Changes in trends and patterns of homicide across three decades

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Swiss Homicide Project

Database
- Completed, intentional homicides
- Committed in Switzerland
- Including homicide-suicides
- Supported by Swiss National Science Foundation (NSF)
- Wave II: 2005-2014

Data collection
- Starting point:
  - Wave I: institutes of forensic medicine
  - Wave II: lists from the offices of Public Prosecutor
- Data completion using court and/or police files
Data

• Incident-related data (crime scene, weapon etc.)
• Offender-related data
• Victim-related data
• Prosecution data

→ In this presentation: focus on homicide trends in Switzerland from 1990-2014
Homicides in Switzerland, absolute numbers and rate (1990–2014, N = 1330)
Typology of homicides in Switzerland (1990–2014, in %, N = 1291)

- Intimate partner: 36.3%
- Family: 13.5%
- Criminal: 15.5%
- Dispute: 18.1%
- Other: 7%
- Unknown: 9.7%
Trends in homicide types, 1990 – 2013 (in % of all homicides, N = 1291)
Homicide weapons in Switzerland (1990–2014, in %, N = 1291)

- Firearm: 42.9%
- Sharp instrument: 31.4%
- Strangulation: 13.7%
- Blunt instrument: 5.3%
- Hitting/kicking: 3.3%
- Other: 3.4%
Trends in homicide weapons, 1990 – 2014 (in % of all homicides, N = 1449)
Conclusion

• Drastic decrease of homicides in Switzerland between 1990 and 2014
• All types of homicide have decreased, however some types more than others
• Firearms as modus operandi are nowadays much less used in comparison to the 1980ies and 1990ies
• Are these trends similar to other European countries?
Thank you for your attention!

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