

The Columbine effect and school anti-violence policy

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Glenn W. Muschert

Anthony A. Peguero

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Abstract

Originality/value of chapter – Although not often connected, this chapter explores the intersection between the discourse of school violence (typically, a social problems framing concern) and the development of school antiviolenence policies (typically, an applied social scientific concern).

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Columbine-style violence remains blessedly rare. Such widespread ignorance about school violence should make us skeptical that tragedy will inspire good public policy. It's certainly worth having a discussion about whether there are specific policies that might reduce gun deaths—particularly the most common kinds of gun deaths, which are suicides, not school massacres. But anyone making such a proposal must reckon with the fact that since the '90s, as it has become easier for most Americans to obtain a gun, America has become safer for both adults and kids. Klebold and Harris Head Into Columbine High School. Klebold, wearing cargo pants and a black T-shirt with "Wrath" on the front, was armed with a 9-mm semi-automatic handgun and a 12-gauge double-barrel sawed-off shotgun. Harris, wearing dark-colored pants and a white T-shirt that said "Natural Selection," was armed with a 9-mm carbine rifle and a 12-gauge pump sawed-off shotgun. The Columbine Massacre changed the way society looked at children and at schools. Violence was no longer just an after-school, inner-city occurrence. It could happen anywhere.

