

Firearms and Peace

Author Carlisle E. Moody studied the history of personal violence in Europe, and came to a surprising conclusion.

Personal violence has declined substantially in Europe from 1200-2010. The conventional wisdom is that the state's monopoly on violence is the cause of this happy result. I find some evidence that does not support this hypothesis. I suggest an alternative hypothesis that could explain at least some of the reduction in violence, namely that the invention and proliferation of compact, concealable, ready-to-use firearms caused potential assailants to recalculate the probability of a successful assault and seek alternatives to violence. I use structural change models to test this hypothesis and find breakpoints consistent with the invention of certain firearms.

Firearms and the Decline of Violence

