
ITI	UN International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons
Lula	Brazilian former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
MSF	Multiple Streams Framework
NE	Uruguayan New Space party ( <i>Nuevo Espacio</i> )
NEV-USP	Centre for Violence Studies of the University of São Paulo
NFCO	Uruguayan National Firearms Control Office
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OAS	Organization of American States
PC	Uruguayan Colored Party ( <i>Partido Colorado, Colorados</i> )
PI	Uruguayan Independent Party ( <i>Partido Independiente</i> )
PN	Uruguayan National Party ( <i>Partido Nacional, Blancos</i> )
PoA	UN Program of Action
PSDB	Brazilian Social Democracy Party ( <i>Partido de la Social Democracia Brasileira</i> )
PT	Brazilian Worker's Party ( <i>Partido dos Trabalhadores</i> )
RENAR	Argentinian National Weapons Registry
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SAM	Small Arms Movement
SICA	Central American Integration System
SIGMA	Brazilian Military Weapons Management System
SMA	Uruguayan Army's Material and Weapons Service
THATA	Uruguayan License for the Acquisition and Possession of Firearms
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRILEC	United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
US	United States of America
WVCP	Voluntary Weapons Collection Program
WHO	World Health Organization

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