

GUNS AS AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

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There is no issue on which the U.S. is as exceptional as civilian ownership of firearms. There are an estimated 330 million firearms in private hands; there is at least one firearm in 40% of American households. With 5% of the world's population, the U.S. has more than half of the world's civilian gun stock. How can this situation be explained? What problem or problems does it cause? How can Americans tolerate mass shootings that seem to occur more and more regularly? How come the National Rifle Association exerts so much political influence? To what extent does the U.S. constitution constrain policy options? What is the prospect for sensible gun control in the near future?

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