

Marieke C. A. Liem
William Alex Pridemore *Editors*

Handbook of European Homicide Research

Patterns, Explanations,
and Country Studies



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 Springer

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Part I

This volume examines homicide data, patterns, explanations, and policies in Europe. Our ambitious aim is that the volume will serve not only as a sourcebook that consolidates knowledge gained from prior studies of homicide in Europe, but as a foundation for ideas about moving European homicide research forward. Importantly, this is not simply a collection of materials that have been published elsewhere. Instead, all chapters contain original research and writing commissioned specifically for this volume. This ensures that we present the reader with a central source of up-to-date information on the wide ranging literature on European homicide research that is currently spread broadly in dozens of different European and American journals. We hope that this sourcebook provides scholars, students, and practitioners a comprehensive and authoritative overview of the substantive, methodological, and policy-oriented aspects of homicide research in Europe.

Relative to the United States and several Commonwealth countries, Europe does not have a long tradition of studying the trends, patterns, and explanations of homicide. Differences in legal definitions of and data sources on homicide have hampered cross-national comparisons. Within the European Union there exists no homogeneous comparable definition on homicide, as each country

uses different definitions of homicide and applies different selection criteria to what lethally violent events are included within these definitions (see the contribution by Smit, De Jong & Bijleveld, 2012). Similarly, separate homicide data sources typically contain different information about homicide. For example, some sources detail homicide incidents, other sources count and describe victims, whereas still others focus on the offenders and/or the sentences imposed by courts.

Another contributing factor to this less well developed literature is that what we call Europe can be defined in a number of different ways (Salfati, 2001), ranging from an economic entity such as the European Economic Union to a geographical and political entity. Within these entities there are differences in terms of language, culture, ethnicity, politics, and economics. Now that Europe is becoming increasingly unified in both a political and economical sense, the idea of conducting research at a European level is increasing concomitantly.

In spite of these difficulties, several studies have been carried out comparing homicide between European countries or comparing homicide in European countries to other parts of the world (for an overview, see the contribution by Trent & Pridemore, 2012). Other initiatives are under way in which a number of European countries combine their homicide data in a homogeneous dataset (Ganpat et al., 2011). The first results are promising, and we hope more countries will join this project and other similar initiatives. The limitations on prior research on one

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hand and the recent advances in cross-national research on the other highlight the importance of a central sourcebook like ours as a foundational reference that aids scholars in multiple disciplines in the accumulation of scientific knowledge about homicide in Europe.

Data, Patterns, Explanations, Policies, and Country Studies

This Handbook consists of two sections. The first section covers the most recent substantive and methodological information about homicide research undertaken in Europe. The original chapters cover a broad range of topics that include European homicide data sources, historical and current homicide trends, explanations for homicide, overviews of the theoretical and empirical literature on homicide, and much more. Each of these chapters represents the current state of knowledge in its respective area. We chose a wide range of well respected contributors who are recognized for their research and scholarship. However, while we asked them to write on the general topics assigned to them, we did not stipulate the theoretical or empirical approach they should adopt, leaving the authors' broad discretion over the specific content of these chapters. As you can see, we also deliberately selected scholars from a wide range of countries and academic disciplines.

The second section of the volume contains separate chapters on homicide research in over a dozen individual European countries. The authors of these country chapters were provided with a general template to follow so that each of these chapters contains similar material for the respective country. This results in chapters that not only present details about homicide in specific nations but that contain, more or less, similar material about each nation that allows for some general comparisons across nations in relation to the regional distribution of homicide rates, recent homicide trends, descriptions of victim–offender relationships, and explanations and policies specific to the country.

Forty-six authors representing 13 countries contributed to this volume. While to some extent our choice of authors was shaped by our disciplinary origins, circles of acquaintanceship, affiliations, and our research orientations, we believe also that the breadth of topics and the variety of countries included in this sourcebook is reflected in the diversity of the authors who were part of this project. We thank all our contributors for producing original chapters of such a high standard while meeting a demanding schedule. We believe the input by our 46 authors will make this sourcebook a substantial contribution to the academic literature on homicide in Europe and provide a solid foundation for moving this literature forward.

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Homicide Data in Europe: Definitions, Sources, and Statistics

2

Paul R. Smit, Rinke R. de Jong, and
Catrien C.J.H. Bijleveld

Introduction

Homicide is generally considered the most serious of all crimes, with obviously the most serious consequences for the victim. This alone justifies the special place homicide research has within the field of criminology, illustrated by countless studies and special groups devoted to studying the phenomenon. But there is another, more practical reason why homicide research is so dominant: there is more, and usually better and more reliable, information available on homicide than on most other crime types. One reason for this is that the seriousness of the crime results in more attention and more thorough investigations by the police. This chapter focuses on the information available on homicide in European countries. We address available data sources, differing definitions, and data quality.

International organisations, European consortia, and national statistical agencies produce data on homicide. The definition of “homicide” appears straightforward: a homicide occurs when there is a dead person and the cause of death can be attributed to another person. However, in practice things are not so simple. A first observation is that there can be different levels of motivation, involvement, or responsibility on the part of the

person causing the death. It may be a death by accident, through negligent behaviour, or the offender can be considered legally accountable although the death of the victim was something that the offender did not want to happen. Another difference can be in planning: the killing either happened in the heat of the moment or was planned beforehand. As will be outlined below – in this spectrum of different levels of motivation, involvement, or responsibility – European countries differ in what they consider a homicide, and thus the definitions they employ. Related to this is the issue of whether acts that do not constitute a prototypical homicide, but where nevertheless a person is intentionally killed by another person, are included in the definition and thus in the data collected. Examples of such acts are euthanasia and assisted suicide. Furthermore, countries and other data sources differ in what exactly they count as homicide, with some counting only completed offences and others including attempts where the victim did not die. Apart from definitional issues, countries and agencies may differ in the manner in which they compile homicide statistics: they may count at the level of homicide incidents, or the number of homicide victims, or the number of homicide offenders. In general these different approaches will not produce widely varying estimates, though they do not produce identical data.

This chapter is organized as follows: First, we give a short overview of both existing international sources of homicide data and of previous research

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done on the methodological aspects of using these sources (Section “‘International’ Sources of Homicide Data and Previous Comparative Research”). Next we look at the legal definitions of homicide in the European countries (Section “Homicide Definitions”). In Section “Sources of Homicide Data” we return in more detail to the existing sources of homicide data. We discuss how the definitional issues presented in Section “Homicide Definitions” are implemented and to what extent European countries can meet these definitions. In Section “Homicide Statistics” we address the completeness and the reliability of homicide statistics. Also statistical decisions, like the counting unit, are discussed. Much of the information presented in this chapter was collected through two questionnaires answered by many European countries. This is described in the Appendix.

“International” Sources of Homicide Data and Previous Comparative Research

Various international organisations produce homicide statistics for Europe. The most important organisations that are currently generating such data are Interpol, the United Nations Crime Surveys (UNCTS) and the European Sourcebook on Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics (Stamatel, 2006). LaFree (1999) found in his analysis of cross-national homicide studies from 1965 to 1997 that Interpol is the most frequently used data source. Unfortunately, Interpol does not provide any recent comparison data (Interpol, 2006) and therefore will be disregarded here. However, recently Eurostat started to provide homicide statistics for European countries as well, and also the World Health Organization (WHO) provides statistics on homicide (Marshall & Block, 2004).

The United Nations publishes data on homicide in countries worldwide. These data are collected as part of a survey sent to all member states, officially called *The United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems*, but usually referred to as UNCTS (Aromaa, 2010). The responding persons are

“typically United Nations correspondents who compile the data with assistance from government employees from a variety of relevant departments, such as police and corrections” (Stamatel, 2006). Almost all European countries supply data.

The *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics* publishes data on various types of criminal offences at various stages of the Criminal Justice System (CJS). The most recent edition was published in 2010 and covers the years 2003–2007. It is the fourth edition since the project started in 1993 (Aebi et al., 2010). The CJS stages covered by the European Sourcebook are police statistics, prosecution statistics, conviction statistics, and correctional statistics. Both offences and offenders are shown in the statistics. The European Sourcebook covers 42 countries, all member of the Council of Europe. Seven, mainly smaller, countries are excluded, and the UK is disaggregated by England & Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Eurostat started collecting criminal justice statistics only recently. Eurostat presents statistics on the 27 countries of the European Union. The United Kingdom is disaggregated in the same manner as described above. A further nine countries are included, of which five are EU candidate countries such as Croatia and Turkey, and four are members of the European Free Trade Association.

WHO publishes homicide figures based on vital statistics data. LaFree (1999) found that in the period from 1965 to 1997, the WHO data set was the second most used in cross-national homicide studies, after the now discontinued Interpol database. Obviously these data, based on vital statistics data, are not influenced by legal decisions. So the figures will not be affected by decisions whether or not to prosecute or to convict an offender.

One of the most extensive publications on homicide research is *Homicide: A Sourcebook of Social Research*, edited by Smith and Zahn (1999). This handbook is a collection of writings on homicide and on the study of homicide. Of particular interest is “Part III: Methodological issues in the study of homicide”, that focuses on

homicide data and on the comparison of international homicide statistics. Since the publication of this seminal work, however, cross-national resources have changed considerably. Interpol, one of the main sources, stopped publishing data about homicide in 2006 (Interpol, 2006). The European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics, which was not mentioned in the Smith and Zahn book, is now considered a main source of international crime data (Stamatel, 2006). It was likely omitted because the European Sourcebook is limited to Europe or perhaps because at the time it had only recently been published. LaFree (1999), in the same volume, provides a good overview of the international resources, cross-national studies on homicide, and the methodological limitations in those studies.

Bennet and Lynch (1990) studied the differences in the homicide data of three cross-national resources. For the period of 1975–1980 they compared data from Interpol, the United Nations (UN), and the World Health Organization (WHO). The average difference in homicide rate per nation was 26% for Interpol compared to UN, 45% for Interpol compared to WHO, and 52% for UN compared to WHO. Thus, it was mainly WHO data (collected via vital statistics data) that differed strongly from the two other databases (collected via crime statistics), even though these latter had fairly large differences too. Extending their comparison, the authors found that nations' rank ordering of homicide rates differed significantly depending upon the data source, though Interpol and the UN generated a similar ranking. The datasets were consistent, however, when comparing trends in homicide. Thus it appears that there are stable differences in how these international databases arrive at homicide statistics.

Howard and Smith (2003) also studied cross-national homicide data sources. These authors included the UN Survey, Interpol, the European Sourcebook, and WHO. They found moderate to strong correlations of $r=0.60$ to $r=0.91$. The former was found for Interpol in comparison with the European Sourcebook, the latter was the score for WHO in relation to the European Sourcebook.

Rokaw, Mercy, and Smith (1990) examined the difference between such “crime data” and “vital statistics data” on homicide. While their research focused on the United States, both types of data are also available for homicide in Europe (namely statistics based on police data vs. WHO data). The authors compared figures from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) with figures from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The FBI statistics are based on reported homicides and investigations by police officers. The database of the NCHS is based on death certificates completed by medical personnel. The researchers found that, during the years from 1976 to 1982, the medical data showed 9% more homicides than the FBI data.

Cross-national homicide data are regularly used in criminological research (LaFree, 1999). However, as the above shows, the conclusions drawn from a particular study may depend on the data source that is used. Using one or the other source may generate a different ranking of homicide levels. Strikingly, little research has been conducted on the comparability of those statistics and on the differences in definitions used.

Homicide Definitions

As we saw above, there may be wide differences in the kind of data that international or European statistical agencies or consortia collect. Obviously, for comparative research, a much more direct source would be nationally collected data from the respective countries themselves. Some researchers are of the opinion that homicide figures from different countries can be compared, because the definition of homicide is similar in most countries (Barclay & Tavares, 2002; Blatier et al., 2010). It has been argued that even the inclusion or exclusion of “special” forms of homicide, such as assistance with suicide or infanticide, will only have a small effect on the final estimates (Barclay, 2000). However, some researchers warn against such optimism. For example, the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice warns its readers not to over-interpret any difference between countries

(Aebi et al., 2010). Interpol used to state in its introductory notes that its data are “in no way intended” for comparing countries (Kalish, 1988). Before moving on to a more in-depth comparison of national homicide data in Europe, we will discuss more in depth the aspects on which definitions might diverge. First we look at linguistic pitfalls when using the English term “homicide”, then we discuss some of the legal elements commonly found in the definition of homicide such as premeditation and intent. After that, we consider “special” forms of homicide like abortion and euthanasia. Much of the information presented in this (and the next) section was collected specifically for this study, see Appendix.

The English Term “Homicide”

Most research articles are written in the English language. Thus, “homicide” is a widely used term and familiar to most readers. In the English context, the term covers many situations where a person is killed by another: homicide may include not only premeditated and intentional killing, but also non-intentional killing. Not all other countries have such a comprehensive word in their language. As an example, in the Dutch language it will take four different terms to identify all offences covered by the English term homicide and only two of those are usually considered as research objects in Dutch homicide research. Also, for some languages the English terms “homicide” and “murder” translate into the same word, although they are clearly different concepts in the English context. In the Georgian language, the elements “premeditated”, “deliberate”, and “intentional” all have the same meaning. Such linguistic issues can have wide reaching implications for homicide definitions, estimates, and research. Thus, it is not simply a definition that matters, but also culture, language, and translation.

Legal Elements in the Definition of Homicide

Almost all definitions used in an *international* context contain more or less the same elements.

For example, both the European Sourcebook (Aebi et al., 2010) and Eurostat (European Commission, 2010) use as their definition of homicide the “intentional killing of a person”. The United Nations uses a slightly different definition: “death deliberately inflicted on a person by another person” (www.unodc.org). WHO measures homicides by cause of death, and uses the definition “injuries inflicted by another person with intent to injure or kill, by any means” (WHO, 2009). So, these definitions are all related and all consist of the following elements: a killed person, an intention to kill, and a human offender. Implicit in most internationally used definitions is the fact that the killing must be unlawful.

If we look at the *national* level, we see that homicide is often defined by a selection of articles from the national criminal code. This implies that not all countries define homicide in the same way. While this does not pose any problems when investigating data at the national level, this clearly hampers cross-national comparison.

In national law, a simple homicide is often described as killing or causing the death of another person. In Norway, for example, “any person who causes another person’s death, or who aids and abets thereto” (section 233) is guilty of homicide. In Scotland, homicide is described in the Statistical Bulletin (2010) as “either murder or culpable homicide”. In Armenia, a homicide is the “illegal wilful deprivation of one’s life” (article 104). “Whoever kills a human being” (article 148 §1) is guilty of murder in Poland, similar to the German section 212: “whosoever kills a person”.

We outline here two of the most important elements of the legal definitions of homicide as they are found in various European countries, that is premeditation (and/or other aggravated circumstances) and intent. We base our findings on definitions of homicide as outlined in the UNCTS, the European Sourcebook, and previous literature, in particular as found in Smith and Zahn (1999). But mainly we use information from two questionnaires sent out to statisticians and homicide researchers in all European countries (see Appendix).

Murder is, at least in some jurisdictions, seen separately from the more general “homicide” and refers to the *premeditated* killing of another person. Premeditation is used here to describe

killing with malice aforethought. Some degree of planning is required. To determine if a homicide is a premeditated murder, Dutch judges will investigate whether the offender had time and opportunity to consider what he was doing (de Hullu, 2003). Whether or not he actually did think about it is not important, it has to be proven that he had the time and opportunity to do so. Furthermore, the offender must have had the intention to take the life of the victim. In other European countries, however, the term murder is used in a broader sense for aggravated forms of homicide (where premeditation could be one of the aggravated forms of homicide).

Not all countries have a special provision for premeditated homicide, either autonomously or as one of the aggravated forms of homicide. In such countries the offender is prosecuted for “normal” homicide. To determine the penalty, the judge then takes into consideration the degree of planning of the offender. This is the case, among others, in Iceland, where the penal code does not distinguish between premeditated and non-premeditated murder, but premeditation is taken into account when deciding the punishment.

Intent in the offender is typically a condition for homicide. The intention of the offender should be aimed at the particular consequence of his act, in this case the death of the victim. The Hungarian criminal code has a fairly clear description of intent: “An act of crime is committed with intent if the perpetrator desires the consequences of his conduct or acquiesces to these consequences” (section 13). However, some national homicide definitions might include non-intentional killings as well, like involuntary manslaughter (England) or negligent manslaughter. In such cases, it is sufficient that the offender is proven to be culpable of the victim’s death. Mistakes by medics with deadly result are another example of such situations.

Table 2.1 shows both the linguistic aspects and the notions of premeditation, aggravating circumstances, and intent for most European countries. Because information was not specifically gathered for this purpose, the terms presented here can be both legal and linguistic. For the same reason the data are not complete for all countries. However, they give an overview of what offences are considered similar. Almost all countries

mention non-intentional killings separately. The other three columns are often merged together with a similar term. Also premeditated homicide and homicide with aggravated circumstances are combined by some countries. This is less surprising, since premeditation is in certain countries considered as one of the aggravating circumstances of homicide. The meaning of the grey shadings in the fourth column will be discussed in Section “Sources of Homicide Data”.

Although not one of our research questions, it is striking that in almost all countries with a separate article for murder, premeditated killing can be punished with a life sentence. The death penalty is officially applicable for murderers in Russia. However, there is now a moratorium for capital punishment, and in practice it is substituted by a life sentence. Spain seems to be the most lenient, with a punishment of up to 20 years. Portugal does not sentence criminals to life sentences either, with 25 years being the maximum sentence. The most common maximum sentence for an intentional, but not necessarily premeditated, killing is life in prison (in 14 of 35 countries). In the 19 countries that do not inflict such penalties, the mean maximum sentence is about 18 years in prison. The most lenient punishment can be found in Armenia, where the maximum is 12 years imprisonment. The highest possible sentence to be imposed for intentional homicide was unclear for two countries. The Netherlands is the only country without a mandatory minimum sentence. Respondents from Cyprus, Greece, and Ireland left the question about a minimum sentence for homicide blank. However, according to Kapardis (2010), Cyprus does have a mandatory punishment of life in prison for premeditated murder. In Ireland, according to the Criminal Justice Act of 1990 Irish judges are also bound to mandatory sentences. For Greece we did not receive information about a minimum sentence for homicide, but we did for all other offences.

Special Forms of Homicide

As noted earlier, a definition of homicide often employed by international agencies is “the intentional killing of a person by another”

Table 2.1 Elements of homicide in national law

	Premeditated	Aggravated circumstances	Intentional killing	Non-intentional
Albania	Vasje me paramendim 25/15	Vrasje në rrethana të tjera cilësuese Life/25	Vrasje me dashje 20/10	Vrasja nga pakujdesia 5/fine
Armenia	– –	Spanutyun canracucich hangamanqerov Life/8	Spanutyun 12/6	Anzgushutyamb mah patjarel 5/0.25
Austria	Life/10	Mord Life/10	Life/10	Totschlag 10/5
Belgium	Assassinat Life/life	?	Meurtre 30/20	Homicide involontaire 2/0.25
Bulgaria	?	?	Убийство 20/10	Убийство по непредпазливост 5/0
Cyprus	Φόνος εκ προ μελέτης Life/life	Ανθρωποκτονία Life/?		
Czech Republic	Vražda 20/12	Life/10	vražda prostá 18/10	Usmrcení z nedbalosti 3/0
Denmark	Drab Life/3			Uagtsomt manddrab 0.33/fine
England & Wales	Homicide			
	Murder Life/life			Manslaughter Life/?
Estonia	–	Mõrv Life/8	Tapmine 15/6	Surma põhjustamine ettevaatamatuses 3/0
Finland	Murha Life/life		Tappo Life/8	?
France	Assassinat Life/?	?	Meurtre 30/10	Homicide involontaire 3/fine
Georgia	gandzraxi mkvleloba damamdzimebeli garemoebebit Life/16		gandzraxi mkvleloba 15/7	sitsosxlis mospoba gauftxileblobit 4/?
Germany	–	Mord Life/life	Totschlag 15/5	Fahrlässige Tötung 5/fine
Greece	Anthropoktonia (ανθρωποκτονία) Life/?			Anthropoktonia apo ameleia (ανθρωποκτονία από αμέλεια) 5/0.25
Hungary	Szándékos emberölés 15/5			Gondatlanságból elkövetett emberölés 5/1
Iceland	Manndráp Life/5			Mannsbani-gáleysi 6/?
Ireland	Murder Life/life			Manslaughter Life/?
Italy	Omicidio volontario o doloso 24/21			Omicidio colposo 5/0.5
Lithuania	–	Nužudymas Life/7		neatsargus gyvybės atėmimas 4/0.25
Rep. of Moldova	Omor			
	Omor agravat Life/12		Omor simplu 15/8	Lipsirea de viață din imprudență 3/?

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

	Premeditated	Aggravated circumstances	Intentional killing	Non-intentional
The Netherlands	Moord Life/0	15/0	Doodslag 30/0	Dood door schuld 2/0
Northern Ireland Norway	Murder Homicide 21/?		?/6	Manslaughter Negligently causing death 3/fine
Poland	–	Zabójstwo kwalifikowane Life/25	Zabójstwo Life/8	Zabójstwo nieumyślne 5/0.25
Portugal	Homicídio qualificado 25/12		Homicídio 16/8	Homicídio por negligência 5/fine
Russia	Ubiystvo Life/8			Prichinenie smerti po neostorojnosti 3/0
Scotland	Murder Life/life	Manslaughter ?		Culpable homicide ?
Slovak Republic	úkladná vražda 25/20	Vražda 20/15		?/Manslaughter 3/0
Slovenia	Umor Life/15		Uboj 15/5	Povzročitev smrti iz malomarnosti 5/0.5
Spain	Assesinato 20/15		Homicidio 15/10	Homicidio imprudente 4/1
Sweden	–	?	Mord Life/10	Vållande till annans död 6/0.5
Switzerland	?	Mord/assassinat Life/10	Vorsätzliche Tötung/homicide intentionnel 20/5	Fahrlässige Tötung/homicide par négligence 3/fine
Turkey	Kasten öldürme Aggravated life/aggravated life		Life/life	Taksirle yaralama 6/2
Ukraine	–	вбивство з обтяжуючими обставинами Life/10	Умисне вбивство 15/7	Вбивство через необережність 2/community service

Dark grey offence is not included in national homicide statistics

Light grey unknown whether offence is included in national homicide statistics

– premeditated homicide not a separate offence or term (can be taken into account by the judge to determine sentence)

? unclear whether there is such a term in local language

The *last row* for each country (except for Northern Ireland where this information is missing) gives information on the maximum/minimum statutory penalty in years imprisonment

(Malby, 2010). And in national definitions of homicide the element of intent is often present as well. In most cases it appears clear when an incident can be labelled as a homicide. However, even though some types of homicide seem to fit this definition, they could be different from “average” homicides. Although they might be committed *intentionally* and even *unlawfully*, it could be argued that they are not a homicide. Euthanasia is such an example. A physician intentionally

causes the death of another person. Depending on the national laws it might very well be unlawful. But should it be considered a homicide if he fulfils the wishes of a patient and prevents suffering from a potentially long illness leading to death?

Also, there are certain kinds of homicide for which the offender’s intention can be ambiguous, for example, assaults leading to death (where the death of the victim was not intended by the

offender) or dangerous driving with a deadly consequence. It can be difficult to determine to what extent the offender had intent on the victim's death. However, these situations can usually be legally captured with "criminal negligence". The latter is, again quoting the Hungarian criminal code: "[...] if the perpetrator foresees the possible consequences of his conduct, but carelessly relies on their non-occurrence, or fails to foresee the possibility of the consequences with a deliberate indifference or failure to exercise reasonable care" (section 14). Lastly, there are "justified killings" where the most basic aspect of the definition, that is the unlawfulness, could be ambiguous.

We will now discuss a number of cases that could be considered as "special homicides". "Special" does not imply being less worthy of punishment or more excusable (with the possible exception of "justified killings"). They are "special" however because there is less consensus on whether or not they should be comprised under the label homicide (Marshall & Block, 2004).

Abortion. Most countries have regulations for the interruption of pregnancy (UN, 2010), where under certain circumstances and up to a certain stage of the pregnancy abortion is allowed. Such abortions will not be considered a homicide. Nonetheless, an unlawful abortion might fit the definition of homicide because it is done intentionally. There is an ongoing religious or philosophical discussion, however, to determine if an unborn foetus in various stages of a pregnancy could be considered a *person*. According to the UN, only six countries did not permit abortion under any circumstances in 2009 (UN, 2010). Two of these countries are European, namely the Holy See and Malta. However, these countries are not represented in our research. Most of the respondents in our survey mention that in their countries abortion is legally dealt with separately from other forms of homicide. Initially some respondents reported that it always constitutes a crime. However, when examining their answers and in some occasions the translated penal law, it becomes evident that most descriptions are about *illegal* abortions. The *World Population Policies 2009* report of the United Nations (2010) presents also

information on abortion. Out of the countries presented there, only in Ireland abortion is always punishable. The only exception is when it is done to save the mother's life. In over half of the countries the mother is not punishable when an illegal abortion is committed. The person committing such an abortion is almost always liable, regardless of the fact whether or not this person is an official physician. However, usually an abortion can only be legal if performed by an official physician. The maximum penalty for illegal abortion in most European countries ranges from 2 to 10 years. In countries where the mother is liable, the punishment for her is usually less severe. Generally, the maximum penalty is 1 year in jail for the mother.

Assisted suicide. Most penal laws in Europe contain a separate article for assistance with suicide, (where, other than with euthanasia, there is still more or less active involvement of the person committing the suicide). Out of the 30 respondents, 22 mentioned that help with suicide is dealt with separately from other kinds of homicide. In about two-thirds of these 22 countries it is always considered a crime. For the countries that deal separately with this offence, the mean maximum sentence is 5 years imprisonment. Nevertheless, it varies from 4 months (Denmark) to 12 years (Italy).

Euthanasia. Related to assisting with suicide is euthanasia. However, in this case it is the physician (or another person) who is actually performing the fatal actions. The ending of a life is done in request of the subject wanting to die. Under certain circumstances euthanasia is allowed in some countries. When euthanasia is considered unlawful, it fits the term of homicide: an intentional killing of a person by another. Less than half of our respondents, 14 out of 32, mentioned that in their country euthanasia is legally dealt with differently from other forms of homicides. In five countries it is, in certain circumstances, not always considered a crime. In the remaining nine countries the average maximum penalty is 6.3 years in prison. So, it is punished slightly more severely than assistance with suicide. In those countries that have a separate article for

euthanasia in their penal code, it is often used as a mitigated form of homicide. For example, in Italy euthanasia will be prosecuted for “homicide of a consenting person” (*omicidio del consenziente*). Instead of 24 years, the maximum penalty is reduced to a maximum of 15 years in prison. In other countries with a separate euthanasia article, the penalty is usually up to 5 years in prison.

Infanticide. Some countries may have a separate division in law for the murder of babies or very young children. Infanticide might be an ambiguous term. For instance, in the Dutch penal code infanticide is covered by article 290 and 291. It mentions the mother who kills her child during or soon after childbirth. A section with a similar definition can be found in Danish law (section 238). However, in England and Wales the mother can be prosecuted for infanticide if she kills her child with the age of up to 12 months (section 1 Infanticide Act 1938). Infanticide fits the international definition of homicide: the mother intentionally kills her child. Although a very young person, the child is still considered a person. It could be argued, however, that because of the high degree of emotions experienced by the mother (e.g. post-partum syndrome), these cases should be excluded from homicide statistics. Almost all European countries have a separate article in their law for infanticide. Out of our 34 respondents only 6 stated otherwise. All of them indicated that it was always a crime in their country. Mostly it is a mitigated form of homicide, punishable by an imprisonment of up to 10 years. However, in five countries the offender can be sentenced to life in prison. For the remaining countries, the average maximum punishment is 6 years imprisonment.

Assault leading to death. Another example of crimes that could possibly fit the definition of homicide is assault leading to death. This term is usually used for situations in which the offender physically abuses another without the intention to kill but the victim nevertheless dies as a result. Although the assault is committed intentionally by a person to another person, it could be argued that the intention is focused on the physical abuse,

not on the death of the victim. It is difficult though to determine whether or not the offender was anticipating this consequence, which means that the decision whether to prosecute and convict an offender for homicide instead of assault leading to death is dependent on the interpretation of the circumstances by the prosecutor and the judge. In almost all countries, an assault leading to death is legally dealt with differently from homicide. As can be seen from Table 2.1, one of the few exceptions is England & Wales, where unintentional killings could be considered homicides. With an average of around 13 years in prison, the maximum penalty is usually between that of (aggravated) assault and attempted murder.

Dangerous driving. Dangerous driving can lead to the death of other road users. The difficulty here is the same as with assaults leading to death. The driver could have had the intention of driving recklessly, but is it enough to label the fatal consequence as a homicide? In juridical terms it could be argued that in some cases the recklessness is so obvious and intentional that the driver could have foreseen the consequences. Hence, the driver’s actions can in part considered to be with intent. In other words, the driver accepted that his actions can have certain consequences (*Dolus Eventualis*), in this case the death of another road user.

Justified killings. It may have been established that a person did not die a natural death, but while the death was intentionally caused by another person – the death was not considered unlawful. Such homicides concern, for example, killings by police officers, capital punishment, and soldiers or civilians killed in armed conflicts. The first example will usually be considered self-defence, the second as lawful killing, and therefore both will not be labelled as a homicide. The third example is more difficult. Fallen soldiers in an armed conflict generally do not count as homicide victims. But when is a situation an armed conflict? And what to do, statistically speaking, with civilian casualties? Fortunately, situations like this are currently exceptional in Europe.

Sources of Homicide Data

According to our survey (see Appendix), almost all countries have publicly available statistics on homicide as part of their general crime statistics. Usually these statistics are accessible on the internet. Crime statistics cover four areas of the CJS. First, the police statistics where information on recorded crimes and offenders found by the police is presented. Second, there are statistics for prosecution decisions: Will an offender be prosecuted? For what crime is he/she prosecuted? And will the case be brought before a criminal court or be dealt with otherwise? Next, court statistics give information on convicted offenders and the sanctions imposed. And lastly, there are the prison statistics with information on the numbers of homicide offenders in prison. For homicide, the court statistics are the most common, followed by the police statistics. The former is maintained by all but Northern Ireland, the latter by all except four countries in our survey. The least common statistics are those on prosecution decisions, although still covered by two-third of the countries.

Aside from these regular crime statistics, we found from our survey that from the responding countries there are eight national databases with special homicide statistics. These publications are more detailed than the regular statistics. Information about the murder weapon, the victim, the offender, the location of the murder, and the relationship of the victim to the offender can be included in such databases. The investigation stage is covered by each of these eight databases. Both the prosecution stage and the court stage are included by six countries. Only Scotland has detailed homicide statistics about the prison population. All statistics include either the completed homicides or completed and attempted homicides separately. With the exception of Switzerland and the Netherlands, all these databases, or publications based on these databases, are publicly available on the internet.

As mentioned in Section “Homicide Definitions”, the definition of homicide in national sources usually reflects the national criminal code. Therefore, it is expected that comparison between

countries will be difficult if at all possible. Sources with standardized definitions, such as the four sources already presented in Section “‘International’ Sources of Homicide Data and Previous Comparative Research”, are more suitable for international comparisons. Therefore, we will first describe the definitions – both regarding the legal elements as well as the “special” forms of homicide – used in the four international sources. After that we will discuss how countries, from their national sources, can meet these definitions.

The UN-CTS: The definition used for homicide in this survey is “death deliberately inflicted on a person by another person, including infanticide” and countries are requested to include both attempts and completed homicides (www.unodc.org). The counting unit is not prescribed, but respondents are requested to note which unit they use. The UN-CTS is fairly lenient in which cases can be labelled as homicide. Aside from infanticide, no other “special” types of homicide are explicitly included or excluded. With the wording “deliberately inflicted” in their homicide definition, the United Nations explicitly ask their respondents to report intentional homicide only.

The European Sourcebook: The definition used for homicide is “intentional killing of a person”. Assistance with suicide is excluded, but assaults leading to death, euthanasia, infanticide, and attempts are included (Aebi et al., 2010). Although attempted homicide is included in the standard definition, figures for completed homicides only are given as well. The European Sourcebook presents an overview of countries that were not able to supply data conforming to the standard definition.

Eurostat: Homicide, one of the crime types for which police data is collected, is defined as “Intentional killing of a person, including murder, manslaughter, euthanasia and infanticide. Attempted (uncompleted) homicide is excluded. Causing death by dangerous driving, abortion and help with suicide are also excluded” (European Commission, 2010). The preferred counting unit

is the victim. Because “manslaughter” is included, the Eurostat homicide data constitute a mixture of intentional and unintentional killings.

WHO: To define homicide, WHO uses the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) codes corresponding to “injuries inflicted by another person with intent to injure or kill, by any means” (WHO, 2009). These codes are used by physicians to describe cause of death. The related ICD-10 codes for homicide are X85-Y09. Except for the given definition and codes, WHO does not specify which type of acts are included or excluded. However, by comparing these cases to the codes or definition it can be presumed that the following are excluded: abortion (codes O00-O08) and assistance with suicide (not a cause of death), and dangerous driving (codes V01-V99). Furthermore, the ICD-10 has a special code for legal interventions (Y35). So if it can be determined, so-called “justified killings” would not be included in these homicide statistics. It is unclear how strictly the “intent” criterion is adhered to in practice. The counting unit for the WHO data is the victim.

Based on these descriptions, which are summarized in Table 2.2, we see that there are clear differences between the various sources of homicide statistics. There seems to be a general consensus in the international data sources on homicide that the intent to kill must be a necessary condition within the definition of homicide. However, when looking at the full definition used in those data collections, there

could be room for interpreting the notion of “intent” in different ways. Furthermore, there seems to be a wide variation in whether attempted homicides and “special” forms of homicide – such as euthanasia, abortion, assistance with suicide, etc. – are included in the definition of homicide. Thus, it is not surprising that previous comparative studies encountered fairly diverging homicide estimates in the different sources.

In Table 2.3 a more detailed description is shown at the country level, what legal homicide definitions statistical agencies in European countries use. It is clear that there is considerable variation between countries in the type of offences included in national homicide statistics. In fact, almost no pair of countries uses the same homicide definitions. Besides information on national statistics, it is also helpful to know which offences can be found as a separate article in the criminal code. The use of this is to know to what extent the scope of the statistics can be made identical for international purposes. For example, some countries do not include infanticide in their homicide figures, but all of those countries have information about the number of infanticides. Thus, although the aggregate national statistics would differ on this subject, it is possible to make the figures comparable. Furthermore, this disaggregation should help to find out to what extent a country meets the definitions used by international agencies for their homicide index. To clarify this, we asked our respondents if some offences are considered a homicide in their country. We also

Table 2.2 Definitions of homicide in four international sources

	UN-CTS	Eurostat	Sourcebook	WHO
Attempts	Both total (including attempts) and completed separately	Exclude	Both total (including attempts) and completed separately	Exclude
Assaults leading to death	–	–	Include	–
Euthanasia	–	Include	Include	–
Assistance with suicide	–	Exclude	Exclude	Exclude
Infanticide	Include	Include	Include	–
Dangerous driving	–	Exclude	–	Exclude
Abortion	–	Exclude	–	Exclude
Unintentional homicide	Exclude	Exclude	Exclude	Include
Counting unit	Various	Victim	Offences Offenders	Body counts

checked the cross-national publication for information on this.

Assault leading to death: some sources may include these assaults because they might actually be intentional killings. A small majority of countries, 15 out of 28, report that their national statistical agencies exclude assaults leading to death from their homicide data. Only four of these countries are not able to deliver these statistics separately. This shows that those four countries are also not able to meet the homicide definitions of some international agencies, such as *The European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics*.

Euthanasia: A majority can be found for national agencies that label euthanasia as a form of homicide. Out of the 28 respondents, 20 reported that they include euthanasia in their homicide statistics. Out of the other eight agencies, three have separate data available on euthanasia.

Assistance with suicide: Over half of the national statistical agencies, 16 out of 27, exclude assistance with suicide from their national statistics of homicide. Twelve out of 28 agencies reported to have this information separately available.

Infanticide: Not only most international agencies but also most national statistical agencies include infanticide in their homicide statistics. Of our 28 respondents, only 6 stated otherwise. All of those six countries have separate information available on infanticide.

Dangerous driving: Fatal traffic accidents that result from dangerous driving are mentioned by two of the international agencies (Eurostat and WHO), that is it is stated explicitly that they do not include them in their homicide statistics. Because the UN-CTS and The European Sourcebook do not state something about dangerous driving, it is unclear whether these incidents are included or excluded. Twenty out of the 28 respondents note that their national agencies also exclude dangerous driving from the homicide

data. Nineteen national agencies should have this information separately available, eight do not.

Justified killings. One-third of the national agencies register justified killings as a homicide. Of the countries that do not label it as homicide only one has separate information available on these killings. With a total of four countries, it is the least separate registered form of homicide in this research.

Intent: Contrary to the international organisations (see above), not all national statistical agencies include non-intentional killings in their homicide statistics: only about half of the national agencies do include these in their data. As to premeditation, although there is not always a separate provision for such an offence in national law, all killings with malice aforethought are included in national statistics. See also Table 2.1, where a dark grey marking in the last column signifies that non-intentional killings are not included in the national homicide statistics, and a light grey marking means that it is unknown whether non-intentional killings are included.

Homicide Statistics

In this section we first address the reliability and the completeness of homicide statistics. For various reasons homicide statistics report not all (or too many) homicides. Three aspects are discussed here: the inclusion of attempted homicides, the possibility of missing persons having been murdered, and the cases where the cause of death is mistakenly not decided to be a homicide. All these issues are probably applicable for most if not all European countries. If they affect homicide data to the same extent, then cross-national comparisons can still be valid. There is little research, however, that tests the extent to which these items affect homicide to the same extent among different European nations, and these items do affect the completeness and reliability of homicide statistics as a whole. We conclude this section with some remarks on typically statistical decisions, like the counting unit.

Attempted Homicides

An important issue that has a considerable impact on homicide statistics is whether attempted homicides are included. Many homicide researchers are of the opinion that there is no difference (except, of course, for the consequences for the victim) between completed and attempted homicides. Indeed, sometimes the difference is negligible: the bullet misses the aorta by only a few millimetres, or the difference between attempted and completed homicide depends on the quick availability of medical assistance. So from a research point of view, it seems attractive not to make a distinction between attempted and completed homicides. However, in practice there obviously is a huge difference between the two. As an example, prior research showed (Bijleveld & Smit, 2006) that in the Netherlands the characteristics of offenders of attempted homicides were found to be markedly different from those of completed homicide offenders. Even so, some statistics include attempted homicides and some do not.

In our survey, attempted homicide is included in 22 out of 29 sets of national statistics. It is unclear whether or not they are included in the total of homicide or mentioned separately. With the exception of Portugal, all the countries that excluded this offence in their statistics have the information on attempts separately available. In one-third of the countries there is a difference between the maximum penalty for homicide and attempted homicide. In those countries, the distinction is usually used to lower the maximum sentence from life to 20 or 30 years in jail. Some of the countries without a difference in sentencing have a rule in their criminal procedures that judges must take into consideration depending upon whether or not the offence was completed. However, in other countries the judge is given wide discretionary powers on the subject of attempts. For example, the Icelandic article 42 refers to attempted offences in general. Section 1 of the article mentions that an offender shall be imposed with a lesser punishment if the felony is not completed. However, section 2 mentions the possibility for the court to impose the maximum

sentence anyway, if found necessarily. With the exception of Georgia, no country has a difference between the maximum penalty for attempted murder resulting in minor injury and such an attempt resulting in major injury. Furthermore, there is almost nowhere a difference between the maximum penalty for an attempted homicide with injury and such an attempt without injury. However, there is a variation in the maximum sentence for assaults leading to death and attempted homicide. The former is punishable by a more lenient penalty, even in countries that consider assault leading to death as a homicide, with the exceptions of Cyprus.

Mostly the national homicide statistics contain information about both completed and attempted homicides. This is only different for the prison statistics, which only contain information about the total of attempted and completed homicides in most countries. With the exception of the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Spain, all national CJS statistics make a distinction between completed and attempted offences in one stage or another. This means that most countries were able to give the information needed for the international datasets, where either only completed homicides were asked for (Eurostat and WHO), or both completed and attempted homicides (ESB and UN-CTS). See Table 2.2.

Missing Persons

The number of homicides might rise if missing persons are taken into account, because some of those may have been murdered. For example, in the Netherlands a small number of missing persons are still registered as such after 1 year. If all of these cases are in fact homicides they would increase homicide numbers by 5–7% (Smit, Bijleveld, & Van der Zee, 2001). Furthermore, it is possible that some missing persons are not even reported as missing and these persons might be more prone to homicide victimisation (e.g. fugitives or illegal immigrants). Newly born murdered children are also prone to be missed. In 2010 several cases of infanticide were mentioned

in newspapers and on the internet. It was reported that in France a mother killed eight newborn babies between 1989 and 2006 (bbb.co.uk, 2010). In the north of the Netherlands a woman confessed to killing four of her babies between 2003 and 2009 (nos.nl, 2010). Both mothers concealed their pregnancies and killed their babies shortly after birth. Therefore, aside from those directly involved no one knew about the children. Because others did not know about their existence, no one had reported them missing. In such cases, the killings that happened years before only came to light because of the (accidental) discovery of the infants' remains.

Cause of Death

The cause of death of a homicide victim might have been wrongly determined. The death may have been considered a natural death, for example, after poisoning. A second option is that the death is labelled as a suicide. A murder can be concealed by staging it as a suicide. It is also possible that a suicide is really committed but that it was forced by another. This can happen for example with honour killings. Aside from labelling a death as natural or as a homicide, it can also be falsely considered as an accident. Some criminals would properly think of this as the perfect murder. A fatal traffic accident could, for example, be the intended consequence of a sabotaged car. Very little is known about the possible distorting effect of such unrecognized homicides on homicide statistics. Estimates for Germany of the number of deaths mistakenly categorized as natural deaths have been extrapolated to the Netherlands and estimated to more than double the yearly homicide rate (Bijleveld & Smit, 2006).

Statistical Counting Rules

Counting rules also affect the comparison between nations. Aebi (2008) researched the influence of national counting rules on cross-national homicide rates in Europe. The moment

at which the data are collected is correlated with the homicide rate. Countries using input statistics (i.e. label crimes as a homicide as soon as they come to the attention of the police), which includes roughly half of European nations, generally have higher homicide rates than countries using output statistics (i.e. label crimes as homicide after police investigation or even only when there is a conviction for homicide). When the index rate for completed intentional homicide is set to 100 for countries using output statistics, the rate for countries using input statistics is 228. However, Aebi (2008) notes that it is actually not precisely known to what extent this difference (between 100 and 228) is actually due to the counting rules applied.

Both victims and cases are usually being used as the counting unit for homicide in the national statistics. Offenders are used by two countries as the solely counting unit. However, the total rises to eight because some agencies use multiple counting units. Mostly the data for the national statistics is collected after a homicide is reported to the police. Slightly less frequently the data is gathered after the investigation by the police. The former is done by 15, the latter by 12 countries. Our respondents reported 8 times another moment when homicide is counted, usually after conviction. The sum of answers exceeded our number of respondents, because some countries collect their data on homicides at more than one point in the process.

Conclusion

The differences between countries in homicide definitions, the inclusion of special homicide types, and statistical decisions are numerous. We first saw that when it comes to prototypical homicides, that is, the "regular" intentional (and premeditated) killing of one person by another, there are few differences. Even linguistic differences do not seem to stand in the way of a generally accepted definition of homicide. This does not mean that the differences were superficial. Especially the inclusion or non-inclusion of culpable (where the offender is guilty of the death

of the victim) as opposed to intentional (where the offender is not only *guilty* of the death of the victim but also had the *intent* to kill) homicides seems to pose a fairly substantial definitional hurdle. Comparing intentional acts with essentially accidents would seem unwanted from a substantive point of view. In spite of such principled objections, one might wonder whether these differences make for large incomparability in practice. It might be so that the culpable homicides generally amount to such small numbers that definitional differences do not hamper comparison in practice. Whether that is the case is an issue outside the scope of our chapter and a topic for further research.

Countries diverge more when it comes to the inclusion of special cases of homicides. There are wide differences in the extent to which deaths resulting from causes like euthanasia, (illegal) abortion, and dangerous driving are included. While this is by itself problematic from a definitional point of view, we suspect that comparison will be affected much more by these differences, as the numbers of these particular homicides may be much larger than the number of “prototypical” homicides. Again whether that is actually the case is an empirical question, but distortions do appear much more likely here.

This possible distortion applies even more to the inclusion or exclusion of attempts. In some countries, the number of attempted homicides could well be a multiple of the number of completed homicides. And while the legal definition for attempted homicide is expected to be the same (apart from the outcome) as for completed homicide, in practice there is a large difference. Whether countries or international agencies include attempts is thus an issue researchers should pay particular attention to.

Homicide victims who are never found (missing persons) or where the cause of death is mistakenly not categorized as a homicide have potentially an even greater influence on the number of homicides as measured in (inter)national statistics. It is, however, very hard to determine or even guess the quantitative effect these phenomena have.

In addition, there may be a difference in the counting unit being used. The unit may be offences, investigations, or body counts. The same holds for the particular stage in the CJS when a crime is actually labelled as a homicide: when the crime comes to the attention of the police or when the case is brought to court or results in a conviction. There also may be a difference in how multiple offences by one offender, or one offence by multiple offenders, are being handled. It is unknown to what extent these issues seriously affect national homicide estimates and to what extent they effectively distort comparisons.

Thus, a first conclusion is that in comparing homicide data cross-nationally, researchers must be careful. Blind extraction of data from websites is ill-advised. As our study showed, many statistical agencies enable the extraction of statistics that can be made similar, for instance by synchronizing whether attempts are included or not. It is remarkable that quite a number of countries do not distinguish between premeditated homicide (i.e. murder) and unpremeditated homicide. For some countries, it would therefore not be possible to extract these from national databases.

It therefore appears wise to use data that have been synchronized whenever possible. The most complete and best documented data appear to be those from the European Sourcebook, which are not only fairly complete but also provide the best options for tailoring the data to the particular needs of the study.

We end by recommending that more research be conducted, first, on an issue that we could only signal but shed little light on: the dark number in homicide. Missing persons, “perfect poisonings”, etc. may affect the homicide rate substantially. Second, it would be wise not only to study the existence of definitional and statistical differences in homicide data, but also to estimate the quantitative effects of these differences on the overall number of homicides as well. For example, we expect that countries that use output statistics (i.e. label crimes as homicide after police investigation) count fewer homicides than those using input statistics (i.e. label crimes as homicide as soon as they come to the attention of the police). The question, then, is what would be the average

difference between using input and output statistics? Only then will we be able to conduct better comparative, explanatory studies on this rare but serious offence.

Appendix: Information Sources on Homicide Definitions and Statistics

Much valuable information on definitions of homicide was already available in the UN-CTS and, in particular, in the European Sourcebook. Further information used in this chapter was derived from two questionnaires sent out to European countries, where the first questionnaire dealt mainly with definitional issues and the second one mainly with availability of homicide data in the national statistics. Sources of cross-national crime statistics were also consulted. We examined to what extent they are comparable on the subject of homicide. Both publications and internet databases of those agencies were consulted. Furthermore, other sources were used to describe the background of some of the cross-national agencies. To better gauge the evaluation of respective offences that do or do not fall under the national definition of homicide, we discuss also maximum, minimum, or mandatory punishments for these offences.

Questionnaires: Design

Contact persons in 46 countries were sent questionnaires. These included all European countries with the exception of the five very small countries: Andorra, the Holy See, Liechtenstein, Monaco, and San Marino. We made use of the contact persons who were known for the European Sourcebook, Eurostat, and UNODC. Three questionnaires were sent to the UK, where England & Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland have different Justice Systems.

A first questionnaire consisted of five questions about the respondents' country. The first question dealt with "normal" homicides. The respondent was asked to write down the different categories of "normal homicide", with their

corresponding maximum and minimum penalties. The second question was on the subject of "special" homicides, such as euthanasia, infanticide, abortion, and help with suicide. It was asked if those crimes are legally dealt with separately from normal homicide (i.e. in a different article of law), if it is always a crime, and what the penalty would be. The third question aimed to clarify the difference in the intent of the offence and the result of it. The respondents were presented with a table with 16 possible scenarios. Both result and intent were divided in four categories: no injury, minor injury, major injury, and death. Thus, the scenarios varied from no injury intended and no injury occurred, to death intended and occurred. Respondents filled in the cells with a translation of the violated national law and the corresponding minimum and maximum penalty. Of particular interest are situations where the intention of an offender differs from the outcome of the offence. Further questions covered the subject of statistics. It was asked whether figures about completed and attempted homicides are available in the police, prosecution, court, or prison statistics. Furthermore, we wanted to know if statistics are publicly available and whether the country has a dedicated dataset for homicide only.

The second questionnaire was designed after the findings of the first questionnaire had been analysed. It served to provide more in-depth information. It consisted of three questions that could usually be answered with a simple yes or no. The first question aimed to clarify the relevance of premeditation in the legal system. The length of a common life-sentence was the subject of the second question. The third question covered the statistics. We wanted to know which cases are included in the national homicide statistics, and which cases can be made separately available. The latter is useful because international sources can include other types of cases than those included by national agencies. However, both figures can only differ if the information about those cases is separately available. This is asked for different forms of homicide. Also, the counting unit and the moment of counting were asked. For the latter, we are interested

in the moment a case was labelled as “homicide”, as it can have a considerable effect on the statistics if the “homicide” labelling occurred before or after the police investigation.

Response

Contact persons in 46 countries were sent the first questionnaire. A total of 35 surveys were returned. Of those returned, all countries responded to all questions, with the exception of question 3 (about the difference in the intent of the offence and the result of it), which three countries were unable to fill in. No questionnaires were received from Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo under UNSCR1244, Latvia, Luxembourg, the FYR of Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia. The second questionnaire was sent to the 35 respondents who had returned the first one, of which 28 filled in the second questionnaire as well. With one exception, all respondents completed all questions. The seven countries that responded only to the first but not to the second questionnaire were Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Spain.

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Long-Term Historical Trends of Homicide in Europe

3

Pieter Spierenburg

Any discussion of European-wide long-term trends in homicide implies a collective enterprise. Identifying these trends means relying on the work of numerous scholars, some of whom in their turn profited from a number of local studies. Hence, this overview involves much secondary and even tertiary analysis, but it is ultimately based on painstaking research in local archives. The chronological starting point of this chapter lies roughly around 1300 for two reasons: our series of reliable homicide rates begins around that time, and before that date it is ever more difficult to distinguish between state violence and private violence. The year 1300 is a European average. For England, for example, we have some reliable thirteenth-century homicide rates, whereas for some other regions these are not available until the fifteenth century. As a rule, the present chapter will not venture beyond the year 1990, as contemporary trends are covered elsewhere in this volume.

The trends to be discussed can be divided into quantitative and qualitative ones. We know, for example, that homicide between intimates makes up an increasing share of all homicides since the middle ages. But we also know that around the sixteenth century many wife murders originated because a husband felt he was exercising his right of punishment, which then regrettably got out of hand. By contrast, in modern times a large

proportion of spouse murders result from marital tension of a more psychological nature. Obviously, a shift has taken place in between. Although we might even try to quantify that shift, the data in question result from a number of studies covering different regions and periods, whose cases cannot simply be added together. Thus the distinction between quantitative and qualitative trends is one of degree, not absolute. At the very quantitative end is the study of the overall incidence of homicide, whose sources and methods of construction are discussed below. At the other end of the continuum is the reflection about broad changes over time in the character of murder. Examples include the rise and demise of the formal duel and the emergence of serial killing. These broad changes, usually affecting all of Europe, can hardly be described in terms of more or less of something. Instead of “trend,” historians often use the word “development.” My alternation between these two terms is for stylistic reasons only and does not imply a difference in meaning. More recently, Pridemore (2007; see also Gruenewald & Pridemore, 2009) has referred to these qualitative changes in the nature of the homicide event as a “criminological transition,” which he borrows from the broader literature on the “demographic transition.”

We know very little about homicide in Eastern Europe before modern times, which sets a geographic limit to the discussion of long-term developments. In this chapter, “Europe” roughly means West of the former Iron Curtain. Within that area, the evidence is most detailed for

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England, France, Scandinavia, the Low Countries, Germany, and Italy.

Sources

The main type of source for quantitative study consists of body inspection reports. This is used here as a general term for various forms of registration of all suspect dead bodies found in a locality. To enable the construction of an annual rate, the register should of course be dated. Suspect corpses usually include those whose cause of death was suicide, an accident, or natural. Hence the document must either contain the judgment of contemporaries about whether or not the cause was murder or allow the modern investigator to draw a reliable conclusion. Body inspection reports vary in structure according to country and over time. England used a specific genre of coroner's inquests, often containing a larger dossier of information. Coroner's records are available from the thirteenth century onward. On the Continent, in the middle ages, we often have only simple lists of murders known to have occurred. In the Netherlands, from the sixteenth century onward, the documentation consists of literal inspections, done originally by judicial authorities and later by medical professionals who usually performed an autopsy.

For much of European history, body inspection reports are the sole reliable source for estimating the overall incidence of homicide. Although they exclude cases in which a victim's body was successfully hidden, all historians agree that the number of such cases must have been negligible. Prosecution rates, on the other hand, refer only to cases in which the killer was identified and brought to trial and therefore underestimate the number of murders. More importantly, they underestimate this number by an unknown factor that is likely to have varied over time. A rise or decline in prosecution rates, therefore, may or may not indicate a rise or decline in real murder. The main reasons why killing remained unprosecuted were either because the incident was handled privately or because the killer escaped prosecution through flight or anonymity. Over

time the first factor gave way to the second. In small medieval communities, people knew what had happened but most conflicts were settled between the victim's and the perpetrator's families (at times these settlements were also registered, but seldom systematically). As towns grew in size, the possibility for perpetrators to remain anonymous and flee increased, while supra-local cooperation in the detection of killers remained relatively undeveloped.

Body inspection reports yield victimization rates, which make them comparable to the rates calculated from modern medical statistics. More generally, all systematic information which these reports provide concerns, with one exception, the victims only. Next to the fact of a murder having been committed, there is at least one other element always present: the victim's sex. Sometimes body inspection reports list the victim's approximate age. As race was hardly a factor in the European past, the documents rarely reveal the victim's skin color. The exception to solely victim information refers to the type of injury suffered by the victim. This often allows the investigator to draw a conclusion about the murder weapon, which can be considered as primarily an event characteristic.

National crime statistics, available from the early nineteenth century onward, have been used also for the study of homicide, even though they are based as a rule on prosecutions only. For most European countries, medical statistics of the causes of death are not available until the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century, except for Sweden where they start as early as 1754 (Lindström, 2009: 257). Newspapers constitute another good source for quantitative study, but they have been used mainly by American historians.

Court records, although a bad source for establishing the incidence of homicide, are not entirely useless for quantitative study. If the number of manslaughter and murder trials examined is large enough, these trials can be considered as a sample of all homicides committed in the place and period studied. That sample allows conclusions about the relative prevalence of one type of murder compared to another. However, the

sample will rarely be fully representative. During the period when private settlements were common, perpetrators without firm roots in the community certainly were overrepresented among prosecuted killers. Since prosecuted cases also were relatively few then, they should not be used for quantitative study until the seventeenth century or so. From then on (until the rise of organized crime) the killer's flight is the major factor preventing prosecution and every investigator should carefully assess the chances that this produces a systematic bias in the sample. The principal advantage of trial records for quantitative study is that they include information about the perpetrators. Hence it is possible to count (changes in) victim-offender relationships. Various authors categorize them differently, but it is not uncommon to group them into the three broad categories of strangers, acquaintances, and intimates (before the twentieth century, during which the category of partner in crime rose in prominence).

The major sources used for qualitative analyses of the character of homicidal violence vary per period of European history. The relative scarcity of prosecutions in the middle ages causes medievalists to rely in large part on documents other than trial records. Narrative sources such as family chronicles are important for the earliest centuries examined here. Notably, they contain stories of revenge and vendetta. Medieval charters and urban and national legislation yield additional information. Although reconciliations and peace settlements were private in principle, toward the end of the middle ages the authorities increasingly meddled with these practices. This caused them to be registered and the documents often provide contextual information about murders and feuding. For the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in particular, petitions for pardon are valuable sources revealing, if not the reality, the representation of homicide. From about 1600, dossiers of criminal trials are a prominent source for the qualitative study of lethal violence and they remain so today. For the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they are the principal source, supplemented by such documents as broadsides, dueling manuals, and ecclesiastical

writings. After 1800, newspapers and magazines become increasingly important. The works of the first few generations of criminologists, finally, can now be used as a historical source.

Methodological Limitations of These Sources

Nearly all problems of method to be reviewed in this section are specific for the study of long-term trends, but one appears more basic. Instead of presenting counts, homicide must be standardized relative to the population of the area studied. Like criminologists, historians are accustomed to murder rates per 100,000 residents. Schwerhoff (1991) is one of the few historians objecting to this custom or at least expressing doubt. He suggests that today a town with 50,000 inhabitants is considered a "sleepy provincial town," whereas it had the status of a metropolis in the middle ages (Schwerhoff, 1991: 286). As I have commented, it is highly significant that nowadays so many people can live together peacefully while in the middle ages every neighborhood in a town of that size was likely to have direct experience with killing (Spierenburg, 2001: 93). Indeed, no scholar appears to have taken up Schwerhoff's suggestion of not (always) counting homicides per 100,000.

A more serious problem lies not in the populousness of modern towns but in the small size of many past communities. Obviously, in a town of 5,000 inhabitants a single homicide increases the rate by a factor of 20. Most scholars agree that, for a meaningful calculation of homicide rates, the area studied must be large enough, but there is no agreement about the threshold. Only a few researchers advocate the most rigorous standard, which prohibits the rate to exceed the absolute number, hence at least 100,000 inhabitants. That standard would oblige us to discard most urban homicide rates before the nineteenth century. The American historian Robert R. Dykstra (2009) is one of the fiercest critics of rates calculated for small-size communities. He focuses on the nineteenth-century American West, for some of whose cattle and mining towns his objections are

certainly valid, but he wants to extend his argument to the European middle ages. In the latter case, however, the argument from consistency applies. Medieval homicide rates, when based on body inspection reports, are consistently high in geographically distant places over several centuries. This allows us to add them up as it were. It is highly unlikely that all these high rates are the outcome of chance variations. Additionally, scholars may list rates for individual small communities, but only when these rates represent an average over a very long period. For example, when calculated per decade, homicide rates in the Swedish town of Arboga (a few thousand inhabitants) fluctuate between 10 and 60, which does not tell us much; only the average of 23 between 1452 and 1543 is meaningful (compare Österberg (1996: 44) and Spierenburg (2008: 16)).

In counting the number of homicides the special case of infanticide presents a further problem. From a modern point of view the entire subject may seem insignificant, but in the past infanticides often were frequent. The term needs to be delineated exactly. Almost all historians define infanticide as the killing of newborn babies, during or shortly after birth, by or at the instigation of the mother. Some scholars prefer the term neonaticide for this, but that word appears overly technical. Only when defined in this restrictive manner does infanticide constitute a special case. Although killing a baby is clearly a form of murder, there is no fight, anger, or aggression in play. The motive is nearly always fear of the consequences of letting the child live. Therefore, most historians acknowledge that infanticide counts as an offense separate from (non-infant) homicide. Consequently, they reserve separate graphs for the incidence of infanticide. It should be added that reliable counts are few. For this offense even more than for homicide, prosecution rates considerably underestimate the real number. Registers of all dead babies found have been preserved in only a few cases.

The problem of how to determine the influence of life-saving activities on the homicide level looms large for research that covers the long term. While a question of method, it is bound up with considerations of a more theoretical nature.

If investigators were merely curious to know how many people died after an aggressive action by another person, the state of medicine would be irrelevant. Usually, however, the incidence of homicide is taken as an indicator for the prevalence of a broader spectrum of serious violence in a particular society. Obviously, that spectrum includes all cases in which a victim is dangerously injured but survives with wound care. For the comparability of homicide figures over time, it would be ideal if, among all serious attacks, the proportion of those leading to the death of a victim is constant over time, which of course is not. In particular, the survival chances for injured victims today are much higher than they were a few centuries ago. Can we estimate what proportion of a given set of homicide victims in the past might have been saved if modern medical care had been available to them? Monkkonen (2001) proposed to take the time between injury and death as an indicator: the longer it was, the more likely that, in modern circumstances, the victim would have been saved. Monkkonen found the information on the time between injury and death in nineteenth-century dossiers from New York, but in the European past this was often not or imprecisely registered. We do have a crude measure for early eighteenth-century Amsterdam, where 24% of homicide victims had been visited for the inspection of their dangerous wounds on a day prior to their death (Spierenburg, 1996: 87–88).

At all times, three factors are crucial in determining an injured victim's chances of survival: the standard of medical knowledge and skill (including that of lay practitioners), the availability of surgeons or doctors and hospitals, and the speed with which assistance agencies can be alerted. The literature on past homicide, however, contains almost no discussion of these factors. As far as can be ascertained presently, there was little change before the nineteenth century. When a person had been stabbed in early modern Amsterdam, for example, a surgeon put a bandage on his wound(s) hoping that the bleeding would stop. If it did, the wound might still become infected and again nothing much could be done. The infection, moreover, could very well be the

result of the surgeon's intervention. Until at least the late-eighteenth century it hardly mattered for an injured victim's chances whether he received curative care or not (personal information from Mart van Lieburg). Thus, all three factors did not begin to lower the homicide rate until the greater part of the long-term decline in murder (see below) had already occurred. Consequently, it is impossible to attribute this decline to an increase in survival chances. Even the historically lowest level of homicide in the 1950s and 1960s owes little to improved chances, because in these decades relatively few homicide victims died of either stabbing or gunshot wounds (Spierenburg, 2008: 204).

Finally, as Monkkonen notes, the influence of wound care on the homicide rate is far from straightforward. This influence operates most directly in cases of "involuntary" manslaughter, which admittedly were numerous in the past. Intentional killings, on the other hand, were certainly not infrequent, with revenge murder as the most notorious example. A medieval avenger who left his victim with one or two seriously bleeding wounds could be sure that his mission was accomplished. If we imagine a swift ambulance at the spot and a time machine taking the patient to a modern hospital, we might just as well imagine the attacker, knowing about this possibility, to have acted more drastically. Nowadays, intentional killings occur, among others, in the world of organized crime. A few reputed bosses from the Dutch underworld have been shot at, recovered, and then fatally shot a year or so later.

Medical expertise equally plays a role in the special case of poisoning. Some historians believe that this type of killing forms an exception to the agreed-upon reliability of body inspection reports as a basis for homicide counts. Often this belief is coupled with the supposition that poisoning was rather frequent in the past. In particular, oppressed women allegedly used this method to get rid of their abusive husbands. In most of these cases, so the supposition continues, family and neighbors had few suspicions, so that no investigation took place. However, historical research done so far into cases of poisoning that

were reported shows little support for these suppositions. Most of the killers in question used household poison meant for eradicating vermin, whose symptoms were widely known. As several case studies show, neighbors were usually alert, their attention facilitated by the relative lack of privacy in early modern households. Autopsies on suspected poison victims were performed as early as the seventeenth century. Finally, even in modern times with better detection methods available and physicians routinely investigating the cause of any death, poisoning remains a minority method of killing. A scenario that has (mainly female) poisoners massively killing with premeditation for centuries, conveniently stopping with this practice when fears for discovery became greater, is highly unlikely.

Not surprisingly, qualitative research entails fewer methodological problems, but these are not absent from it. The most basic problem is common to criminal investigations in the past and today, despite the present availability of such devices as lie detectors and DNA tests: how do we know whether defendants and witnesses are telling the truth? The incongruence of perpetrators' stories with reality has been posited especially for the pardon petitions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These all contain stereotypical tales of utter provocation, which has led Davis (1987) to label them "fiction in the archives." Vrolijk (2001: 307–340), on the other hand, who compared petitions with the dossiers of their ratifications in court, concluded that there is no reason for systematic distrust of the offenders' stories. Doubts have also been expressed with respect to early modern court records, concerning defendants' evasive replies, witnesses' perceptions, and magistrates' agendas. The latter, moreover, might have recourse to torture. Faced with the ensuing problems of verification, historians vary in the degree of distrust they think necessary. For example, Nolde (2003) stresses that early modern magistrates were convinced that few women would kill their husbands just by themselves. She therefore believes that in most cases of husband murder, tried by the *Parlement* of Paris, in which male accomplices were mentioned this resulted

from pressure by the judges to come up with one. If a male helper seemed present indeed and he was unrelated to the wife, observers assumed that he was her lover, which Nolde equally denounces as a stereotype of the time. However, the frequency with which lovers appeared as accomplices of husband murderers in various parts of early modern Europe makes it unlikely that this accusation is solely due to contemporary beliefs.

Thus, interpretations depend on a scholar's conviction. The most skeptical historians tend to consider all murder stories as representing images or at least stereotypically stylized versions of reality. Others are convinced that by careful scrutiny and critical and informed reading researchers are able to construct an approximate picture of what actually happened. In fact, it is often possible to analyze both fiction and reality in the same dossier. As an example, let us consider an Amsterdam homicide in 1736. It started with a quarrel between a diamond cutter and a sailor in a tavern late at night, but the eventual victim was a member of the tavern's personnel who had tried to chase the former away. The landlord was already in bed, but his wife managed twice to persuade the sailor not to respond to the challenge of the diamond cutter who had gone outside for a fight. In between, the two men had made peace by drinking together. At the second challenge the landlord woke up and as he entered the bar room, the sailor reproached him for being no master in his own house. The tavern's fiddler then went out with a stick in order to chase away the diamond cutter who stood ready for a knife fight with the sailor. That is, two neighbors and a customer testified that only the fiddler had gone outside, which caused him to be fatally stabbed in the belly. By contrast, the landlord declared that he himself had confronted the diamond cutter with three of his men, all armed with sticks. The modern researcher can easily believe the three congruent witnesses, whereas the landlord's testimony was a story of masculine determination that he made up in order to convince himself that he was indeed the master of his house and to deny that he had let his fiddler die alone (Spierenburg, 2008: 92).

Long-Term European Homicide Trends

In summarizing the main results of the research on European homicide over the long term let me start again with quantitative developments. Scholars are enormously indebted to Manuel Eisner (2001, 2003), who has collected figures from publications throughout Europe and put them into a data base. The long-term graph of homicide presented here is based for the most part on this work. Yet, it should be emphasized that our picture is far from complete. At the very least, new research is bound to improve our view of the details of and varieties within this overall picture.

Figure 3.1 unequivocally shows the enormous decline of homicide in Europe until the mid-twentieth century. It is so overwhelming that the rise of about 50% from c. 1970 to the mid-1990s is hardly visible here. Note that this highly aggregated graph presents averages per century: 1450 stands for the entire fifteenth century, 1550 for the sixteenth, etc. Moreover, in line with the methodological requirement of avoiding considering brief periods for the middle ages (see discussion above), all medieval homicide rates have been combined into one average.

Recently, Roth (2009) challenged the conclusion of a long-term decline in homicide, in particular for America but for Europe as well. For Europe, however, his argument – which has murder merely fluctuating with trust in government – is as yet fragmentary and unpersuasive. To the contrary, future research may show the decline to have been even steeper. The counts used for constructing Fig. 3.1 possibly include some that are based on prosecution rates, although that may be the case almost throughout the period, up to the national statistics of the mid-nineteenth century. Despite such minor deficiencies, it is clear that the overwhelming part of the long-term decline took place during the early modern period. Although the trend is common to all European regions for which we have data, Fig. 3.2 reveals that there are considerable differences between these regions in the level of homicide at any point

Fig. 3.1 The long-term decline of homicide in Europe (rates are per 100,000 residents per century). *Sources:* Eisner (2001, 2003), Monkkonen (2006)

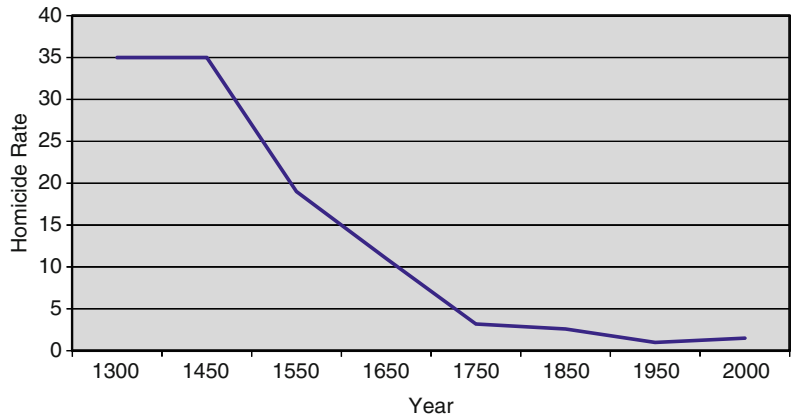
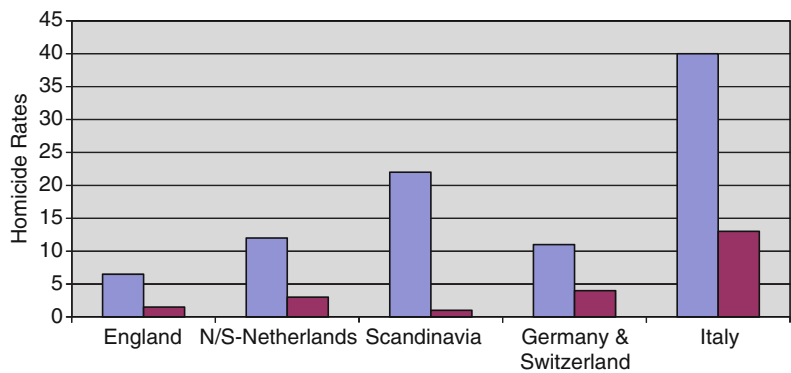


Fig. 3.2 Annual average of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in five European regions around 1600 and around 1800. *Source:* Eisner (2001, 2003)



in time. That becomes clear when we examine them separately during the two centuries with the steepest decline.

The five regions listed are the ones distinguished by Eisner, for which sufficient data are available from the middle ages onward. It is not until after 1800 that the geographic spectrum of our knowledge about the incidence of homicide starts to broaden. Between 1600 and 1800 England and Italy witnessed a decline of similar proportions, but the beginning and end levels were markedly different. Indeed, in the second half of the sixteenth century the English counties of Essex (nearly 7) and Kent (nearly 5) had the lowest of the reliable homicide rates found so far, whereas Rome (47.3) was Europe’s murder capital. Note that Scandinavia had the lowest end level, but this region’s figure is influenced disproportionately by Swedish national statistics that, although based on causes of death, leave

some doubt about their comprehensiveness in the early years. Figures from outside these five regions are fragmentary. Madrid’s homicide rate, for example, peaked around 15 between 1650 and 1720 and dropped to below five in the second half of the eighteenth century. The rates in rural Cantabria, on the other hand, were surprisingly low (1.2–1.8) throughout the period 1660–1830. France, a well-researched country when it comes to qualitative evidence about violence, is nearly a blank spot with respect to its quantitative history before the statistical age. The only reliable homicide rates available so far are for Haute Auvergne (about 15 between 1587 and 1664) and Paris (about 2 between 1692 and 1791).

The pan-European average during the nineteenth century was a little lower still than in the eighteenth, but the most conspicuous feature of homicide after 1800 was the clear distinction between an inner and outer zone of Europe.

The outer zone constituted a ring from Ireland to the Mediterranean, over the Balkans, and Eastern Europe to Finland. Ireland though belonged to this zone only at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this ring of peripheral countries, murder remained relatively frequent throughout the nineteenth century. That was the case in Italy, for example, where additionally homicide rates always were higher the more one went southward. Those of Rome stood between 10 and 12 from the 1850s to the 1880s, around 8 until 1910, and just under 5 on the eve of the Great War. Finland had partaken of the common Scandinavian development of declining homicide in the early modern period, but it began to deviate from this path. Homicide rates went up from about 2 in the eighteenth century to about 3 in the nineteenth, and they rose to even higher levels during much of the twentieth century. Regional homicide rates in European Russia around 1910 fluctuated between 3.2 and 18.6 with a mean of 7.9 (Stickley & Pridemore, 2007: 84). Figures within the inner zone were relatively uniform compared to previous centuries, but fluctuations occurred. Several countries witnessed a temporary rise in the years preceding the Great War.

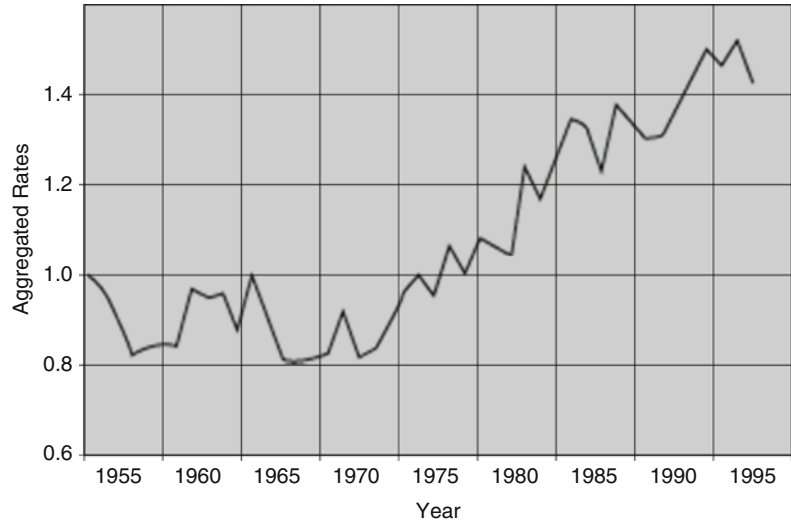
The two world wars of the twentieth century certainly had an impact on the incidence of homicide, but it was short-lived. Peaks can be observed during their later years and in their aftermath. In each case, however, a very quick return to pre-war levels occurred, despite contemporary fears of brutalization. In fact, the 1950s had the lowest homicide rates ever in nearly all European countries and in many of them this low level continued into the 1960s (rates mentioned thus far, except for Russia, in Spierenburg, 2008: 70–71, 106–107, 167–169, 199–203). Then the centuries-long trend of decline started to reverse.

Figure 3.3 presents the combined rates for Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, England, Belgium, and France. Except for the inclusion of the latter country, the figure covers roughly the same regions for which medieval and early modern data are available. This makes it comparable to the earlier figures. Especially since the proportion of guns and knives among murder weapons has increased since 1970, the upward trend in

homicide rates took place in spite of a downward effect of improvement in medical care. The inherent major trend reversal is accompanied by at least two others. First, after one or two centuries of higher levels in the countryside (see Kaylen, 2012), since the 1970s murder and assault have become urban phenomena. From then until today homicide concentrates in cities, especially in metropolitan areas, which usually have rates much above the national average. Second, there was a complete reversal of the age-old pattern by which the rates were lowest in England and highest in Southern Europe. Italy and Spain hovered around the mean rise of about 50%, whereas homicide rates more than doubled in England and tripled in Ireland between 1970 and 2000. Rome, once Europe's leader in murder rates, came to rank in the lower echelon of the national capitals (Spierenburg, 2008: 208–212). Common again to many European countries is the stabilization or even decrease of homicide rates since the mid-1990s, which is discussed elsewhere in this volume.

The quantitative trends discussed so far concern homicides of all kind. Nevertheless, the secular decline of homicide was due in large part to a decrease in male-on-male violence. To put it differently, whenever and wherever homicide rates are high, this high level results nearly always from a prevalence of fighting among men. That conclusion can be drawn with certainty from the combined evidence of body inspection reports, trial records, and still other sources. For example, the proportion of female victims in body inspection reports usually correlates negatively over time with the overall incidence of homicide. Evidence that includes perpetrator characteristics allows us to identify the killer-victim relationship. That relationship can be viewed from many angles, such as social stratum or race, but in the historical literature on Europe those of gender and the degree of intimacy stand out. These two perspectives are distinct but obviously related. Male-on-male violence takes place overwhelmingly among strangers and secondarily among acquaintances. Intimate violence involves a proportionately larger share of women, especially as victims but also as perpetrators. Note that the

Fig. 3.3 Homicide rates, 1950–1995, per 100,000 residents in seven European countries: Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, England, Belgium, and France.
Source: Presentation by Helmut Thome, based on data from Manuel Eisner, at the seminar on violence, Ferrara, September 2003



victim–offender relationship based on degree of intimacy is the only type where both parties necessarily belong to the same category.

Yet few quantitative studies explicitly distinguish the four possible types of killer–victim relationship from the gender perspective. That means, among other things, we lack a clear picture of trends in the incidence of male-on-female violence. We have to infer the gender relationship from figures about perpetrators. These show women always to have been considerably less prone to murder than men. The proportion of female killers is surprisingly constant over time, hovering around 10%. Consequently, when taken together, the two categories of female-on-female and female-on-male lethal violence have proportionately partaken of the overall decline in homicide rates. We are ignorant, however, about possible fluctuations in their mutual ratio.

From the perspective of the degree of intimacy we can distinguish, as already mentioned, between strangers, acquaintances, and intimates. Some scholars list the latter relationship under the heading of family violence. The two labels largely overlap, but there is a difference of nuance. The family category can include cousins or aunts with whom a person has little contact, whereas the intimate category should include all kind of partners, also same-sex ones, who are not official spouses. Historical developments in this sphere

are unmistakable. The proportion of intimate murder victims has steadily increased from the middle ages until modern times. Next to the great decline in the overall rates, this is the second important long-term trend in homicide. Data from English, Dutch, and German studies show that until the sixteenth century the percentage of intimate homicide victims was well under 10, with 5 as the median. It rose to about 16 in the seventeenth century, 30 in the eighteenth, while 40 or more was common after 1800.

We should not mistake proportion for absolute number though. The share of intimate homicide increased dramatically, but since the overall rates declined by a much larger factor, the rate of intimate victimization declined as well. A rough estimate, based on a combination of all available European data, comes at 2 homicides on intimates per 100,000 residents in the middle ages and 0.5 after 1800. Thus, it will not do to consider intimate homicide simply as a kind of residual in society, impervious to change. It is true that, whenever and wherever homicide rates are high, male-on-male fighting largely accounts for it. It is not true that the only change implied in the long-term decline of homicide was the drastic reduction of male-on-male fighting, causing the proportion of intimate victims to increase automatically. Scripts of intimate victimization changed as well.

That is visible most clearly in the case of spouse murder. Killing one's wife or husband can be considered as the ultimate degree of domestic violence. As is well known, it was not until recent times that the effort to prevent, detect, and punish domestic violence has intensified. By contrast, around the sixteenth century it was widely accepted that men could correct their wives with a beating, while weak husbands were ridiculed with the mocking ritual of *charivari*. Church institutions often meddled with marital conflict though, attempting to reconcile spouses. When spousal conflict escalated into murder, this was certainly not accepted and usually prosecuted. However, the type of spousal murder handled by courts in the sixteenth century reflected the hierarchical structure of the family and society generally. Men who had killed their wives often claimed, whether or not viewing this as a mitigating circumstance, that they had given their wives legitimate punishment but that this unfortunately got out of hand. Of course the question of reality vs. fabricated story applies here, but in both cases the testimony reflects society's patriarchal structure. The "punishment" that preceded the killing usually had been meted out on numerous occasions, with the killing as its culmination. Conversely, when a woman had killed her husband, this was in many cases the ultimate remedy after suffering long-time abuse, hence equally hierarchy-related. In England husband murder was suggestively termed petty treason.

The punishment-related type of spousal murder was frequent throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and started to decline rapidly during the eighteenth. While this conclusion is based on a number of studies in various European countries, the precise trajectory of changes in the character of spousal murder surely needs further scrutiny. Alongside the punishment-related type, an anger-related type can be distinguished. This involved more sudden outbursts in quarrels that were less clearly a function of patriarchal customs. Anger-related killing usually was husband-on-wife and its character resembled, more closely than other types, that of ordinary, male-on-male violence. A third type of spousal murder can be termed tension-related. This form

of killing has to do with tensions within the affective relationship of a couple, which characteristically, after having been submerged for a long time, lead to sudden eruptions. Becoming visible in the late eighteenth century, this type was associated with the rise of sentimentalism and romanticism. The elimination of a rival in love can be included in this category because, although the victim is not an intimate, the entire context is intimacy-related. Again it should be stressed that quantitative developments with respect to the three types of spousal murder should be specified in future research, but it appears that a great historical shift took place from punishment-related to tension-related killing. In modern times marital tension and divorce equally lead to the killing of children, of course also implying intimate victimization.

The killing of babies just after birth, not a pressing social problem in Europe today, perfectly illustrates how social circumstances can shape a crime. The overwhelming majority of perpetrators were single mothers, afraid of the consequences of having a bastard child. Hence, the incidence of infanticide correlates first of all with the degree of concern over extramarital sex. It should be added that in spite of this, the number of illegitimate births far exceeded that of infanticides. That is not surprising, as committing this crime implied crossing a moral threshold that was strongly embedded in the society. Female honor played its part, but the evidence suggests that the risk of poverty was the most forceful trigger in crossing that moral threshold. Infanticide was committed disproportionately by domestic servants, who faced instant dismissal when their masters discovered that they were pregnant or had given birth. The frequency of infanticide started to increase during the sixteenth century under the influence of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, at the exact moment when the first decreases in homicide were visible. Levels of infanticide continued to be high throughout the early modern period and in many places well into the nineteenth century. Thus, their high level neatly outlasted that of homicide. During several decades in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Amsterdam infanticide

rate outnumbered the city's homicide rate. The moral and legal condemnation of infanticide started to wane earlier than its actual incidence. By the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries romantic writers laid the blame on male "seducers," and after 1800 courts and juries were increasingly prepared to view infanticide as a symptom of insanity and to grant diminished responsibility.

As part of the long-term historical development, suicide needs some discussion. First, up to the seventeenth century it counted as a crime punishable by various forms of ignominious treatment of the corpse. Second, some homicides were indirect suicides. The perpetrators, often women, murdered someone's child with the aim of being executed. They had religious scruples against killing themselves that, unlike with murder, would give them no time to repent. These indirect suicides have been attested especially for Scandinavia and Northern Germany from the seventeenth century to the early nineteenth. Figures for direct suicide, according to the best estimate, went up in the sixteenth century and rose further since then. Historically, the negative correlation is manifest and strong, with the homicide-suicide ratio estimated at 20:1 in the middle ages and the reverse in modern times. Once more, exceptions occurred and more-detailed research is necessary.

The scope of this chapter allows no more than a cursory treatment of the various qualitative developments visible in the long history of murder since the middle ages (see Spierenburg (2008) for elaboration). That story begins with the vendetta and its gradual decline. The prevalence of feuding in the middle ages was directly related to the period's low level of monopolization of force. Revenge was legitimate up to a point. Urban governments and even kings tried to reduce feuding not by forbidding but by regulating it. They decreed, for example, that a feud should be officially announced. Urban patricians themselves belonged to families that might be enmeshed in violent conflict. Next to attempts to regulate feuding, the secular authorities promoted private reconciliation, granting immunity from prosecution to a killer if he and his kinsmen were

prepared to make peace with the victim's relatives. Consequently, prosecutions for homicide were few. The killing of a man was always felt as a wrong suffered by his relatives, but it counted largely as a private matter to be handled by either revenge or reconciliation. Note that this applied only to honorable homicide committed in the course of a quarrel, not to devious murder or homicide committed in the course of a robbery. No doubt, the prevalence of revenge and feuding contributed much to the high medieval homicide rates, but this is hard to quantify.

Originally, then, homicide was no crime. Its gradual criminalization took place from the late-fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth. During its first phase, prosecution became ever more common but pardons, from kings or a few other great lords, were liberally granted. The function of the reconciliation ceremony changed from a voluntary act to serving as a precondition for pardon. Social pressure, in particular from the churches, for the prosecution and conviction of all manslaughterers grew. Next, both pardons and reconciliations decreased in frequency, becoming rare on average by the mid-seventeenth century. Simultaneously, criteria for self-defense were tightened, which sealed the criminalization of homicide.

By that time the duel, a stylized form of fighting over a breach of honor, had been known for over a century. The official duel pitted one man against another after a written challenge by the insulted party. However, during the first 100 years or so of its existence the one-on-one principle was often violated by the seconds joining in the fight. During this period, moreover, it was not uncommon that duelists handled a dagger alongside the sword. From the mid-seventeenth century onward duels were really stylized, fought by the protagonists alone with rapiers or pistols. Elite men, mainly aristocrats and military officers, regarded this custom as an exception to the criminalization of homicide. They denied that honor could be involved in physical altercations within all other social strata. The official duel persisted tenaciously, as a counter-tendency to the pacification of the elites and the spiritualization of honor. From the Napoleonic period

until the First World War, bourgeois men and academics engaged in dueling too. Duels did become ever less violent. In the nineteenth century they were usually, but not always, fought “at first blood.”

The notion of a fair fight was not restricted to the upper classes. Although court records disclose a fair amount of unfair fights, they do reveal the existence of a popular duel. It was often fought with knives, after just a verbal challenge and directly at the spot. In this case too, the purpose was usually to draw blood, not to kill, but some popular duels equally resulted in fatalities. Socially in between elite and popular duelists were men who found it beneath their dignity to fight with knives but who were often obliged to defend themselves with a stick. Thus, the early modern period was characterized by a social differentiation of male fighting. In the nineteenth century, lower-class violence more often involved fist fights, but knife fighting survived in Europe’s outer zone where higher homicide rates prevailed.

The greater marginality of homicide from the nineteenth century onward meant that ordinary people’s image of killing became more sinister. This sinister image was reinforced by a very real phenomenon, that of serial killing. Serial murder should be distinguished from both mass murder and multiple murder. Whereas the difference with mass murder such as colonial slaughter or the Holocaust is plain, the other distinction may need some explanation. Multiple murder refers to the bare fact of the same perpetrator making various victims, which applied among others to some medieval avengers. Multiple killers of a later period sought to gain their victims’ possessions, their insurance payment, or to sell their bodies to anatomists. With serial killers the sexual or lust component is more prominent than the motive of material profit, and they usually select one single type of preferred victim. The evidence so far indicates that serial murder did not emerge on the European scene until the mid-nineteenth century. A simple explanation for that fact takes into account that this offense was simply impossible to commit in earlier times, when neighbors continually spied on each other and there was

little room for privacy. Since the late-nineteenth century serial killers have inculcated horror into and drawn the fascination of many as well as the admiration of some.

Twentieth-century developments began with the gradual crystallization of an underworld and the increasing visibility of juvenile delinquency. More recently, they include the rise of a drug scene, the growth and internationalization of organized crime, and the ethnic diversification of urban neighborhoods. All three phenomena have probably contributed to the rise in homicide rates from about 1970, but it is insufficiently known in what way and to what extent.

This chapter has not ventured much into theory. In fact, many historians who deal with just a particular period or theme regarding homicide and violence do not embrace grand theory. They offer interpretations and partial explanations. On the other hand, most scholars examining the long-term decline of homicide believe that it confirms Norbert Elias’ (2000) theory of civilizing processes. Randolph Roth’s recent challenge to this theory remains largely confined to American history. Elias’ work is well suited to explain nearly all long-term developments with respect to violence in European history, especially when combined with anthropological reflections about honor.

Remaining Questions

The nature of the remaining questions follows from the uncertainties, deficiencies, and relative lack of research signaled in the previous sections. The most important lacuna concerns our lack of knowledge of the long-term development (including the medieval and early modern periods) of homicide in Eastern Europe. To remedy that situation requires archival research in Hungarian, Russian, Rumanian archives, and so on. Hence scholars from those countries or at least with the language skills in question should be persuaded to start historical homicide research. More research is needed as well for Spain and France, but in the latter country only with respect to trends in homicide rates. Among other things,

a better knowledge of the Spanish and French long-term trends would be a great help in establishing the relative weight of state building vs. urbanization as an explanatory factor in the early modern decline of homicide.

Even the quantitative evidence about which scholars are relatively sure might be re-examined. One more check in order to eliminate data points based on unreliable sources would be useful. In particular, the homicide rates that are now based on nineteenth-century national statistics should be refined by juxtaposition with local and regional studies based on body inspection reports and newspapers. Next, homicide researchers should make contact with medical historians in order to determine more precisely the influence of medical intervention, from the early modern period to the twenty-first century, on the survival chances of injured victims and hence on homicide rates.

Next to extending and refining our knowledge of the incidence of homicide, several other research enterprises would be desirable. They include a systematic study of killer–victim relationships from the gender perspective, as opposed to the degree of intimacy perspective. We would like to know more precisely about the trajectories of male-on-female, female-on-male, and female-on-female violence. In the intimate sphere, the great historical shift from hierarchy-related spouse murder to tension-related spouse murder can as yet have the status of a plausible hypothesis only. In this area, too, more systematic studies covering various periods and parts of Europe are needed.

Two other useful enterprises can be singled out, one for the long term and the other for the short term. First, it would be good if we had a pan-European graph with estimates of suicide rates from the middle ages to the present. Second, we need greater insight into the qualitative elements in (and hence the causes of) the rise in homicide from about 1970 to the mid-1990s. This recent trend has been studied disproportionately at the aggregate level, so that smaller-scale but in-depth studies are called for.

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Contemporary Differences in Rates and Trends of Homicide Among European Nations

4

Ineke Haen Marshall and Diana L. Summers

Introduction

We are fortunate to be able to draw from a large body of work when writing about contemporary rates and trends in homicide in Europe (1990–2008). Speculating about violent crime in its many forms has been a popular preoccupation of many politicians, scholars, and journalists for a long time. Such speculations are virtually impossible without local and national crime statistics. Compiling national crime statistics – first pioneered in 1825 France – by now is routine practice in many countries, particularly in prosperous and developed countries such as Canada, the United States, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and many European countries. Here, government statistics (i.e., police, court, and prison data) provide the basis for annual, often much-publicized statements about whether “the violent crime problem” is getting better or worse. This is in spite of the extensive body of theoretical and methodological work which cautions against taking such statistical data (collected for purposes other than measuring crime) at its face value (Coleman & Moynihan, 1996; Maguire, 2007). As Black argued, in his now famous article on the social production of crime rates (1970), official crime statistics should be viewed primarily as a measure of police activity rather than a measure

of crime. These well-documented measurement problems are of course exacerbated when we use criminal justice data to *compare nations*. The problems of comparing crime rates between nations have been discussed extensively (see for example, Bennett, 2010; Bennett & Lynch, 1990; Gartner, 1995; Howard, Newman, & Pridemore, 2000). Among the most frequently mentioned problems are national differences in legal definitions, different criminal justice and legal systems, varying recording practices, cultural differences in reporting behavior, and missing data (Aebi et al., 2010; Heitmeyer & Hagan, 2003; Marshall & Block, 2004). That is the bad news. The good news is that the problems related to crime statistics are much less pronounced when focusing on *homicide rates*.

International Homicide Statistics

Most researchers agree that among all internationally available crime data, homicide data are the most valid and reliable for cross-national comparison (e.g., LaFree & Drass, 2002). Homicide is a grave and virtually universally condemned act, and as such it is assumed that homicide statistics tend to be relatively reliable and valid – both at the national level as well as for comparative purposes. This does not mean, of course, that homicide data are without problems, particularly when used in a cross-national comparative context. A number of these problems have already been discussed in the preceding

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chapters and need not all be repeated here.¹ Definitional problems in particular, loom large. One way to minimize the cross-national comparability problems is by focusing on the relatively narrow category of *intentional* homicide (i.e., the intentional killing of a person), rather than on the more inclusive category of all cases of unlawful death (both intentional and non-intentional). Limiting the analysis to *completed* intentional homicides further sharpens the focus and tends to eliminate the “noise” associated with the broader category of *total* (intentional) homicides (which, in official crime data from some nations, includes *attempts*). Nonetheless, for purposes of the present chapter, we decided to present – whenever possible or appropriate – *both* total and completed intentional homicide rates. The levels of completed intentional homicides tend to be rather low, which means that a relatively small change in the low base rate may produce apparently large fluctuations. But perhaps more importantly, there are fewer missing cases for the total – rather than the completed – homicide category.

Sources Used

In this chapter, we rely heavily on the homicide statistics compiled by the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics (2000, 2003, 2006, 2010; see <http://www.european-sourcebook.org/index.html>). These government-produced data on homicide are without a doubt currently the best statistics available due to the extensive validation procedures used (Aebi et al., 2010). If the needed data were not available for a particular year or a particular country, then we used data from the United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and Operations of the Criminal Justice System (UNCS), managed by UNODC. If the required data were neither available through the European Sourcebook nor through the UNCS, then we relied on the homicide estimates produced by the World Health Organization ([\[www.who.int/whosis/mort\]\(http://www.who.int/whosis/mort\)\). To supplement our own analyses, we also used a number of recent publications produced by international organizations such as Eurostat, HEUNI, and WHO Europe \(Eurostat, Harrendorf, Heiskanen, & Malby, 2010; Jakab, 2010; Sethi et al., 2010\). In large degree, these publications base their analysis on the UNCS, the European Sourcebook data, and/or WHO mortality data, sometimes expanded by national research results.](http://</p>
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Trends in Homicide: 1990–2008

One typically is cautioned against direct cross-national comparisons of crime rates. After all, it is possible that these rates reflect national differences in victims’ likelihood of alerting the police (not relevant for homicide statistics of course), police recording practices, technological resources, or political forces rather than “true” differences in the prevalence and seriousness of criminal events. The general recommendation is to compare *trends* (i.e., has crime increased, decreased, or remained the same), reflecting the assumptions that the just mentioned national differences remain constant over time. Important for present purposes, homicide is viewed as an exception to this cautionary rule of not making direct comparisons between national crime rates. In the case of homicide, it is commonly argued that there is sufficient cross-national agreement on definitions to make absolute comparisons of rates possible (Barclay & Tavares, 2002). Even so, it is probably best not to put too much weight on one single annual rate (which may reflect some unique event). Instead, it is considered good practice in comparative research to report rates *averaged* over a number of years. We follow this practice in a number of analyses.

A notorious problem in the cross-national study of homicide trends is the problem of missing data.² Only a limited number of nations rou-

¹ See also the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime publication *International Homicide Statistics* (HIS).

² See Marshall and Block (2004) for an attempt to address the missing data problem in comparative homicide research by creating a composite measure (International Homicide Index).

tinely provide crime statistics to international organizations, such as Interpol, WHO, or UNCS. This is less problematic in the more prosperous and westernized countries, compared to the lower-income nations (e.g., Africa). But even in Europe, not all nations provide homicide data on a yearly basis. The reason for this may be logistic, political, or simply administrative oversight or error.³ Most recently, the number of European countries with missing information has decreased considerably, but only a handful of European countries have yearly data available for a long time series. This was illustrated by Aebi et al. (in this book) who aimed to start their trend analysis in 1970, which could not be done for a large number of countries. In this chapter, we will analyze homicide trends starting in 1990. One of the reasons for selecting 1990 as the starting date is that it marks the beginning of an increase in the number of European countries with homicide data available. Around this time, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe underwent a profound social, political, and economic transformation. It was a significant historical turning point in the trajectory of European history and was accompanied by increases in violent crime rates (Gruszczynska, 2004; Williams & Rodeheaver, 2000). After 1990, crime statistics for Central and Eastern European countries started to become publicly available, albeit slowly. Official crime statistics, particularly those that need to be processed through international agencies, tend to lag behind a few years, so that 2008 is the latest year that we can include in our trend.

³There are efforts underway to remedy this situation at the European level. Eurostat received a mandate under the 2004 Hague Program to develop comparable statistics on crime and criminal justice. A series of measures towards this end were undertaken under the 2006–2010 Action Plan. The system will now be enhanced and extended as part of the implementation of the 2009 *Stockholm Programme: An open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens*. (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/crime/introduction>).

The Comparative Context: What Kind of Comparisons?

Strictly speaking, crime data only have meaning when placed in a comparative context. Knowing that the homicide rate of country X is 8 per 100,000 does not mean much, unless we also know that the rate in country Y is 2 per 100,000. With these two pieces of information, we may conclude that country X has a much bigger problem than country Y. On the other hand, if the only two pieces of data available are that country Y has a homicide rate of 2 per 100,000 and country Z has a rate of 0.5 per 100,000, then it is country Y which has the bigger problem. The point of this example is to stress the importance of the comparative context chosen when we aim to draw conclusions about “high” or “low” homicide countries. When looking at homicide in Europe, there are several comparative contexts that may be chosen. We may make *global* comparisons by contrasting the European (average) homicide rate against the rate in Africa, Latin America, or the Asian continent, as we will do herein. Or we may make somewhat more limited comparisons between violent crime in “Europe” with that in United States – a very common practice based on the assumption that such comparisons between western geopolitical units are reasonable and informative (Marshall, 2001). Such comparisons are not self-evident, however, and warrant some elaboration.

An important first step in understanding crime in an international perspective is to organize the large number of countries into more manageable country groupings or clusters. That is first and foremost a *practical* matter. The global count of nations is about 200, with between 42 and 52 belonging to Europe (depending on the defining organization⁴). It is very difficult to provide detailed descriptions of so many nations simultaneously and to make sense out of it. Hence, we use country groupings. In addition to providing

⁴WHO, for example, defines the European Region as having 52 nations, including a number of nations located on the Asian continent (e.g., Azerbaijan, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan).

an important ordering and simplification function, classification of countries has a potentially important *theoretical* relevance. For instance, differences in crime patterns found between country clusters are assumed to be linked to particular cultural, political, socio-economic, or demographic characteristics shared by the countries that are grouped together in a cluster (see Marshall, 2002). Dividing the world by geographical regions (often continents) is the most simple and most frequently used approach in grouping countries together. For example, UN language tends to use regions (for continents) and subregions (geographically based). Regional comparisons tend to be based on the assumption that geographic proximity implies a certain degree of cultural, social, legal, economic, and political homogeneity among the countries grouped together. A useful classification scheme should be based on the assumption that the within-cluster commonalities and between-cluster differences will be useful in comparative analysis of crime (Smit, Marshall, & van Gammeren, 2008). In the present chapter, we use a classification of countries based on the work of Lappi-Seppala (2007). This classification system – an elaboration of the influential work done by Esping-Andersen (1990) – has a strong conceptual foundation that takes into account a number of unifying and separating factors like social welfare investment, income inequality, geography, political traditions and orientations, and history and cultural tradition (Lappi-Seppala, personal communication cited in Smit et al., 2008, p. 173). Lappi-Seppala's work on the relationship between welfare regimes and penal policies expands on Esping-Andersen by adding several additional clusters. Following Lappi-Seppala, we distinguish six European country clusters: (1) a Northern European cluster, (2) a Western European cluster, (3) Mediterranean Europe, (4) Anglo-Saxon countries, (5) the Baltic countries, and (6) Central and Eastern Europe. See Table 4.1 for a list of the countries belonging to each cluster.

We use country clusters as an organizing device for the presentation and analysis of the data, but of course we also present homicide rates for individual countries. Among other things, this allows us to see if the trends for individual coun-

tries parallel the overall trend observed for the country cluster. If not, this would cast some doubt on the usefulness of the clustering criteria used.

Using highly aggregated data (such as using average rates for country clusters, or national rates for individual countries) may be problematic in that it ignores the large variations in homicide rates that exist in different parts (rural areas, towns, cities or large metropolitan areas) of a country. It is reasonable, therefore, to also make comparisons between large cities (rather than entire countries) to gauge cross-national differences or similarities in homicide. We will present the very limited amount of cross-national *city-level* homicide data available.

Finally, for pragmatic reasons, in our analysis of homicide data we exclude the very small countries and territories on the European continent (Luxembourg, Malta, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, San Marino, Serbia and Vatican City). On the other hand, in keeping with common practice, a small number of countries on Asian territory are included (Armenia, Turkey (a candidate for EU membership), and Russia (partly located on the European continent)). When drawing from other publications, on the other hand, the range of included countries often is larger (e.g., see the WHO definition of European Region in footnote 4).

European Homicide in Global Perspective

Global homicide levels are very difficult to estimate for many reasons. One very pressing problem is simply the very limited availability of reliable measures in large parts of the world (e.g., Africa). This is even more so when trying to establish global homicide *trends* which require repeated annual measures. One way to maximize data availability is to combine both criminal justice and public health records. While public health indicators (i.e., mortality rates) and criminal justice records tend to provide fairly similar estimates in the more prosperous and developed countries, the discrepancy between these two measures is quite significant

Table 4.1 Average homicide rates for completed and total homicides (1990–2008)

Country by cluster	1990–1993		1994–1997		1998–2001		2002–2005		2006–2008 ^a	
	Compl.	Total	Compl.	Total	Compl.	Total	Compl.	Total	Compl.	Total
Anglo-Saxon										
Ireland	0.63	0.75	1.23	1.30	1.28	1.43	1.35	1.40 ^b	1.80 ^b	1.40 ^b
UK: England & Wales	1.33	2.45	1.38	2.68	1.55	2.98	1.68	3.28	1.33	3.28
UK: Northern Ireland	6.63	27.33	3.08	10.45	3.18	9.68	2.18	11.78	1.50	8.75
UK: Scotland	2.15	12.75	2.33	14.70	2.15	14.95	2.33	17.35	2.30	17.25
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	2.68	10.82	2.01	7.28	2.04	7.26	1.89	8.45 ^b	1.72 ^b	9.53 ^b
Northern Europe										
Denmark	1.18	4.68	1.38	4.58	1.03	3.93	1.10	3.95	0.95	3.00 ^b
Finland	3.55	8.90	3.43	10.13	3.30	9.55	2.85	9.58	2.67	9.00
Norway	1.07 ^b	2.53 ^b	0.93	2.23	0.93 ^b	2.10	0.87 ^b	2.10 ^b	0.65 ^b	1.55
Sweden	1.38	7.83	1.10	9.5 ^b	1.15 ^b	5.19 ^b	1.00 ^b	5.21 ^b	1.03	4.52 ^b
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.85	5.98 ^b	1.71	6.61 ^b	1.79 ^b	5.19 ^b	1.63 ^b	5.21 ^b	1.41 ^b	4.52 ^b
Western Europe										
Austria	1.40	2.60	1.23	2.35	0.93	1.98	0.78	2.00	0.63	1.65
Belgium			1.35	4.50 ^b	2.05	6.10	1.95	5.95 ^b	1.83	4.90 ^b
France	2.83	5.05	2.68	4.80	2.00	3.95	2.00	3.95	1.57	3.35
Germany	1.43	4.13	2.08	4.93	1.63	3.83	1.28	3.33	0.97	3.10
Netherlands	1.60	17.85	1.68	17.93 ^b	1.48	10.95	1.30	10.68	0.92	9.00 ^b
Switzerland	1.45	2.73	1.15	2.50	1.10	2.48	1.08	2.75	0.73	2.65
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.74 ^b	6.47 ^b	1.69	6.17 ^b	1.50 ^b	4.88	1.43	4.78 ^b	1.11	4.11 ^b
Mediterranean										
Cyprus	1.10	1.70	1.00	1.83	1.38	2.18	1.48	2.18	1.33	1.60
Greece	1.25	2.28	1.40 ^b	2.88		2.88	1.05	2.20	1.07	2.10
Italy	2.85	6.25	1.75	4.75	1.45	4.13	1.23	3.80	1.10	3.60 ^b
Portugal	4.30 ^b		4.03		2.88		2.15		1.68	
Spain		2.43	0.97 ^b	2.45	1.15	2.90	1.28	3.20 ^b	1.03	
Turkey		4.05		3.35		2.50 ^b	3.88 ^b		2.73	3.40
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.90 ^b	3.34 ^b	1.91 ^b	3.05 ^b	1.72 ^b	2.92 ^b	1.72 ^b	2.73 ^b	1.49	2.37 ^b

(continued)

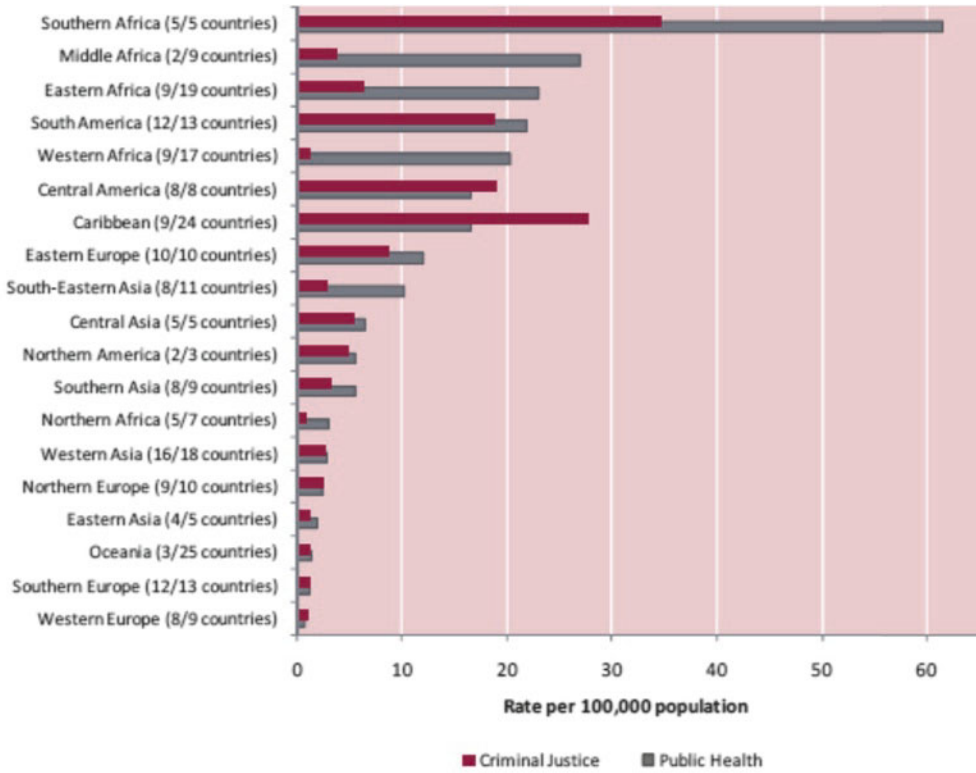
Table 4.1 (continued)

Country by cluster	1990–1993		1994–1997		1998–2001		2002–2005		2006–2008 ^a	
	Compl.	Total	Compl.	Total	Compl.	Total	Compl.	Total	Compl.	Total
CEE										
Albania	7.40 ^b	15.15 ^b	17.23	32.05	12.08	21.90	4.80	11.05	2.85 ^b	10.70
Armenia			3.27 ^b	4.46 ^b	2.85	4.30	2.25	3.35	2.53	3.35
Belarus								8.83 ^b	5.60 ^b	8.30 ^b
Bulgaria	4.73	8.28	5.35	9.75	4.00	7.10	2.85	4.83	2.22	3.35
Croatia	1.63	11.70	3.57 ^b	7.98	2.53	6.78	1.83	5.50	1.67	5.50
Czech Republic	3.70	2.30	1.80 ^b	2.73	2.45	2.65	2.00	2.13	1.35	2.05
Hungary		5.00	3.15	4.43		4.00		3.50	1.57	3.00
Moldova		8.23		8.95		8.98		7.33	5.10	4.65
Poland	2.13	2.93	2.55	3.45	2.25	3.43	2.13	3.20	1.67	2.75
Romania	3.48	7.08	3.30 ^b	3.93	2.65 ^b	4.10	2.38	4.73	2.03	4.05
Russia	10.55	14.15	15.60 ^b	20.75		21.53	27.02 ^b	21.90	16.70	17.50
Slovakia		4.43	2.50 ^b	3.15	2.50	2.50	2.35	2.35	1.67	1.65
Slovenia	2.15		2.18	4.80 ^b	1.15	3.55	1.23	3.50	0.77	3.05
TFYR of Macedonia	2.13		2.50 ^b				2.20 ^b	5.20 ^b	2.00 ^b	4.40 ^b
Ukraine				9.30 ^b		9.20 ^b	7.90	7.83 ^b	6.10	6.60
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	4.00 ^b	7.12 ^b	5.06 ^b	8.90 ^b	3.89 ^b	7.69 ^b	4.57 ^b	6.35 ^b	3.46 ^b	5.39 ^b
Baltic countries										
Estonia	11.93	13.63	15.90	20.00	11.20	14.18	9.08	10.38	6.73	8.65
Latvia	12.40 ^b	10.48	8.78	11.65	6.47 ^b	9.25		8.73 ^b	4.40 ^b	5.85
Lithuania		8.58	10.43 ^b	12.43	9.20	10.13	9.58	10.20	8.07	8.25
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	10.95 ^b	10.89	12.25 ^b	14.69	9.31 ^b	11.18	9.71 ^b	9.77 ^b	7.06 ^b	7.58
Total avg. per year	3.51 ^b	7.36 ^b	3.89 ^b	7.65 ^b	3.21 ^b	6.53 ^b	3.25 ^b	6.11 ^b	2.65 ^b	5.33 ^b

Source: European Sourcebook, UNODC, WHO

^aTotal homicide rates not available for 2008

^bMissing data for 1 or more years



Note: Figure 1 includes only those countries for which at least one criminal justice and one public health value for intentional homicide are available in the period 2003–2008. This is indicated alongside each sub-region name by the number of countries included out of the total countries in the sub-region.

Fig. 4.1 Average intentional homicide rate by subregion, latest available year, criminal justice and public health data (from Malby, 2010, p. 9, Fig. 1)

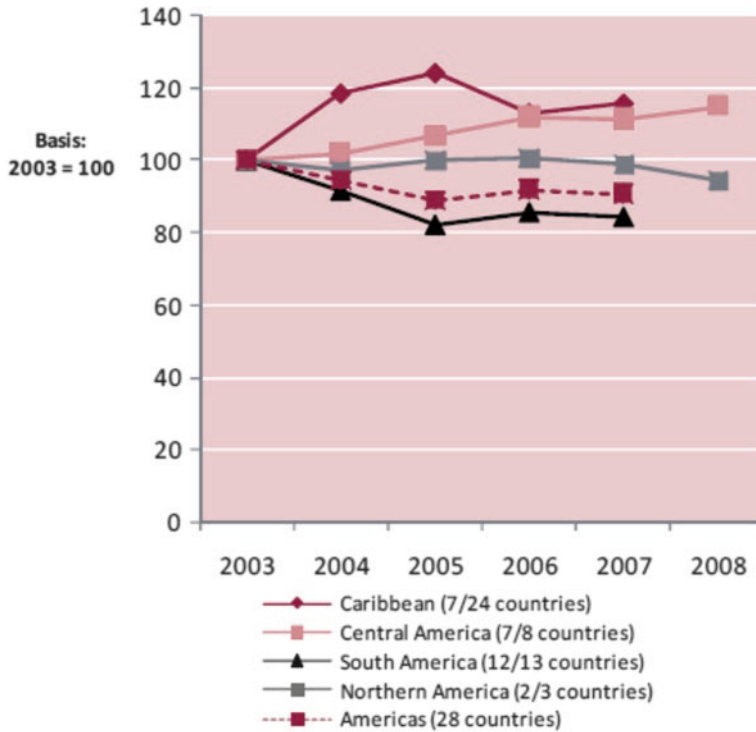
in Africa and numerous Latin American countries, among others.⁵

Two UN-related institutes, HEUNI (European institute for Crime Prevention and Control, Affiliated with the United Nations) and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) have devoted considerable effort in the creation and validation of global crime data, in particular those related to violence (UNODC International

Homicide Statistics). In a recent (2010) publication, they present an overview of the average of a limited set of countries in the world’s subregions (144 countries in total), for which at least one criminal justice and public health value for intentional homicide was available during the 2003–2008 period.

Keeping in mind the cautionary warning of the author that the average rates calculated on a larger set of countries would be different, Fig. 4.1 shows comparatively low homicide levels in countries of Europe, Asia, and North America and fairly high levels in Africa and Central America. Figure 4.1 also shows that the discrepancy between police-based homicide data and public health records is negligible in most of Europe (Western Europe, Southern Europe, and

⁵In this context, we should keep in mind that while we tend to focus on the available international indicators for homicide comparisons, there are also numerous other local and national sources (newspaper accounts, ethnographic studies, and so on) that should be used to validate the observed global discrepancies in levels of lethal (criminal) (interpersonal) violence.



Note: Weighted average of homicide rates in countries consistently reporting homicide for the entire period 2003–2008 (basis: 2003 = 100)

Fig. 4.2 Average intentional homicide rates for countries in the Americas, 2003–2008 (from Malby, 2010, p. 15, Fig. 6)

Northern Europe), and somewhat larger in the Eastern European subregion.⁶

Malby (2010) also presents global data on recent trends (2003–2008) in intentional homicide, based on a smaller number of some 88 countries in the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania, again organized by subregion. Not included in these trends is the African continent, because of severe data problems (missing or unreliable). The overall conclusion (based on 2003–2008 criminal justice data available for a limited number of countries) is that average intentional homicide levels tended to decrease in Asia, Oceania, and Europe, and overall stayed largely constant

for the Americas (2010, p. 16).⁷ Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show the average intentional homicide rates in the Americas (Fig. 4.2) and Asia and Oceania (Fig. 4.3) (2003–2008); we do not show the trends for Europe since these will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Keeping in mind our earlier caution about the limits of relying on aggregate rates, these global generalizations need to be immediately qualified once we focus on the subregions within the larger region: there a large amount of variation in the noted trends exist. Some of the subregions (e.g., Central America and the Caribbean) showed average increases over this time period. The changes in the subregional rates remained fairly

⁶WHO data show considerably larger homicide rates – compared to the criminal justice data – for Russia Federation, Ukraine, Latvia, Belarus, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldova, Albania, Macedonia, Romania, and Bulgaria (Malby, 2010, p. 14). For a detailed analysis and discussion of the discrepancy in Russia, see Pridemore (2003).

⁷The Americas include the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and North America (Mexico, Canada, and the United States). Oceania includes New Zealand, Australia, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

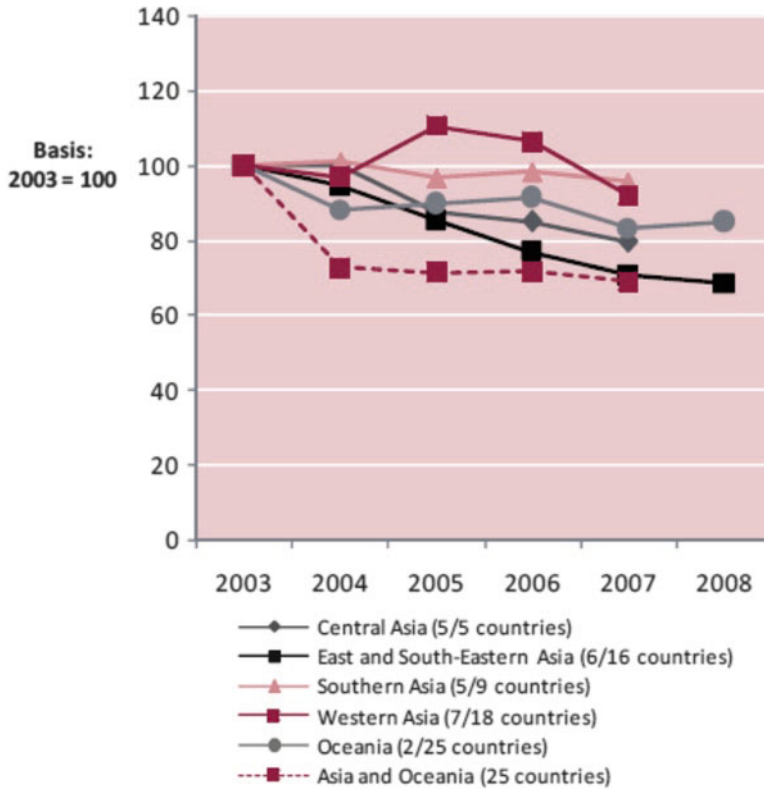


Fig. 4.3 Average intentional homicide rates for countries in Asia and Oceania, 2003–2008 (from Malby, 2010, p. 15, Fig. 7)

modest overall, however. Not surprisingly, within the subregions, there are also considerable variations at the national level, particularly in the subregions with a high level of homicide (e.g., countries in the Central America and Caribbean subregions such as Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, as well as in Venezuela, show significant increases). Malby observes that “Those subregions with lower homicide rates [i.e., Central Asia and Europe] also tend to be those that show either stable or gradually decreasing homicide rates over time” (2010, p. 17). We will provide more detailed analysis of homicide trends in Europe in the next sections of this chapter. For now, the two main points to take away from this brief discussion are: (1) the level of homicide in Europe, generally speaking, is quite low compared to other world regions and (2) there is a large amount of variation in homicide rates within all regions and subregions, including in the European region. These

European subregional and national differences will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

In spite of the paucity of international homicide data, there are a number of very useful analyses and publications – apart from the HEUNI/UNODC publication *International Statistics on Crime and Justice* – that attempt to provide a global picture of homicide (e.g., Eisner, 2001; Gurr, 1981; Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002; LaFree, 1999; LaFree & Drass, 2002; Marshall, Marshall, & Ren, 2010, Appendix; Messner, 2003; Van Dijk, 2008). These analyses include discussions of the age and gender ratios of victims and offenders, as well as a limited number of other characteristics of the homicide event. Discussion of these publications falls beyond the scope of the current chapter, but are highly recommended for those interested in placing the European homicide problem in the larger global context. However, as a last point related to

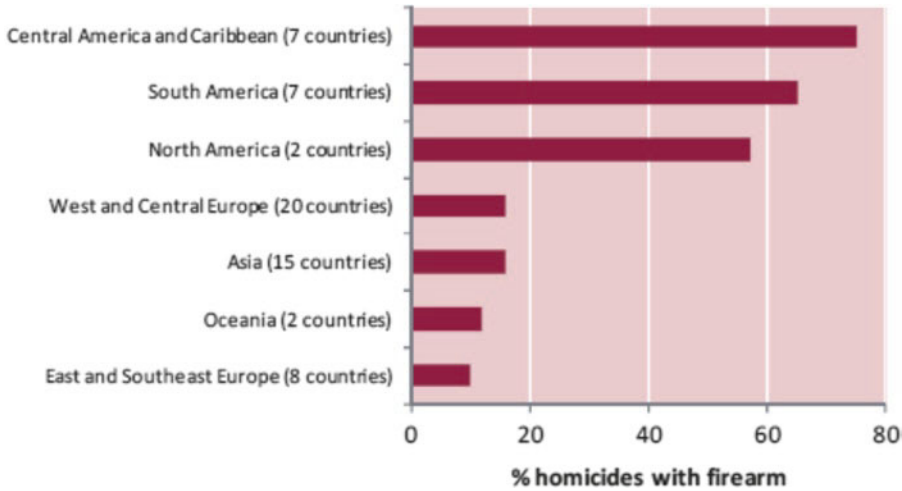


Fig. 4.4 Percentage of homicides committed with a firearm, latest available (2003–2008) (Malby, 2010, p. 18, Fig. 11)

global comparisons, we do want to highlight briefly global differences in the type of *weapon* most typically used in homicides. Undeniably, differences in economic prosperity, political stability, and availability of social welfare provisions play a key role in accounting for differences in criminal violence, but availability of firearms is often viewed as a very significant factor (i.e., the so-called instrumentality effect). As Fig. 4.4 shows, there is a huge amount of variation between different global regions with regard to the proportion of homicides committed with a firearm. Data from 61 countries, presented by Malby (2010, p. 18) suggest that European countries, overall, tend to have a much lower proportion of homicides committed with firearms than Central America and the Caribbean, South America, and North America. We will return to this topic briefly in a later section.

Homicide Rates and Trends Within Europe

There is no doubt that – generally speaking – the homicide statistics for Europe are among the most reliable and complete in the world. In order to take full advantage of the data that are available, we

present as much detailed information as possible in this section. Still, there remain some inconsistencies between the different data sources (criminal justice data vs. mortality data), as well as a considerable amount of missing data that becomes quite evident when taking a close look at the data presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 herein.

Table 4.1 presents 4-year complete and total average homicide rates for the period 1990–2008. Table 4.2 presents annual rates (2004–2008), as well as city-level rates (2006–2008 average). In the Appendix (Tables A.1 and A.2) we include annual Standardized Death Rates due to homicide and assault (solely based on public health records). Below, we present the main conclusions that may be drawn from these data.

Homicide Rates: Most Recent (2006–2008)

Both Tables 4.1 and 4.2 present the most recent homicide data.⁸ First, there is the *average rate* (2006–2008), in the right hand column of both

⁸Tables A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix also provide a number of 2008 and 2009 Standardized Death Rates.

Table 4.2 Intentional completed homicides – homicide rates Per 100,000 Rate Per 100,000 population, average per year, 2006–2008

Country by cluster	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Country	City	
Anglo-Saxon								
Ireland	1.10	1.60	1.60	2.00		1.80	Dublin	2.26
UK: England & Wales	1.60	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.20	1.33	London	2.17
UK: Northern Ireland	2.40	1.70	1.40	1.70	1.40	1.50	Edinburgh	1.86
UK: Scotland	2.80	1.90	2.40	2.30	2.20	2.30	Belfast	2.12
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.98	1.65	1.70	1.85	1.60 ^a	1.72		2.10
Northern Europe								
Denmark	1.00	1.10	0.70	0.72	1.44	0.95	Copenhagen	1.58
Finland	3.30	2.50	2.60	2.90	2.50	2.67	Helsinki	2.10
Norway	0.80	0.70	0.70	0.60		0.65	Oslo	1.76
Sweden	1.20	0.90	1.00	1.20	0.90	1.03	Stockholm	
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.58	1.30	1.25	1.36	1.61 ^a	1.41		1.81 ^a
Western Europe								
Austria	0.80	0.80	0.70	0.60	0.60	0.63	Vienna	1.06
Belgium	2.10	1.70	1.70	1.97	1.82	1.83	Brussels	3.20
France	1.90	1.90	1.70	1.60	1.40	1.57	Paris	1.49
Germany	1.20	1.20	1.10	1.00	0.80	0.97	Berlin	1.31
Netherlands	1.20	1.20	0.90	0.87	1.00	0.92	Amsterdam	3.14
Switzerland	1.10	1.00	0.80	0.70	0.70	0.73	Berne	1.34
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.38	1.30	1.15	1.12	1.05	1.11		1.92
Mediterranean								
Cyprus	1.90	1.80	1.60	1.40	1.00	1.33	Lefkosia	1.75
Greece	1.00	1.10	1.00	1.10	1.10	1.07	Athens	1.11
Italy	1.30	1.10	1.10	1.16	1.05	1.10	Rome	1.20
Portugal	1.80	1.70	2.10	1.74	1.20	1.68	Lisbon	0.64
Spain	1.20	1.20	1.10	1.10	0.90	1.03	Madrid	1.30
Turkey	3.40	4.30	2.80	2.50	2.90	2.73	Ankara	4.21
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.77	1.87	1.62	1.50	1.36	1.49		1.70
CEE								
Albania	3.80	4.20	2.80	2.90		2.85	Tirana	
Armenia	2.40	1.80	2.50	2.60	2.50	2.53	Yerevan	
Belarus					5.60	5.60	Minsk	
Bulgaria	2.90	2.30	2.20	2.20	2.25	2.22	Sofia	2.90
Croatia	2.00	1.60	1.80	1.60	1.60	1.67	Zagreb	1.36
Czech Republic	1.21	0.94	1.03	1.06	1.95	1.35	Prague	3.06
Hungary	2.10	1.60	1.70	1.50	1.50	1.57	Budapest	1.45
Moldova					5.10	5.10	Chisinau	
Poland	2.20	2.10	1.90	1.90	1.20	1.67	Warsaw	1.92
Romania	2.40	2.10	2.00	1.90	2.20	2.03	Bucharest	1.10
Russia	27.30	24.90	20.20	15.70	14.20	16.70	Moscow	
Slovakia	2.30	2.00	1.70	1.60	1.70	1.67	Bratislava	3.12
Slovenia	1.40	1.00	0.60	1.20	0.50	0.77	Ljubljana	0.50
TFYR of Macedonia		2.20	2.00		2.00	2.00	Skopje	3.30
Ukraine	7.40	6.40	6.30	5.71	6.30	6.10	Kiev	
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	4.78 ^a	4.09 ^a	3.59 ^a	3.32 ^a	3.47 ^a	3.46		2.08 ^a
Baltic countries								
Estonia	6.70	8.40	6.80	7.10	6.30	6.73	Tallinn	6.04
Latvia					4.40	4.40	Riga	
Lithuania	9.40	10.80	8.20	7.40	8.60	8.07	Vilnius	8.28
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	8.05 ^a	9.60 ^a	7.50 ^a	7.25 ^a	6.43 ^a	7.06 ^a		7.16 ^a
Total avg. per year	3.14^a	2.95^a	2.58^a	2.44^a	2.63^a	2.65^a		2.29^a

Source: European Sourcebook, UNODC, WHO

^aMissing data for 1 or more years

tables (Table 4.1 average for 2006–2008 for both completed and total homicides; Table 4.2 average rate for 2006–2008 for intentional homicide only, plus average rate for capital city). Table 4.2 also provides the *yearly* data for the last 5 years (2004–2008).⁹

The overall average rate for completed homicide (2006–2008) in the 35 countries included in the analysis is 2.65 per 100,000 (completed homicide) and 5.33 per 100,000 (total homicide). Overall, in Europe the *total* homicide rate is about twice that of *completed* homicide. The ratio of completed to total homicide rates varies significantly between country clusters: it is largest in the Anglo-Saxon cluster (1:5.5) and smallest in the Baltic countries (1:1.07). This warns against the use of total intentional homicide for cross-national comparisons. In the following, we focus primarily on completed intentional homicide.

Comparisons of the six country clusters reveal a very clear pattern: The Baltic States (with 7.06 per 100,000) have the highest homicide rate in Europe (as defined by the 35 countries included in this data set). The Baltic average rate is twice that of the Central and Eastern European cluster (with a rate of 3.46 per 100,000). The Central and Eastern European cluster homicide rate, in turn, is about twice that of the Anglo-Saxon country cluster (1.72 per 100,000). The differences between the three low homicide clusters (Northern Europe, Western Europe and the Mediterranean cluster) are minor (respectively, 1.41, 1.11 and 1.49). In view of the possibility of measurement errors in these homicide statistics, we should not place undue emphasis on relatively small differences.

The homicide rates range from a high of 16.70 (Russia) to a low of 0.63 (Austria). Based on the most recent (average) homicide figures available, and focusing on the individual nations, the high homicide countries (top 20%) come either from the Baltic cluster or from the Central and Eastern European cluster. Countries in the bottom one-fifth belong to either the Northern or Western European cluster, with the exception of one country (Slovenia) that belongs to the Central and Eastern

Table 4.3 European countries with highest and lowest homicide rates (2006–2008)

Top 20% (more than 4 per 100,000)	Bottom 20% (less than 1 per 100,000)
Russia	Austria
Lithuania	Norway
Estonia	Switzerland
Ukraine	Slovenia
Belarus	Netherlands
Moldova	Denmark
Latvia	Germany

European cluster (See Table 4.3). Generally speaking, it seems that country clustering is a useful tool in separating the high from the low homicide countries.

Comparing average rates of the country clusters tells only part of the story. Each cluster comprises a different number of countries, ranging from only three (Baltic cluster) to fifteen (Central and Eastern European cluster). The Anglo-Saxon cluster includes two (Ireland and the UK) or four (counting England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland as separate nations). Clusters with a smaller number of countries assign more weight to each individual member country. Also, purely based on probability statistics, it is more likely for small clusters to be homogeneous (i.e., have comparable rates) than larger clusters.

Baltic countries. This is a fairly homogeneous cluster. The three Baltic States have relatively high homicide rates, producing the highest overall average (7.06). There is some variation among the three states: Latvia (4.40) scores lowest, Lithuania highest (8.65), and with Estonia occupying the middle position (6.73).

Central and Eastern European countries. This relatively large cluster (15 countries) is quite heterogeneous with regard to homicide rates. It contains the highest homicide country (Russia 16.70 per 100,000), as well as one of the lowest ranked countries (Slovenia 0.77). Three more countries (Belarus 5.60, Moldova 5.10, and Ukraine 6.10) rank among the top 20%. Thus, the core Slavic nations of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus have the highest homicide rates in this cluster. Five countries have a rate in the 2 per 100,000 range

⁹ See Section “Sources Used” for an explanation of data sources used to create these tables.

(Albania 2.85; Armenia 2.53; Bulgaria 2.22; Romania 2.03; Macedonia 2.00). The remaining five countries (Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) have a rate lower than 2 per 100,000. In view of this relatively wide range of rates, in future analyses it would make sense to subdivide this large cluster into two or more country groupings.

Anglo-Saxon countries. This small cluster has a somewhat higher average homicide rate (1.72) than the other three low homicide clusters [Northern Europe (1.41), Western Europe (1.11), and Mediterranean countries (1.49)]. This is mostly due to Scotland (2.30) and Ireland (1.80). The range in rates in this cluster is fairly small [between 2.30 (Scotland) and 1.33 (England and Wales)]

Mediterranean countries. In this country cluster, Turkey has the highest homicide rate (2.73). The rates in the five other Mediterranean countries range between 1.03 (Spain) and 1.68 (Portugal). Turkey appears to be somewhat of an outlier in the relative low homicide cluster.

Northern Europe. Finland, with a rate of 2.67 per 100,000 is an outlier in this low homicide cluster (average rate 1.41). The other three countries [Denmark (0.95), Norway (0.65) and Sweden (1.03)] have low homicide rates.

Western European countries. The Western European country cluster appears to have the overall lowest average homicide rate (1.11). Four of the countries are ranked in the bottom 20% [Austria (0.63), Germany (0.97), Netherlands (0.92) and Switzerland (0.73)]. Belgium (1.83) and France (1.57) occupy a more intermediate position.

To summarize, the mean rate for all European countries (35 in this analysis) is 2.65. The Baltic and the Central and Eastern European country clusters are clearly above this mean, and as such separated from the Anglo-Saxon, Western European, Northern European, and Mediterranean clusters (which are all below this mean). In the brief summary of findings, we did include rates and used even relatively small differences to provide some sort of ranking. However, we would

reiterate that we should not give too much weight to these small differences.¹⁰ In order to see if the noted national differences are robust, we need to consider more than just recent national data: we also should consider *trend* data, which will be the focus of the next section. But first, we make a brief detour to consider the limited amount of recent data available about *city-level* homicide rates (see Table 4.2, right hand column).

City-level homicide rates. Comparing average rates for cities needs to be done with some caution, in particular for the Central and Eastern European cluster. We lack information about the Central and Eastern European cities of Tirana (Albania), Yerevan (Armenia), Minsk (Belarus), Chisinau (Moldova), Moscow (Russia), and Kiev (Ukraine). Thus, the city-average presented for the Central and Eastern European cluster (2.08) is most likely an underestimation. No city-level data are available for Riga (Latvia) and for Stockholm (Sweden). Overall, consistent with expectations, the average city-level homicide rates are somewhat higher than the country average. Exception is the Central and Eastern European cluster where there is much more cross-national variation (reflecting the large number of countries included in this cluster). The available data for the Central and Eastern European cluster (see Table 4.2) do suggest that the urban homicide rate consistently is below the national average [e.g., Zagreb (1.36) in Croatia (1.66); Budapest (1.45) in Hungary (1.57); Bucharest (1.10) in Romania (2.03); and Ljubljana (0.50) in Slovenia (0.77)]. Keeping the CEE cluster outside the comparison, the city-based rates generally mirror the country-based rankings: The cities in the Baltic countries have the highest homicide rate (Tallinn (6.04) and Vilnius (8.28)), much higher than the city-level rates in the remaining clusters (except several CEE countries). A handful of cities have rates over 3 per 100,000 (Brussels, Amsterdam, Ankara, Prague, Bratislava and Skopje). On the other hand, Lisbon (0.64) and Ljubljana (0.50) have a very low rate.

¹⁰ By using average rates (2006–2008), however, we may be more confident that the rates are not the result of some unique one-time fluke.

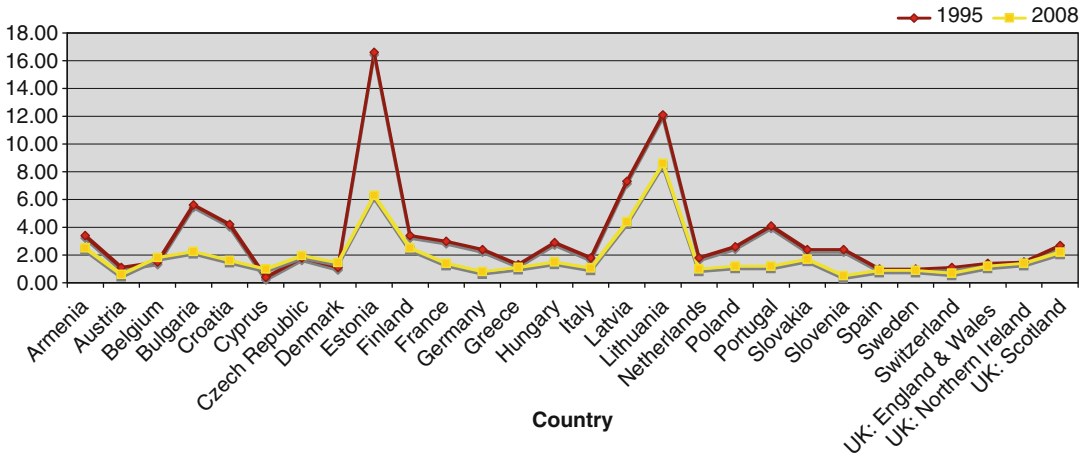


Fig. 4.5 Intentional completed homicide rates for 1995 and 2008

Homicide Trends, 1990–2008

Current rates provide but a snapshot of homicide in different countries. In order to get a more complete comparative picture, we need to examine rates spanning a longer time period. Although it was not possible to obtain a full range of (annual) rates for all European countries,¹¹ there are sufficient data to make several meaningful trend comparisons. We use two types of measures of trends. The first approach describes changes in terms of increases or decreases in *absolute* homicide rates. As suggested earlier, in the case of homicide, the use of absolute rates is considered acceptable, for both cross-sectional comparisons as well as for a longitudinal analysis. Nonetheless, as a complement to the focus on absolute homicide levels, we also describe trends in terms of *percentage change* (in rates) over time, without concern for national differences that may exist between the absolute crime rates at year X. The use of an *index year* (i.e., 2,000=100) further facilitates the standardized cross-national comparisons

National Trends

Table 4.4 lists the countries considered to be lowest, middle, and highest (intentional completed

homicide rates) for 1990, 1999, and 2008, respectively. For each of the three different time periods, a different set of countries ranks lowest. There is a bit more continuity with regard to the highest rate countries: Estonia and Russia both make it twice in this category. It should be noted, however, that some of these rankings reflect the unavailability of data for particular countries for particular years (e.g., no data for Russia for 1999).

There is a very interesting and clear trend visible with regard to the absolute levels of intentional completed homicide for the 28 European countries for which data were available for 1995 and 2008 (Fig. 4.5). With a few minor exceptions, this figure shows that the homicide rates for 2008 were lower than those recorded in 1995 for all included countries. See Table 4.1 for more detailed information.

Table 4.5 presents the percentage change (in intentional completed homicide rates), for two time periods: 1990–1999 and 2000–2008. The same information is presented in Fig. 4.6 (but for a smaller number of countries with complete information). Missing data are a problem, in particular for the CEE countries during 1990–1999. Table 4.5 indicates that the direction of change is primarily in the direction of decreasing rates (indicated by the minus sign). This is illustrated more clearly in Fig. 4.6 where most of the bars (indicating negative change) are in the lower half

¹¹See Tables 4.1 and 4.2 as well as Tables A.1 and A.2 (Appendix).

Table 4.4 Country rankings: intentional completed homicide rates for 1990, 1999, and 2008

	Country	1990	Country	1999	Country	2008
Lowest rates	Ireland	0.50	Austria	0.80	Slovenia	0.50
	Denmark	0.80	Norway	0.80	Austria	0.60
	Greece	1.00	Denmark	1.00	Switzerland	0.70
Middle	UK: Scotland	1.70	Belgium	1.70	Croatia	1.60
	Cyprus	1.80	France	1.90	Slovakia	1.70
	Poland	1.80	UK: Northern Ireland	2.10	Belgium	1.82
Highest rates	UK: Northern Ireland	5.20	Lithuania	8.50	Ukraine	6.30
	Estonia	7.50	Estonia	10.90	Lithuania	8.60
	Russia	8.60	Albania	14.40	Russia	14.20

^aBased on available data

Table 4.5 Percent change in intentional completed homicide rates

Country by cluster	Percent change		Avg. annual percent change		
	1990–1999	2000–2008	1990–1999	2000–2008	1990–2008
Anglo-Saxon					
Ireland	160.00	33.33 ^a	16.00	4.16 ^a	300 ^a
UK: England & Wales	15.38	-25.00	1.54	-2.78	-0.40
UK: Northern Ireland	-59.62	-51.72	-5.96	-5.75	-3.85
UK: Scotland	47.06	4.76	4.71	0.53	1.55
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	-14.94	-20.99	-1.49	-2.33	-1.39
Northern Europe					
Denmark	25.00	20.00	2.50	2.22	4.21
Finland	-8.11	-26.47	-0.81	-2.94	-1.71
Norway					
Sweden	-14.29		-1.43		-1.88
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	-18.64	-15.09	-1.86	-1.68	-0.95
Western Europe					
Austria	-42.86	-40.00	-4.29	-4.44	-3.01
Belgium		-9.00		-1.00	
France	-32.14	-33.33	-3.21	-3.70	-2.63
Germany	33.33	-50.00	3.33	-5.56	-1.75
Netherlands	0.00	-28.57	0.00	-3.17	-1.75
Switzerland	-25.00	-22.22	-2.50	-2.47	-2.96
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	-14.71	-27.85	-1.47	-3.09	-2.00
Mediterranean					
Cyprus	-11.11	-9.09	-1.11	-1.01	-2.34
Greece		-26.67		-2.96	0.53
Italy	-53.13	-25.00	-5.31	-2.78	-3.54
Portugal		-50.00		-5.56	
Spain		-25.00		-2.78	
Turkey					
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	-11.25	-15.10	-1.13	-1.68	-1.69
CEE					
Albania		-63.29		-7.91	
Armenia		-16.67		-1.85	
Belarus					
Bulgaria	44.44	-42.31	4.44	-4.70	-0.88
Croatia		-36.00		-4.00	
Czech Republic					1.58

(continued)

Table 4.5 (continued)

Country by cluster	Percent change		Avg. annual percent change		
	1990–1999	2000–2008	1990–1999	2000–2008	1990–2008
Hungary	-13.79	-25.00	-1.38	-2.78	-2.54
Moldova					
Poland	22.22	-52.00	2.22	-5.78	-1.75
Romania		-15.38		-1.71	-1.95
Russia					3.43
Slovakia		-34.62		-3.85	
Slovenia	-43.48	-72.22	-4.35	-8.02	-4.12
TFYR of Macedonia					
Ukraine		-35.71		-3.97	
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	28.06	6.40	2.81	0.71	0.51
Baltic countries					
Estonia	45.33	-39.42	4.53	-4.38	-0.84
Latvia		-29.03		-3.23	
Lithuania		-14.85		-1.65	
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	14.22	-26.89	1.42	-2.99	-0.75
Total avg. per year	17.25	-14.40	1.73	-1.60	0.10

^aMissing data for 2008

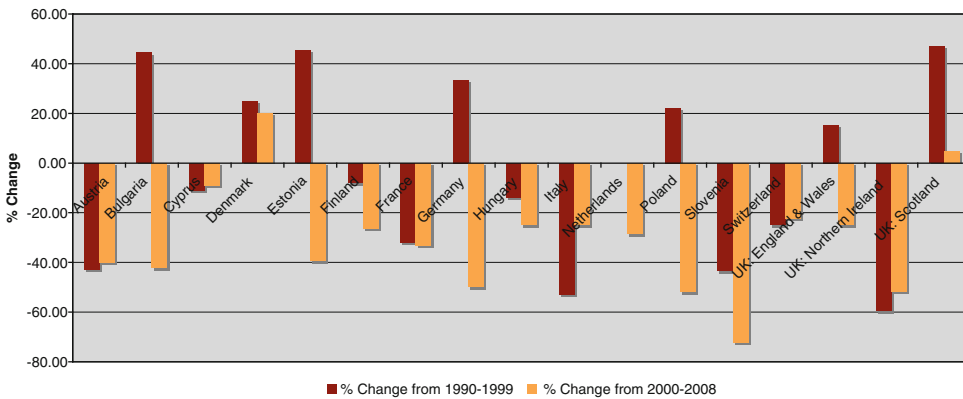


Fig. 4.6 Percent change in completed homicide rates for 1990–1999 and 2000–2008 by country

of the bar graph. Exceptions are Denmark, with an average increase in crime rates of 4.21%, and Scotland (average annual increase 1.55%).¹²

¹²For Denmark, the rates for 1999 actually are higher than in 1990, and 2008 is higher than 2000. Because of the use of aggregation, some of the variation in rates is overshadowed. Without using the 2008 data, the trend would have been somewhat different. This shows that the selection of particular years (begin and end) as cut off points may make a considerable impact on the conclusions.

A few countries show an increase in the earlier time period (1990–1999) (i.e., Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Poland, England & Wales, and Ireland), but all countries (with the exception of Ireland, Scotland, and Denmark) experienced a decline in homicide rates for the 2000–2008 period.

Regional Trends: Country Clusters

We noted that, focusing on the most recent homicide rates, there are significant differences

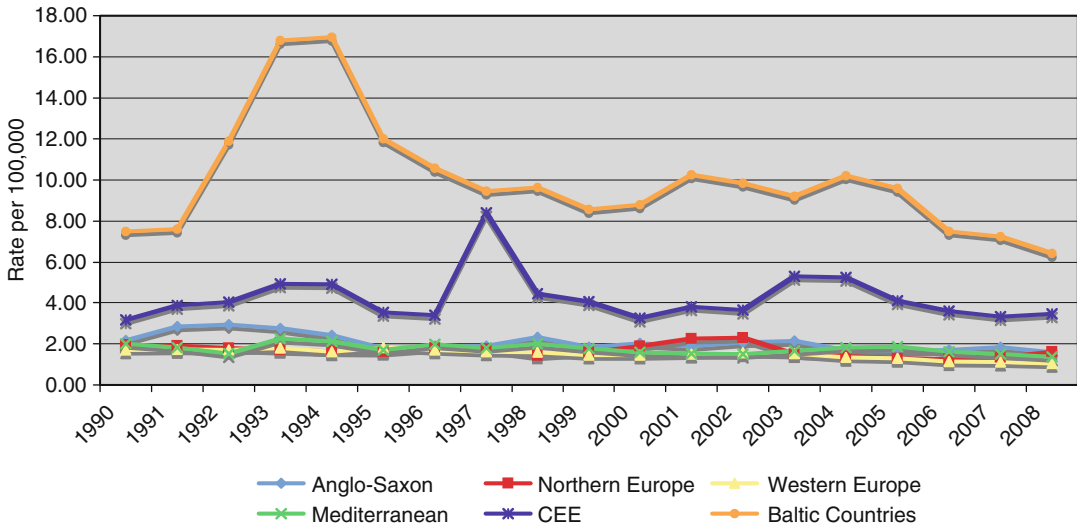


Fig. 4.7 Intentional completed homicide rates by country cluster (1990–2008)

between different country clusters: the Baltic and EEC country clusters tend to have considerably higher levels of homicide than the other clusters. This is not a recent phenomenon. To the contrary, going back almost two decades, these two clusters have consistently recorded higher homicide rates. This is clearly shown in Fig. 4.7, which presents time series data based on absolute rates. The Western European, Northern European, Anglo-Saxon, and Mediterranean clusters bunch together around or just below 2 per 100,000, the CEE clusters consistently shows a higher rate, and the Baltic cluster consistently reports a rate higher than 6 per 100,000.

We conducted a similar trend analysis using exclusively Standardized Death Rates resulting from homicide and assault, generated by the World Health Organization, rather than police-recorded data which are the primary source of the tables presented here. The same patterns were basically repeated (see Appendix, Figs. A.1 and A.2).

Ignoring the differences in homicide rates between country clusters (i.e., the fact that the Baltic cluster has a significantly higher rate than the Western European cluster, for example), Fig. 4.8 presents standardized homicide rates in the six country clusters (2,000 = 100).

These figures show a rather complex picture, not easily summarized.

We use country clusters based on the assumption that there is reasonable similarity between the countries included in each cluster and that there is more between-cluster variation than within-cluster variation. We already have seen that this is not necessarily always the case (i.e., the CEE cluster with a wide range of homicide rates). We further explore this issue by examining the national trends for each of the six country clusters (Figs. 4.9–4.14).

For the Anglo-Saxon cluster, the trend in Northern Ireland appears to be somewhat of an outlier, most likely reflecting the impact of violence related to political conflict. In the Northern European cluster, the overall trend appears to be fairly consistent for all countries, except that Finland has a considerably higher rate over the entire time period. In the Western European cluster, Austria and Switzerland consistently tend to have the lower rates. Belgium, on the other hand, shows a somewhat erratic pattern (including a few missing years). The spike in the German homicide rate around the mid- to late-1990s coincides with the reunification. The Mediterranean cluster, showing significant missing data, shows that Spain, Cyprus, and Greece consistently had a

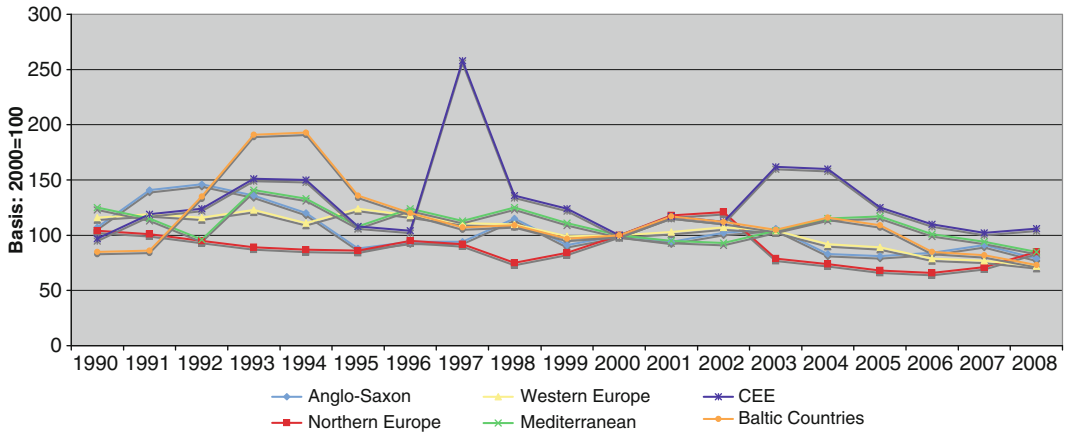


Fig. 4.8 Intentional complete homicide rates by country cluster (2,000=100)

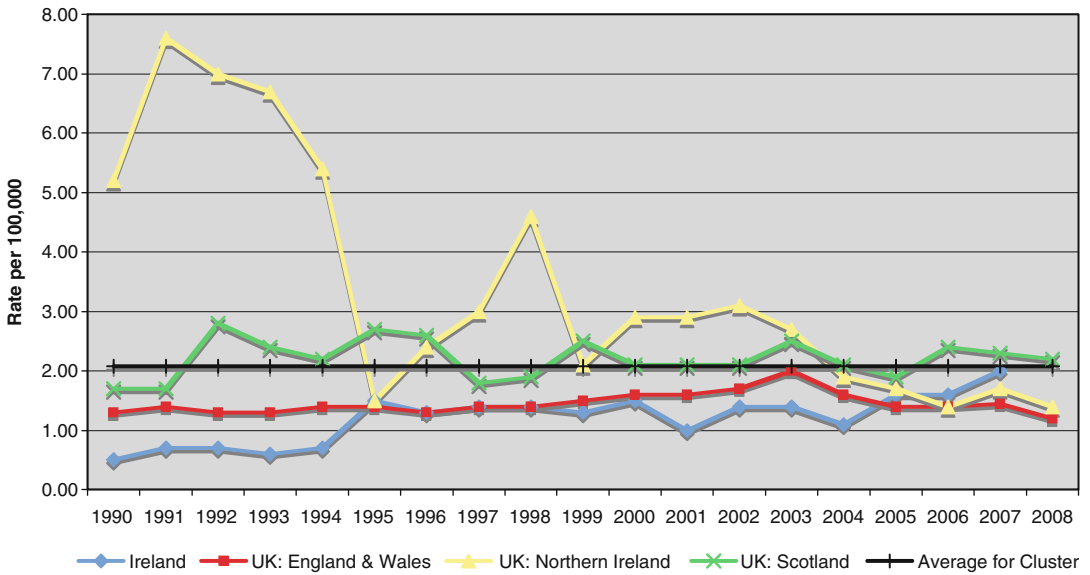


Fig. 4.9 Intentional completed homicide rates for Anglo-Saxon country cluster

rate below 2 per 100,000. Italy and Portugal, on the other hand, showed considerably higher rates in the early years of the time series. The picture for the CEE cluster is rather convoluted, not in small measure due to the relatively large number

of countries included. (We have omitted Albania and Russia from the figure). The three Baltic countries appear to be rather similar with regard to the trend in homicide, except that there is a small uptick in Lithuania.

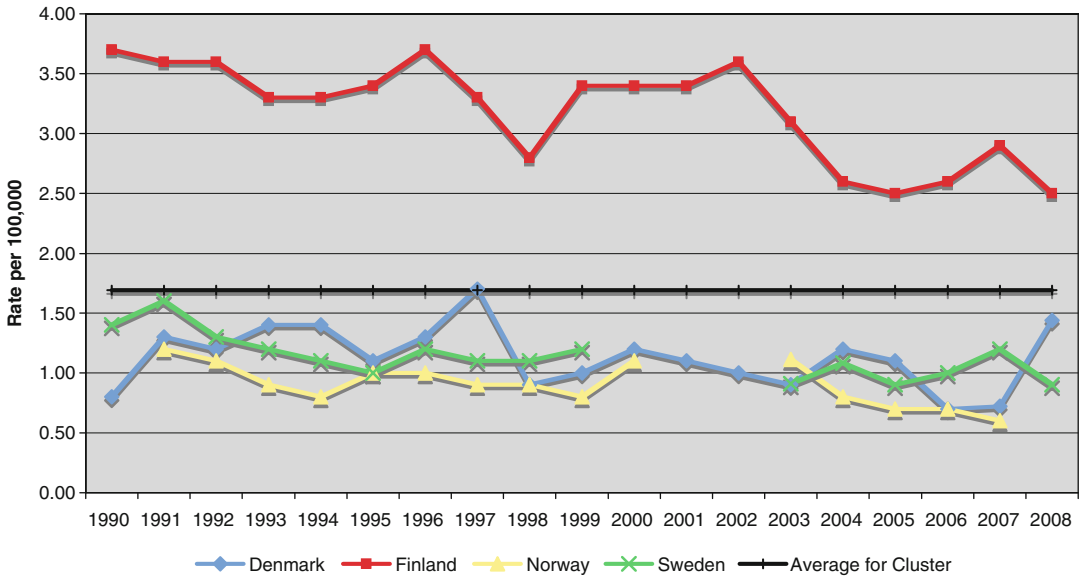


Fig. 4.10 Intentional completed homicide rates for Northern Europe country cluster

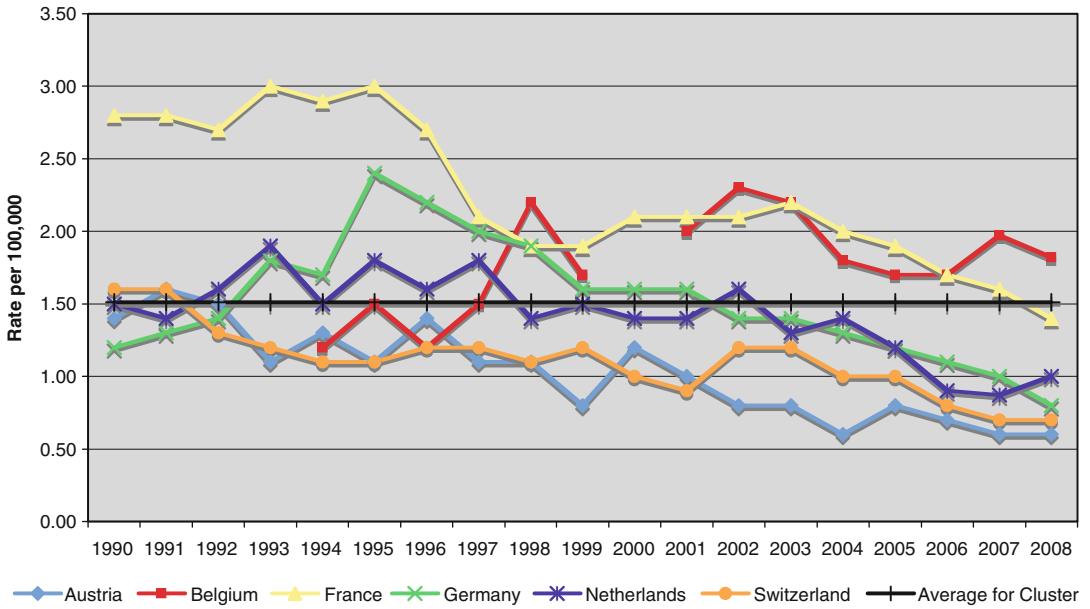


Fig. 4.11 Intentional completed homicide rates for Western Europe country cluster

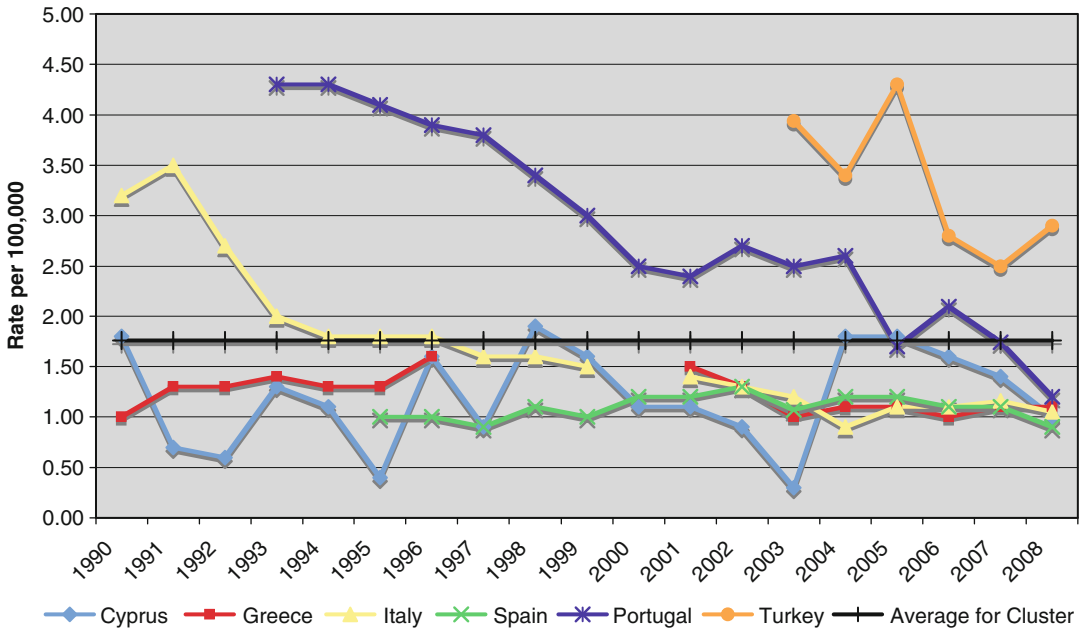


Fig. 4.12 Intentional completed homicide rates for Mediterranean country cluster

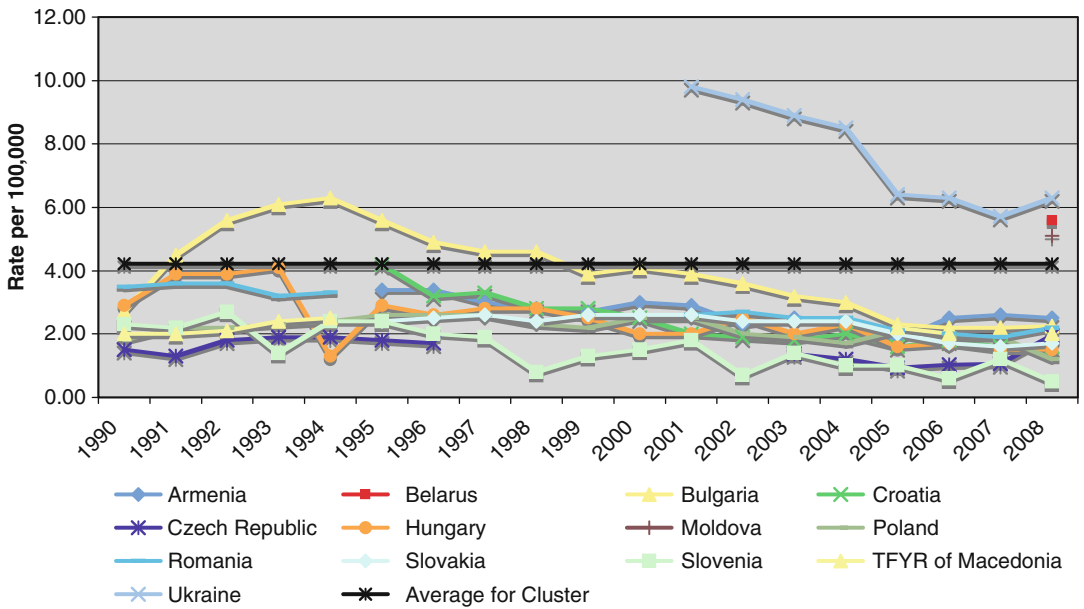


Fig. 4.13 Intentional completed homicide rates for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) country cluster (note: Russia and Albania are omitted)

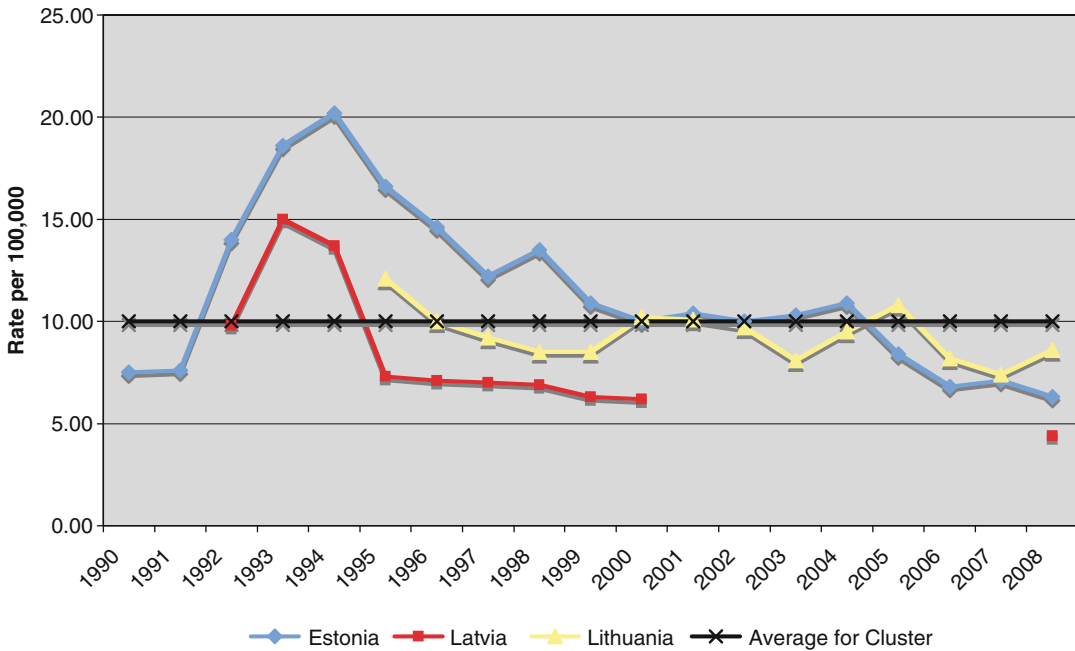


Fig. 4.14 Intentional completed homicide rates for Baltic country cluster

Selected Other Criminal Justice Facts About Homicide

The European Sourcebook (Aebi et al., 2010) presents homicide-related data on conviction rates (per 100,000 people in 2006) and prison rates (per 100,000 people). Since data for total (i.e., completed and attempted rather than completed only) homicide are more plentiful, we base the following brief remarks on total homicide rates. A few useful observations may be gleaned from the data. First, countries with high rates of homicide tend to have relatively high rates of convictions for (total) homicide: Turkey (19 per 100,000 population), Russia (13 per 100,000 population), Macedonia (9 per 100,000 population), and Albania (7 per 100,000 population). One exception is the Netherlands (7 per 100,000 population), which is due to definitional problems for the Dutch category of “total” homicide.

Second, countries with relatively high homicide rates also tend to have a rather high rate of people in prison serving time for homicide. Overall, the highest rates are in the CEE cluster

(Russia (77 per 100,000 people), Ukraine (44 per 100,000 people), Albania (40 per 100,000 people), Moldova (38 per 100,000 people), Romania (31 per 100,000 people)), with Hungary (2 per 100,000 people), and Slovenia (5 per 100,000) as exceptions. Remember though that the police-recorded homicide rates in Hungary and Slovenia are also among the lowest in the CEE cluster.

Third, a rather low percentage of the convictions for total homicide involve a *female* offender: percentages range from a low of zero in Cyprus to a high of 18.50% in Austria. In a handful of countries, a little over one-tenth of convicted offenders are female: Scotland (13.00% of all convictions for homicide were female), Finland (11.00%), Sweden (11.70%), France (11.70%), Germany (10.10%), the Czech Republic (14.00%), Hungary (11.70%), and Slovakia (12.50%). In the other countries for which information is available, the proportion of women and girls among those convicted for homicide is lower.

Limited information is available on the percentage of convictions for total homicide involving a *non-citizen* for 2006. Fourteen countries report the percentage of offenders convicted for

Table 4.6 Countries ranked by percentage of convicted persons for intentional homicide who are aliens

Switzerland (50.50%)
Cyprus (36.80%)
Belgium (33.20%)
Austria (30.80%)
Germany (29.40%)
France (15.90%)
Czech Republic (12.40%)
Portugal (10.40%)
Croatia (10.40%)
Finland (7%)
Slovakia (4.20%)
Bulgaria (3.20%)
Hungary (2.30%)
Poland (1.10%)

Source: European Sourcebook (2010)

homicide that are aliens. Countries with a relatively high proportion of non-citizen residents tend to have the higher proportion of aliens among those convicted for total intentional homicide (Table 4.6).

Focus on Age and Gender

Homicide *rates*, although useful, tell a rather limited story about the nature of violence in a country. They are obviously the most readily available data, but they are rather narrow in scope. For this reason, the United States routinely collects so-called Supplemental Homicide Reports, which try to capture additional characteristics of the homicide event (e.g., weapon use, relationship offender and victim, and so on). These kinds of data are usually not available at the international level. That is unfortunate, for conceptually and methodologically it would make sense to aim at arriving at a more meaningful description of cross-national differences (and similarities) in the *typical homicide event*.¹³ Are most homicides committed against intimates or strangers; do they take place at home, on the streets, or at the workplace; with guns, knives, or other means; under the influence of drugs or alcohol; are the offenders

male or female, young, middle-aged, or old; and citizens or immigrants? Malby (2010, p. 7) succinctly makes the case for expanding homicide indicators by arguing that “[R]esearch suggests that homicide related to intimate, family or other close/known persons tends to stay relatively stable, or only change slowly over time. As such, it is likely that particularly high and increasing homicide rates in a number of countries in the Americas are due on the most part to increasing presence of organized crime, drug trafficking and gang activity” (UNODC 2007, cited by Malby, 2010, p. 12).

A very small step towards broadening the measure of the nature of homicide may be taken by making cross-national comparisons of the age and gender of the homicide offender and victim. It is a well-known fact that both age and gender play a crucial role in homicide, and age and gender also happen to be the two demographic variables that are most readily collected on a global scale. Homicides involving female victims are much more likely to take place in a domestic situation, and females are more likely to become the victim of an intimate (either husband or partner). On the other hand, homicides involving male victims are more likely to occur outside the domestic setting. Unfortunately, we lack systematic comparative data to draw any conclusions here.

Figure 4.15 shows the age – and gender-specific homicide rates in the WHO European Region. Two features stand out clearly: First, homicide victimization is primarily a male problem. With the exception of the oldest age categories (80+), the male victimization rate always exceeds the female victimization rate. These differences are most pronounced for the age groups 15–50: for the very young and the very old, the gender ratio diminishes. Although adolescents and young adult males (15–29) tend to have a relatively high level of death as result of violence (11.80 per 100,000), which will be highlighted shortly, males 30–44 and 45–59 (18.48 and 17.22 per 100,000, respectively) are most likely to die as a result of criminal violence.¹⁴

¹³See Marshall et al. (2010) for a more detailed explanation.

¹⁴Rates of nonfatal violence in many countries are also highest among people aged 15–29 years (Sethi et al., 2010, p. 11).

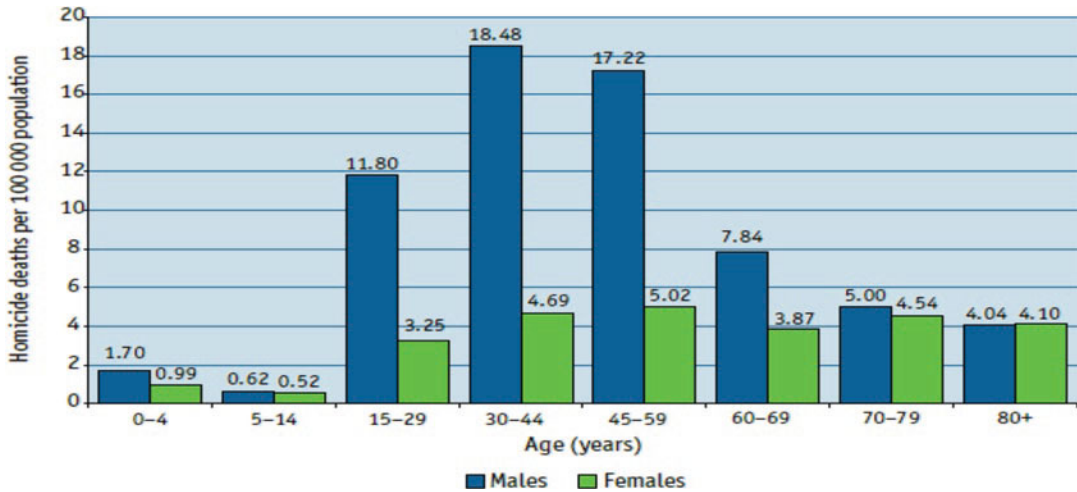


Fig. 4.15 Age- and gender-specific homicide rates in the WHO European region (source: The Global Burden of Disease, 2004 update, cited in Sethi et al., 2010, p. 11, Fig. 2.2)

Young people in particular are victims of violent death. A recent report by WHO Europe (Jakab, 2010; Sethi et al., 2010) states that interpersonal violence is the third leading cause of death (after traffic injuries and suicide) in Europe for those aged 10–29 years, accounting for some 15,000 homicides yearly.¹⁵ Forty percent of these homicides (or 6,000) yearly, are carried out with knives and other sharp weapons (Sethi et al., 2010). The report points out that the trends show a decline. Figure 4.16 (Sethi et al., 2010) provides the Standardized Death Rates (SDR) for young people (15–29) for homicide and assault per 100,000 for three clusters of countries: the European Union (EU), the European Region (52 countries), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan – all post-socialist countries). Figure 4.16 shows that, overall, after a peak in the mid-1990s, a downward trend set in for death through intentional violence among young European people.

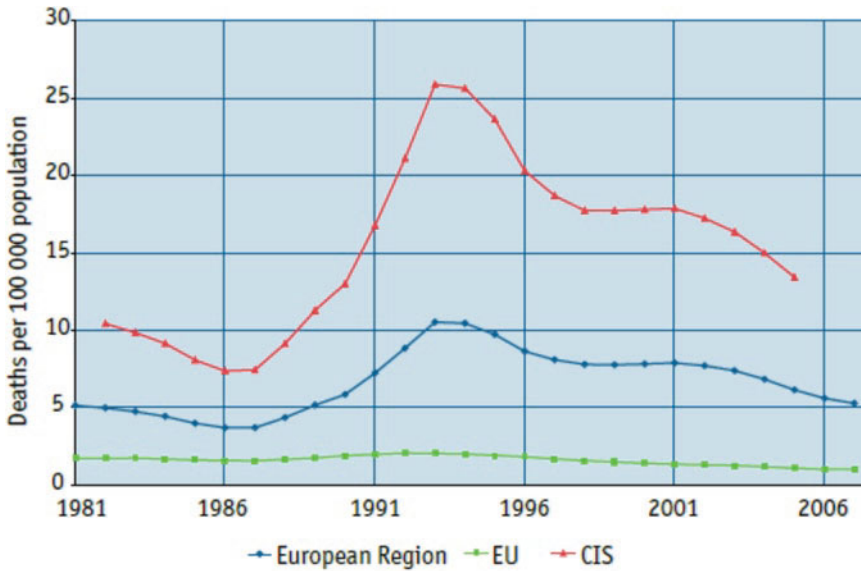
The report stresses that the European region has great diversity, with low- and middle-income

countries in the European Region undergoing the most rapid changes politically during their transitions to market economies (Sethi et al., 2010, p. 5). “High unemployment, rising income inequality, loss of social support networks and high alcohol consumption levels resulted in an increase in homicide among young people in the early 1990s” (Sethi et al., 2010, p. 5).¹⁶ The sharpest decline is noted among the CIS countries, although it is clear that this region still had a SDR for 15–19 year olds about 13 times higher than for the EU countries. Again, it is very clear that lethal violence is unevenly distributed. The WHO report concludes that 9 of 10 homicide deaths of youth between 15 and 29 occur in low- and middle-income countries, with rates in these countries nearly 7 times higher than those in high-income countries (Jakab, 2010) The report continues: “Even in high-income countries, both fatal and nonfatal interpersonal violence rates are several times higher in the most deprived segments of society than the most affluent ones” (Sethi et al., 2010, p. 5).

In an earlier section, we briefly discussed variation in firearm-related homicides across the

¹⁵Please note that this report covers the WHO European Region consisting of 52 countries.

¹⁶Note that these causes are different from those typically mentioned in the US for the large increase in crime in the late 1980s: drugs, gangs, guns.



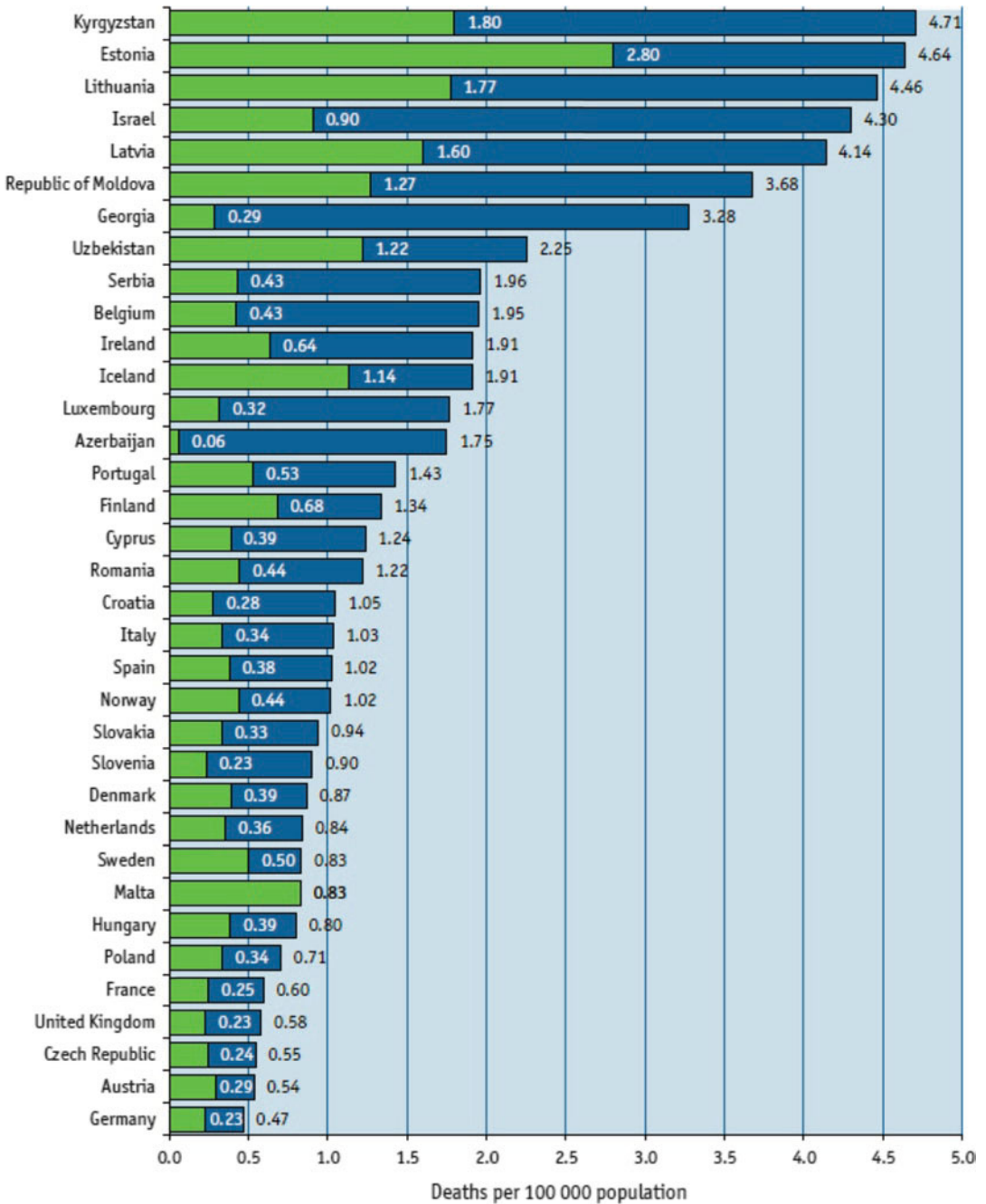
Source: Mortality indicators by 67 causes of death, age and sex (HFA-MDB) [online database] (44).

Fig. 4.16 Trends in standardized mortality rates for interpersonal violence among young people aged 15–29 years old in the WHO European region, EU countries, and CIS countries, 1981–2007 (Sethi et al., 2010)

globe, and we saw that the percentage of homicides committed with a firearm is relatively low in European countries. In Europe, concern is expressed about the alleged increasing use of knives or other sharp instruments among youth. The recent WHO report on knife violence among youth (10–29 years) states that, among the 35 countries of the European region for which data are available on the mode of death in homicide, there is substantial variation in mortality rates from stabbings with knives and other sharp implements (Figs. 4.17 and 4.18). The countries with the highest knife and sharp implement homicide rates are Kyrgyzstan, Estonia, and Lithuania. Those with the lowest knife homicide rates are Azerbaijan, Germany, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom. Looking at it, slightly differently countries such as Estonia, Malta, and Sweden have the highest proportion of homicides committed with knives and sharp implements, at 60% or more; whereas in such countries as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Israel, and Luxembourg this is about 20% or lower, and other means such as guns are used to commit homicide (2010, p. 15).

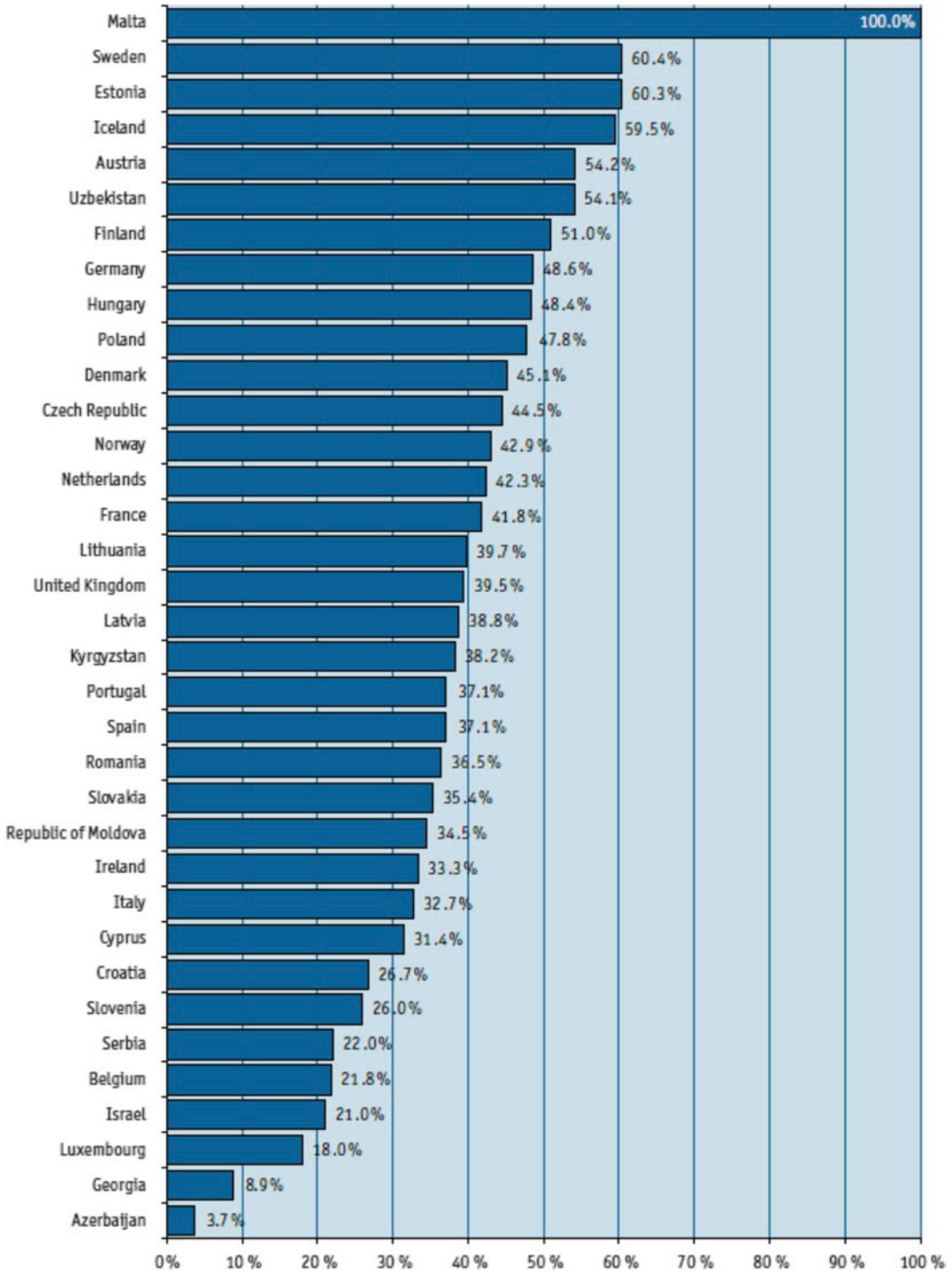
Conclusion

The level of homicide in Europe is among the lowest compared to a number of other world regions. Aggregate rates only tell a small part of the story: they fail to do justice to the heterogeneity and cross-national variability in rates. Such is the case for Europe: a very large geographic region, covering a large territory (almost 4,000,000 square miles), and home to some 730 million people. Not surprisingly, we find considerable differences in the level of homicide in the approximately 40 nations; differences which are largely geographically based. We found the country clustering approach proposed by Lappi-Seppala (and elaboration of Esping-Andersen's welfare-based classification) quite useful in distinguishing the "high" vs. the "low" homicide countries in Europe. The Baltic States consistently rank highest with regard to homicide, followed by the Central and Eastern European countries (CEE cluster). We are less satisfied with the extent to which the post-socialist cluster (CEE) organizes



Source: European detailed mortality database (DMDB) [online database] (6).

Fig. 4.17 Age-standardized mortality rates among people aged 10–29 years for all causes of homicide and from sharp instruments, selected countries in the WHO European region, 2004–2006, or latest three years available (from WHOKNIFE, 2010, Fig. 2.5)



Source: European detailed mortality database (DMDB) [online database] (3).

Fig. 4.18 Proportion of homicides due to knives and sharp implements among people aged 10–29 years in selected countries in the WHO European region, 2004–2006 (source: WHOKNIFE, Fig. 4)

the homicide data. There is a considerable amount of variation in homicide rates between these countries, suggesting that this cluster probably needs to be divided in two or more homogeneous smaller clusters. The differences between the four remaining clusters (Northern Europe, Western Europe, Mediterranean Europe, and Anglo-Saxon Europe) appear rather minor, but there remains sufficient within-cluster homogeneity to warrant additional research. The Anglo-Saxon cluster in particular is of interest in that it usually is not viewed as a distinct subregion within Europe.

The reliability, validity, and general availability of homicide statistics is not evenly distributed throughout the different regions in Europe. Much more is known, based on validated data, about

homicide in the generally more prosperous western parts of Europe than in the economically struggling, politically less stable parts of central and Eastern Europe. Yet, those data that are publicly available strongly suggest that many – but definitely not all – post-socialist countries struggle with lethal violence. In order to gain a better understanding of these struggles, looking at international homicide statistics is not enough. We need to connect with local experts who are able to provide more detailed information about the nature of violence in these nations.

Appendix

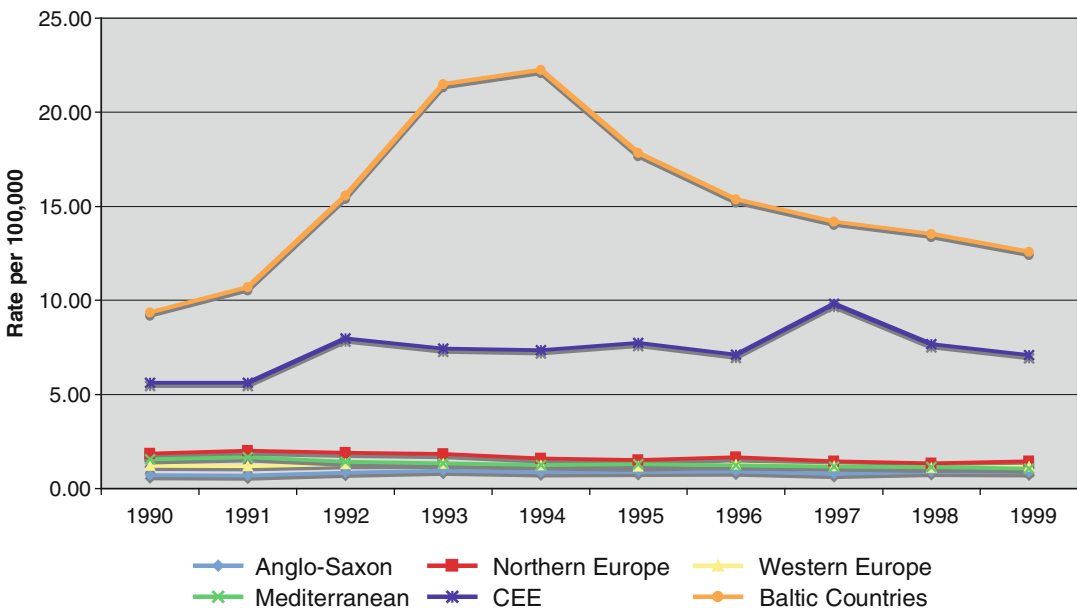


Fig. A.1 Standardized death rate, homicide, and assault rates per 100,000 from 1990 to 1999

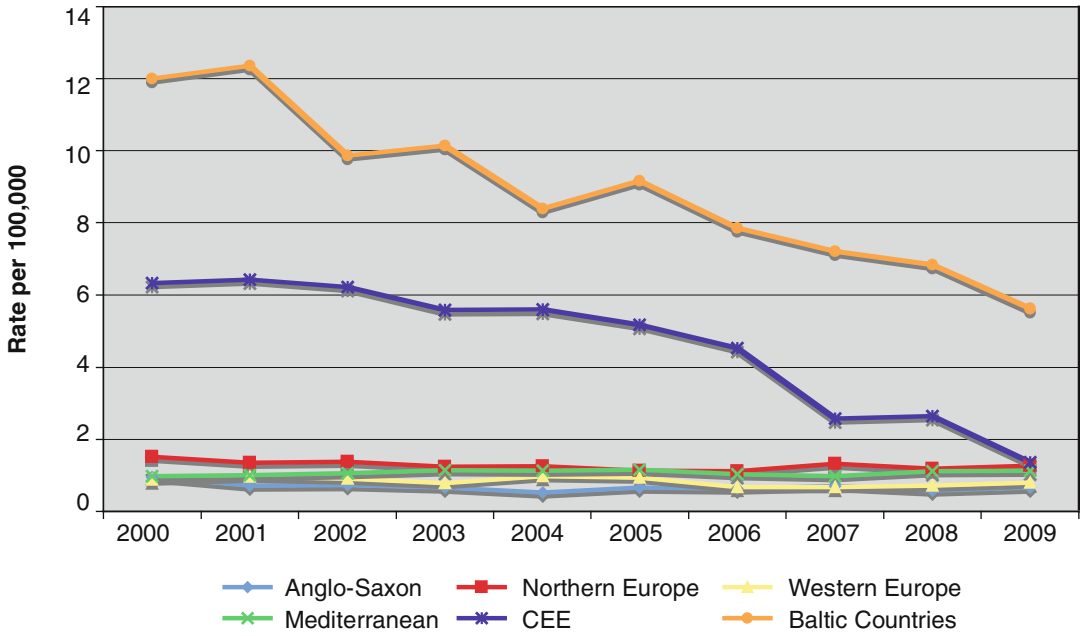


Fig. A.2 Standardized death rate, homicide, and assault rates per 100,000 from 2000 to 2009

Table A.1 Standardized death rate, homicide, and assault rates per 100,000, 1990–1999

Country by cluster	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Anglo-Saxon										
Ireland	0.69	0.65	0.8	0.67	0.7	0.76	0.95	0.87	1.06	0.97
United Kingdom	0.73	0.74	0.87	1.23	1.03	1	0.86	0.69	0.71	0.76
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	0.71	0.70	0.84	0.95	0.87	0.88	0.91	0.78	0.89	0.87
Northern Europe										
Denmark					1.29	1.17	1.09	1.18	0.93	1.07
Finland	3.14	2.95	3.3	3.18	3.17	2.88	3.29	2.64	2.32	2.67
Norway	1.18	1.57	1.06	1.01	0.75	1.03	1.02	0.93	0.99	0.84
Sweden	1.23	1.47	1.38	1.29	1.2	0.99	1.22	1.06	1.13	1.19
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.85 ^a	2.00 ^a	1.91 ^a	1.83 ^a	1.60	1.52	1.66	1.45	1.34	1.44
Western Europe										
Austria	1.63	1.24	1.43	1.32	1.13	1.03	1.15	0.89	1.12	0.82
Belgium	1.41	1.34	1.64	1.87	1.75	1.59	1.95	1.73	1.95	2.41
France	1.07	1.08	1.02	1.07	1.11	1.05	1.02	0.93	0.74	0.71
Germany	1	1.12	1.14	1.17	1.16	1.14	1.08	0.9	0.87	0.88
Netherlands	0.87	1.11	1.21	1.19	1.04	1.2	1.32	1.29	1.07	1.25
Switzerland						0.94	1.07	1.42	0.81	0.99
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.20 ^a	1.18 ^a	1.29 ^a	1.32 ^a	1.24 ^a	1.16	1.27	1.19	1.09	1.18
Mediterranean										
Cyprus										
Greece	1.02	1.4	1.19	1.26	1.11	1.25	1.49	1.47	1.26	1.13
Italy	2.56	2.72	2.14	1.65	1.49	1.42	1.37	1.17	1.22	1.17
Portugal	1.69	1.63	1.52	1.51	1.51	1.69	1.25	1.2	1.28	1.12
Spain	0.97	0.88	0.86	0.93	0.87	0.85	0.83	0.82	0.84	0.82
Turkey										
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.56 ^a	1.66 ^a	1.43 ^a	1.34 ^a	1.25 ^a	1.30 ^a	1.24 ^a	1.17 ^a	1.15 ^a	1.06 ^a
CEE										
Albania			4.53	6.43	3.82	9	9.9	48.34	24.73	20.06
Armenia	6.39	7.4	26.2	9.12	5.69	5.31	3.66	3.26	3.24	3.28
Belarus	7.07	6.61	8.92	10.68	10.76	11.82	11.07	11.88	12.18	11.04
Bulgaria	3.28	3.94	4.64	4.92	4.98	4.65	4.9	4.34	3.72	2.76
Croatia	2.76	3.72	5.04	4.7	3.29	3.25	2.96	2.74	3.26	2.79
Czech Republic	1.87	1.77	1.93	2.15	2.26	1.78	1.63	1.56	1.59	1.44
Hungary	3.07	3.95	3.91	4	3.4	3.39	3.1	3.19	3.15	2.76
Moldova	9.87	9.62	14.87	13.64	15.5	17.87	14.58	14.1	12.35	11.94
Poland	3.07	3.01	3.05	2.8	3.06	2.89	2.68			2.32
Romania	5.51	4.71	5.15	4.4	4.54	4.26	3.84	3.82	3.33	3.57
Russia	14.25	15.25	23.05	30.9	32.91	30.94	26.55	23.72	22.52	25.68
Slovakia			2.44	2.39	2.26	2.14	2.05	2.59	2.13	2.42
Slovenia	2.02	2.5	2.35	1.32	2.17	2.25	2.15	2.24	0.98	1.42
TFYR of Macedonia		1.6	2.02	2.19	1.87	1.66	2.48	2.41	2.3	2.61
Ukraine	8.11	8.83	11.52	11.95	13.79	14.95	14.99	12.95	11.97	12.38
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	5.61 ^a	5.61 ^a	7.97	7.44	7.35	7.74	7.10	9.80 ^a	7.68 ^a	7.10
Baltic countries										
Estonia	11.19	11.11	19.85	26.55	29.33	23	20.83	16.62	18.96	16.64
Latvia	9.14	11.6	16.15	25.02	23.55	18.41	15.73	16.41	13.05	12.73
Lithuania	7.76	9.35	10.75	12.93	13.91	12.13	9.58	9.54	8.64	8.44
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	9.36	10.69	15.58	21.50	22.26	17.85	15.38	14.19	13.55	12.60
Total avg. per year	3.95^a	4.16^a	5.81^a	6.11^a	5.95^a	5.58^a	5.11^a	6.03^a	5.04^a	4.80^a

Source: WHO

^aMissing data for 1 or more years

Table A.2 Standardized death rate, homicide, and assault rates per 100,000, 2000–2009

Country by cluster	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Anglo-Saxon										
Ireland	0.95	1.03	1.02	0.85	0.56	0.89	0.84	1.02	0.81	1.02
United Kingdom		0.41	0.44	0.46	0.49	0.42	0.43	0.39	0.34	0.30
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	0.95 ^a	0.72	0.73	0.66	0.53	0.66	0.64	0.71	0.58	0.66
Northern Europe										
Denmark	1.23	0.88	0.90	1.14	0.64	0.99	0.69			
Finland	2.59	2.85	2.57	1.84	2.42	1.96	1.94	2.15	2.21	1.90
Norway	1.2	0.75	0.89	1.05	0.86	0.64	0.96	0.67	0.57	0.64
Sweden	1.02	0.94	1.15	0.92	1.09	0.91	0.88	1.15	0.77	
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	1.51	1.36	1.38	1.24	1.25	1.13	1.12	1.32 ^a	1.18 ^a	1.27 ^a
Western Europe										
Austria	0.89	0.99	0.87	0.6	0.75	0.81	0.78	0.61	0.55	0.66
Belgium					1.68	1.53				
France	0.85	0.82	0.80	0.74	0.74	0.71	0.68	0.59	0.69	
Germany	0.74	0.69	0.73	0.67	0.63	0.55	0.58			
Netherlands	1.1	1.23	1.19	1.21	1.15	1.06	0.78	0.90	0.93	0.94
Switzerland	0.81	1.09	0.96	0.68	0.9	0.94	0.58	0.58		
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	0.88 ^a	0.96 ^a	0.91 ^a	0.78 ^a	0.98	0.93	0.68 ^a	0.67 ^a	0.72 ^a	0.80 ^a
Mediterranean										
Cyprus					1.43	1.68	1.71	1.27	1.14	
Greece	1.04	0.96	0.69	1.04	0.84	0.97	0.77	1.06	1.22	1.33
Italy	0.99	0.91	0.93	1.07			0.86	0.91		
Portugal	0.92	1.24	1.61	1.53	0.96			0.96	1.31	0.92
Spain	0.96	0.94	0.99	0.97	1.28	0.83	0.79	0.7	0.77	
Turkey										
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	0.98 ^a	1.01 ^a	1.06 ^a	1.15 ^a	1.13 ^a	1.16 ^a	1.03 ^a	0.98 ^a	1.11 ^a	1.13 ^a
CEE										
Albania	5.99	7.63	7.44	5.53	4.31					
Armenia	2.87	2.32	2.39	1.79					1.85	
Belarus	11.2	10.95	11.2	9.46	9.03	8.41		6.34		
Bulgaria	3.32	2.96	2.75	2.58	2.65	2.19	1.65	1.73	1.53	
Croatia	2.62	1.91	1.38	1.54	1.72	1.27	1.75	1.41	1.66	1.20
Czech Republic	1.51	1.25	1.26	1.27	1.15	0.87	0.96	1.02	0.71	0.82
Hungary	2.49	2.31	2.38	1.87	2.04	1.80	1.87	1.65	1.92	1.32
Moldova	12.68	11.83	10.93	9.55	7.69	8.39	7.36	6.79	7.14	
Poland	2.1	1.73	1.75	1.52	1.46	1.41	1.44	1.31	1.21	
Romania	3.58	3.45	3.63	3.77	3.06	2.48	2.13	1.97	2.31	2.15
Russia	27.59	28.75	29.71	27.95	26.05	23.69	19.20			
Slovakia	2.17	2.07	2.23	1.90	1.72	1.56				
Slovenia	1.02	0.75	1.35	1.28	1.77	1.08	0.56	0.92	0.56	
TFYR of Macedonia	3.10	6.32	3.36	3.18						
Ukraine	12.70	12.17	11.38	10.53	9.97	9.06	8.41		7.64	
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	6.33	6.43	6.21	5.58	5.59 ^a	5.18 ^a	4.53 ^a	2.57 ^a	2.65 ^a	1.37 ^a
Baltic countries										
Estonia	13.59	14.82	11.47	10.75	7.79	8.82	7.12	6.75	6.38	
Latvia	12.43	12.13	11.01	10.32	9.08	9.83	9.15	8.00	7.14	
Lithuania	9.97	10.14	7.11	9.36	8.31	8.84	7.28	6.89	7.00	5.62
<i>Cluster avg. per year</i>	12.00	12.36	9.86	10.14	8.39	9.16	7.85	7.21	6.84	5.62 ^a
Total avg. per year	4.57^a	4.52^a	4.20^a	3.91^a	3.57^a	3.49^a	2.93^a	2.22^a	2.33^a	1.45^a

Source: WHO

^aMissing data for 1 or more years

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Regional Variation in Europe Between Homicide and Other Forms of External Death and Criminal Offences

Marcelo F. Aebi and Antonia Linde

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the relationship between homicide and other external causes of death – such as suicide, motor vehicle traffic accidents and work-related accidents – across Europe. It also compares homicide to other violent offences and to property offences. The comparison is both cross-sectional and longitudinal, identifying regional variations in rates and trends from 1970 to 2008, unless in the cases where data are available only for shorter periods of time.

The first part of the chapter presents the available data and the methodology applied for the construction of a comprehensive database. The second part includes an analysis of trends, correlations and ratios between the different measures under study. In the third part, we discuss and propose explanations for these results. Finally, the conclusion gives an overview of the main findings and explanations proposed.

Data and Methods

Data for this chapter are collected from health and police statistics. Health statistics are those produced by the World Health Organization

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(WHO) and included in the European Health for All Database.¹ Police statistics come mainly from the *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics* (Aebi et al., 2006, 2010; CoE, 1999; Killias et al., 2003), supplemented with data from the European statistics published by Eurostat (Tavares & Thomas, 2007, 2008, 2009) and with data from the *United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems – UNCTS* (UNODC, 2010).

WHO Statistics

WHO data on mortality are presented as rates per 100,000 population. They include measures of homicide (deaths due to homicide and intentional injury), suicide (deaths due to suicide and self-inflicted injury), motor vehicle traffic accidents (deaths resulting from any accident of a vehicle propelled by an engine or motor that occurs on a public highway or street) and deaths due to work-related accidents.² To simplify the reading, in the

¹<http://data.euro.who.int/hfad/> (WHO, 2010).

²WHO statistics provide information on transport accidents as well as in traffic accidents. Transport accidents include ‘any accident involving a device designed primarily for, or being used at the time primarily for, conveying persons or goods from one place to another (WHO, 2010)’. As a consequence, it includes shipping and air transport accidents. In that context, we must take into account that for the drivers or pilots involved in an accident, such accident would be considered also as a work accident. Thus, to avoid overlapping between deaths due to transport accidents and deaths due to work accidents (and the subsequent double counting of the same events), we use the category of traffic accidents.

rest of this chapter these categories will often be referred to as (a) homicide, (b) suicide, (c) traffic accidents and (d) work accidents.

For these four measures, the WHO has calculated means for different regions of Europe including mainly (a) EU members before May 2004 (EU15), which are the first 15 European Union Member States and are all Western European countries,³ (b) EU members since 2004 or 2007, which are the 12 countries that joined the European Union between 2004 and 2007 and are mainly Central European countries⁴ and (c) Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which includes most of the former Soviet Union territory and corresponds to Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Caucasia.⁵ In principle, for the EU15, WHO data are available since 1970 for homicide, suicide and deaths related to motor vehicle traffic accidents, and since 1980 for deaths due to work-related accidents. For the EU members since 2004 or 2007, WHO data for the four indicators are available since 1980. Finally, for the CIS, WHO data on homicide, suicide and deaths related to motor vehicle traffic accidents are available since 1981 and, for deaths due to work-related accidents, since 1988.

WHO means are calculated when at least 50% of the countries had provided data for the year under study. This means that the number of countries included in the calculation may vary from one year to another. According to the WHO (2010): ‘the program uses linear interpolation to calculate the missing values between years, and the values of the first and last available years are repeated for the missing years at the beginning and end of the period’. The problem of missing

data is particularly relevant during the period 1970–1984 for Central and Eastern European countries as well as for Central Asian and Caucasian countries, whose inclusion in this chapter, focused on Europe, would be controversial. For example, for 1984 no data on homicide are available for CIS countries and, for Central and Eastern Europe, the only countries that provided data are Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia and Poland. The situation is similar for suicide, deaths related to traffic accidents and, until 1986, for deaths due to work accidents. On the contrary, there are almost no missing data in the series for the EU15. Finally, it must be mentioned that the reliability of suicide data during the Soviet period in the former USSR republics has been analyzed by Wasserman and Värnik (1998). Their analyses show that mortality data were reliable for the Slavic republics (Belarus, Russia and Ukraine) and the Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), as well as for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova; while it was doubtful for the Central Asian and Caucasian republics. For these reasons we have decided (a) to exclude Central Asian and Caucasian countries from our analyses, (b) to merge Central and Eastern European countries in a single cluster keeping only the 12 countries for whom both WHO statistics and police statistics (see the next section of this chapter) are available⁶ and (c) to analyze homicide, suicide and deaths related to traffic accidents since 1985, and deaths due to work accidents since 1987.

Interpolations for the whole dataset were conducted using the same procedure applied by the WHO and described above. Finally, both for the group of EU15 countries (referred to hereafter as Western Europe) and for the group of Central and Eastern European countries, we have calculated geometric means – instead of arithmetic means – for each measure and each year. According to Dodge (1993: 248–249), the geometric mean – defined as the average of the n^{th}

³Countries included: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

⁴Countries included: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

⁵The composition of the CIS has changed across time, but it includes basically Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Georgia.

⁶Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia and Slovenia.

root of n non-negative numbers – is used in particular to calculate the average of ratios and reduces the influence of extreme values (outliers). Thus, the geometric mean fits perfectly well our analyses that are based on rates per 100,000 population and include some outliers. For example, in the case of traffic accidents, Russia – whose figures are extremely high for the four WHO measures – did not provide data for the period 1999–2008. As a consequence, we excluded the country from the analyses of traffic accidents. However, a comparison of the geometric mean for Central and Eastern European countries with and without Russia for the period 1987–1998 – during which data are available for Russia – shows differences that range from only 1 to 3%. This corroborates the adequacy of the geometric mean for our analyses. For some of these analyses, geometric means were also transformed in an index based on the first years of the series (e.g. 1985 = 100).

Police Statistics

Data on offences recorded by the police are available from 1990 to 2007 through the database elaborated by Aebi and Linde (2010a) on the basis of the figures provided by the four editions of the *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics* (referred to hereafter as European Sourcebook), supplemented with figures from the European statistics published by Eurostat and the *United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems – UNCTS* (for details, see Aebi & Linde, 2010a). However, the reliability of the data for Eastern and Central European countries is doubtful for the first part of the series (i.e. the period immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union). Aebi (2004) pointed out that, in 1990 and with the exception of homicide, most police recorded offences presented very low rates in Central and Eastern European countries. Such rates were partially a reflection of the life style under authoritarian regimes and partially the consequence of the recording practices applied by such regimes, which were oriented to

show low crime rates (Aebi, 2004). The situation improved during the second half of the nineties as it was demonstrated by a comparison of police recorded and victimization survey data, which showed that the ratio – in terms of level differences – between both measures was similar in 1995 and in 1999 (Gruszczynska & Gruszczynski, 2005).

The European Sourcebook is constructed on the basis of a questionnaire sent to national correspondents in each country. The latter are asked to adapt, as far as possible, their national police statistics to the standard definitions of the offences proposed by the European Sourcebook (for details, see Aebi et al., 2010: 341–375). The offences included in the four editions of the European Sourcebook are intentional homicide (including and excluding attempts), property offences (theft, theft of motor vehicle, burglary and domestic burglary), violent offences (assault, robbery and rape) and drug offences (total drug offences and drug trafficking). However, we present in this chapter a selected number of them, each one representing a different typology of offences (property offences, violent offences and drug offences). The criteria to choose the offences included in this chapter are based on the relationship between offences of the same type. Thus, apart from homicide, violent offences are represented by assault, which is highly correlated with rape (Rho: 0.99; $p \leq 0.001$) in Western European countries.⁷ As a consequence, the correlation coefficients between rape and the rest of the offences included in our analyses are almost identical to the ones shown for assault. Property offences are represented by theft, which is highly correlated with its different subcategories such as burglary (Rho: 0.98; $p \leq 0.001$), domestic burglary (Rho: 0.93; $p \leq 0.001$) and theft of motor vehicle (Rho: 0.91; $p \leq 0.001$).⁸ Drug trafficking

⁷All the correlations presented in this section are those found for the group of Western European countries.

⁸See also the analyses of Aebi and Linde (2010a), which shows that theft and its subcategories – mainly motor vehicle theft and domestic burglary – have followed a parallel evolution between 1990 and 2007.

has been excluded from the analyses because data are available only for a few countries and the statistical counting rules (i.e. the rules applied in each country to count the offences that will be included in police statistics) for this offence vary widely across them. At the same time, drug trafficking is strongly correlated with the general category of drug offences (Rho: 0.72; $p \leq 0.001$). Robbery was included as a separate category as it constitutes a combination of a property and a violent offence. In particular, robbery shows a moderate negative correlation (Rho: -0.53 ; $p \leq 0.05$) with theft and a moderate positive correlation with assault (Rho: 0.65; $p \leq 0.01$).

According to the standard definition proposed by the European Sourcebook, intentional homicide means ‘intentional killing of a person’ (Aebi et al., 2010: 349). In principle, figures include assault leading to death, euthanasia and infanticide, but exclude assistance with suicide. Attempts are included in the total, but excluded in the category of completed intentional homicide. Indeed, both categories are strongly correlated (Rho: 0.85; $p \leq 0.001$). However, the total rate of intentional homicides is inappropriate for cross-national comparisons of crime because the percentage of attempts varies widely from one country to another (Aebi, 2010). That is the reason why the correlation between the total police recorded homicides and homicides according to WHO statistics is not as strong as the one between *completed* intentional homicides according to police statistics and homicides according to WHO statistics (see Table 5.1). Nevertheless, the category of total homicide has been kept in our analyses because two Central and Eastern European countries – Latvia and Russia – were not able to provide data for completed homicide, and also because we are not interested in comparisons across countries – which, as we have already mentioned, can only be performed with the rates of completed homicide – but on the *trends* in homicide.

The European Sourcebook defines assault as ‘inflicting bodily injury on another person with intent’ (Aebi et al., 2010: 350–351). As a rule, figures include minor assault, aggravated assault, assault of a public servant, domestic violence and attempts, but exclude assault leading to death,

threats, assault only causing pain, slapping, punching and sexual assault. Robbery is defined as ‘stealing from a person with force or threat of force’ (Aebi et al., 2010: 360). As a rule, figures include muggings (bag-snatchings), theft immediately followed by force or threat of force used to keep hold of the stolen goods and attempts, but exclude pick-pocketing, extortion and blackmailing. Theft is defined as ‘depriving a person or organization of property without force with the intent to keep it’ (Aebi et al., 2010: 361). As a rule, figures include minor theft, burglary, motor vehicle theft, theft of other items and attempts, but exclude embezzlement, robbery and receiving or handling stolen goods. Finally, the European Sourcebook indicates that the definition of drug offences ‘is fairly uniform through international conventions’ (Aebi et al., 2010: 371) and that figures should include consumption, cultivation, production, sale, supplying, transportation, importation, exportation and possession of large and small quantities of drugs as well as the financing of drug operations.

In our analyses, trends in homicide are compared with trends in theft, assault, robbery and drug offences, using data on police recorded crimes from 1990 to 2007, which are the years covered by the European Sourcebook. The analysis is based on a computation of the geometric means per 100,000 population for each offence and each year, which were later transformed to an index based on the 1990 rates (1990 = 100) (for details, see Aebi & Linde, 2010a). Depending on the offence considered, the analysis includes 14 or 15 countries because completed time series were not always available. 2010b).⁹ As it can be seen in Tables 5.1 and 5.2,

⁹Spain is included only in the category of total homicide because the rest of the Spanish police data are currently unreliable (Aebi & Linde, 2010b). Ireland and Sweden did not provide a complete time series for that category, England and Wales did not provide it for drug offences, and Belgium, Luxembourg and Portugal did not provide it for any offence. The analysis uses the disaggregated data provided by the United Kingdom (presenting England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland as three separate administrations) and includes Switzerland and Norway. For the latter, it was possible to reconstruct complete time series for total and completed homicide, robbery and drug offences.

Table 5.1 Spearman's Rho correlations between trends in homicide (according to WHO statistics) and trends in other external causes of death and in selected police recorded offences, in Western European countries since 1970

		WHO statistics (1970/1980–2008, 15 countries)			Police statistics (1990–2007, 14–15 countries)					
		Suicide	Traffic accidents	Work accidents	Intentional homicide total	Intentional homicide completed	Assault	Robbery	Theft	Drug offences
Homicide	Rho	0.687	0.527	0.870	0.837	0.905	−0.984	−0.609	0.912	−0.969
(WHO)	<i>p</i>	≤0.001	≤0.001	≤0.001	≤0.001	≤0.001	≤0.001	≤0.01	≤0.001	≤0.001
	<i>N</i>	39	39	29	18	18	18	18	18	18

Table 5.2 Spearman's Rho correlations between trends in homicide (according to WHO statistics) and trends in other external causes of death and in selected police recorded offences, in 12 Central and Eastern European countries since 1985

		WHO statistics (1985/1987–2008)			Police statistics (1990–2007)					
		Suicide	Traffic accidents	Work accidents	Intentional homicide total	Intentional homicide completed	Assault	Robbery	Theft	Drug offences
Homicide	Rho	0.775	0.551	0.380	0.895	0.963	−0.647	−0.606	−0.350	−0.874
(WHO)	<i>p</i>	≤0.001	≤0.005	N.S.	≤0.001	≤0.001	≤0.005	≤0.01	N.S.	≤0.001
	<i>N</i>	24	24	22	18	18	18	18	18	18

homicide data according to WHO statistics and according to police statistics are strongly correlated both in Western and in Central and Eastern Europe.

Regional Variations in Homicide, Other External Causes of Mortality and Criminal Offences

Figure 5.1 shows the evolution of homicide in the three different European regions established by the WHO between 1981 and 2008 as well as in the cluster of Central and Eastern European countries described above.

It can be seen in Fig. 5.1 that there are striking differences, both in the level and in the trends in homicide, between some of the regions studied. The lowest homicide rates can be found in Western Europe (EU members before May 2004) – a region that presents the lowest homicide rates in the world (LaFree, 1999) – and the highest in the CIS. In 1984, for each homicide committed in Western Europe, there were 2.2 committed in the States that joined the EU

between 2004 and 2007, 6.6 in the CIS, and 3.0 in Central and Eastern European countries. These differences increased swiftly during the first half of the 1990s. By the end of the series, in 2008, for each homicide committed in Western Europe, there were 2.6 committed in the States that joined the EU between 2004 and 2007, 17.8 in the CIS and 3.8 in Central and Eastern European countries. The instability of data for the CIS as well as its huge difference with the rest of the regions presented in Fig. 5.1 gives empirical support to our decision of restricting our analyses to a cluster of 15 Western European countries (EU15) and another of 12 Central and Eastern European ones.

Trends

Figure 5.2 presents the evolution of homicides, suicides, traffic accidents and work accidents in Western European countries, according to WHO statistics, from 1970 to 2008. Data are presented in the form of an index based on the 1970 rates (1970 = 100), except for work accidents for which

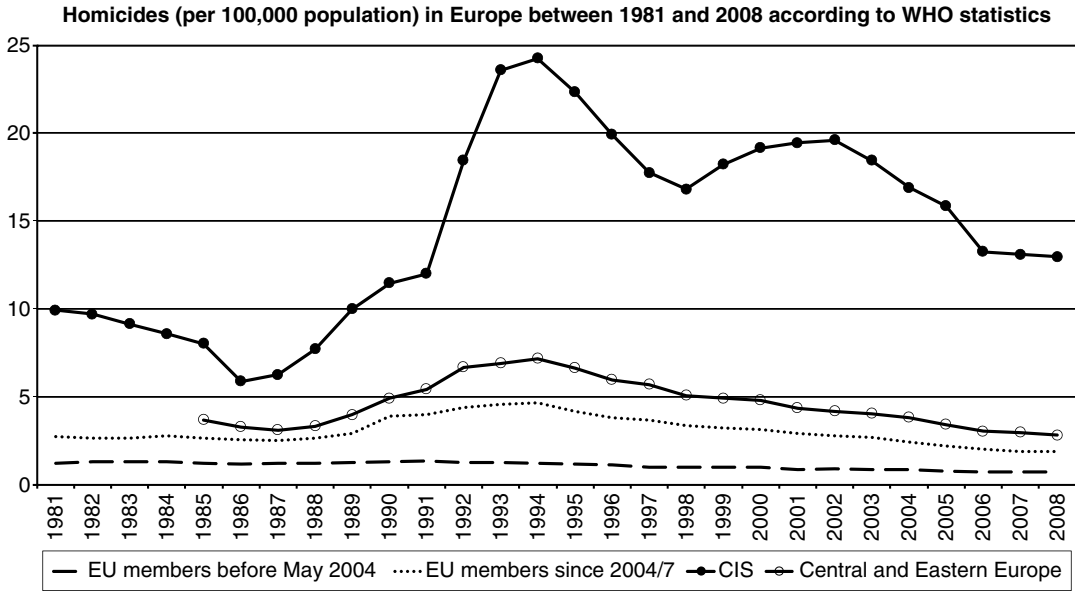


Fig. 5.1 Homicide (per 100,000) in Europe between 1981 and 2008 according to WHO statistics

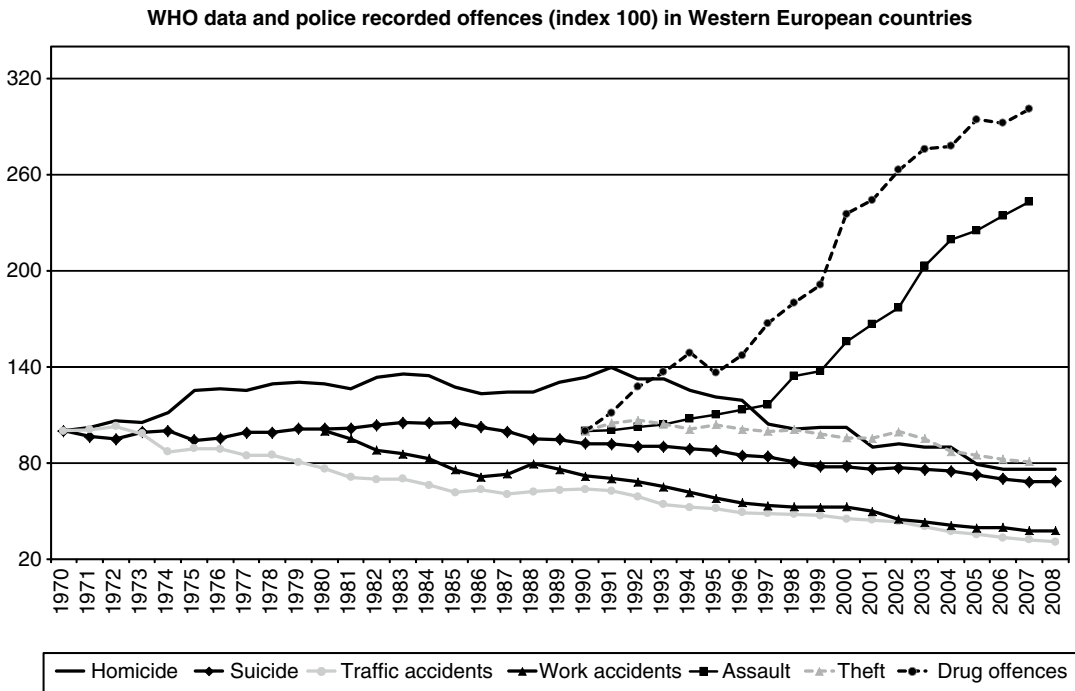


Fig. 5.2 Deaths by homicides, suicides, traffic accidents and work accidents per 100,000 population in 15 Western European countries (EU15) between 1970 and 2008 according to WHO statistics (base 1970=100), and police

recorded offences per 100,000 population in 14 Western European countries between 1990 and 2007 (base 1990=100) – in the case of work accidents, the index is based on data for 1980 (1980=100)

WHO data and police recorded offences (index 100) in Central and Eastern European countries

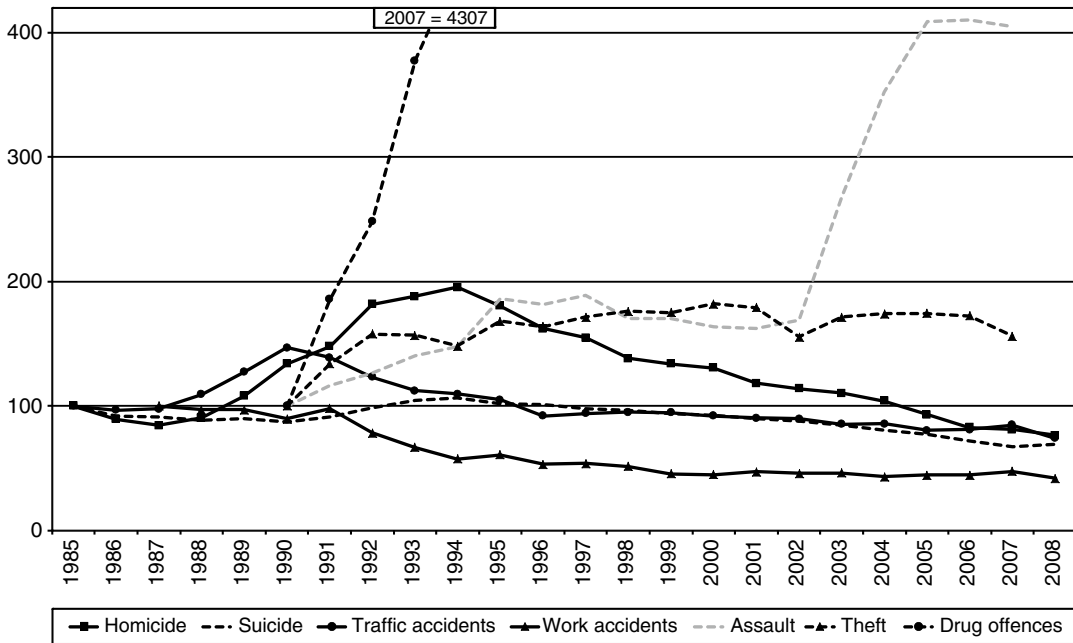


Fig. 5.3 Deaths by homicides, suicides, traffic accidents and work accidents per 100,000 population between 1985 and 2008 according to WHO statistics (base 1985=100), and police recorded offences per 100,000

population in 12 Central and Eastern European countries between 1990 and 2007 (base 1990=100) – in the case of work accidents, the index is based on data for 1987 (1987=100)

data are available only since 1980 (1980=100). Figure 5.2 also includes trends on assault, theft and drug offences according to police statistics from 1990 to 2007, using 1990 as the year of reference for the index.

Figure 5.2 shows that homicide followed an increase by steps from 1970 to the mid-1980s (in 1984 the homicide rate was 34% higher than in 1970) and decreased slightly during the second half of the 1980s, before increasing again and reaching a peak at the beginning of the 1990s (in 1991 the homicide rate was 40% higher than in 1970). After that, homicide has been decreasing, showing once more an evolution by (downward) steps since 1996. The homicide rate ended up being 24% lower in 2008 than in 1970. Suicide followed a curvilinear but overall stable trend in the 1970s, increased slightly at the beginning of the 1980s (by 1985, the suicide rate was 5% higher than in 1970), and started decreasing since the middle of that decade. In 2008, the suicide rate was 32% lower than in 1970. Leaving aside a very slight increase (3%) at the beginning of the 1970s,

and a relative stability in the second half of the 1980s, deaths due to traffic accidents have been decreasing progressively and constantly during the whole period studied, in such a way that the 2008 rate was 69% lower than the 1970 rate. The same is true, regardless of a minor increase by the end of the 1980s (6% between 1986 and 1989), for deaths related to work accidents since 1980. Their rate in 2008 was 62% lower than in 1980.

Police data show a constant increase of assault and drug offences between 1990 and 2007, and a decrease in theft and homicide (the latter is not shown in Fig. 5.2) from 1990 to 2007. In particular, in 2007, the rates of police recorded theft and homicide were 20 and 26% lower than in 1990, respectively, while the rates of assault and drug offences were 143 and 200% higher, respectively.¹⁰

Figure 5.3 presents the same trends as Fig. 5.2, but for Central and Eastern European countries. In this case, the index for homicides, suicides and traffic accidents is based on the 1985 rates

¹⁰For details, see Aebi and Linde (2010a).

(1985=100) and the one for work accidents on the 1987 rates.

Figure 5.3 shows that, after a slight decrease (16%) between 1985 and 1987, homicide started increasing and its rate had almost doubled by 1994. After that, homicide decreased constantly in such a way that, by 2008, the rate was 24% lower than in 1985. Suicide decreased by 13% during the second half of the 1985 and increased at the beginning of the 1990s, reaching its upper limit in 1994 – an increase of 6% compared to 1985 – and decreased regularly after that. The suicide rate in 2008 was 31% lower than in 1985. Deaths due to traffic accidents increased by almost 50% between 1985 and 1990, and decreased continually thereafter, arriving in 2008 to a rate that was 26% lower than the one of 1985. Despite a slight increase in 1991, work accidents decreased constantly during the whole period covered by WHO statistics. The 2008 rate was 58% lower than the 1987 rate.

Police data show a skyrocketing increase of drug offences, whose rate was 4,400% higher in 2007 than in 1990. Indeed, drug offences were at an incredible low level in 1990, reflecting surely a particular way – quite different from the one used in Western Europe – of dealing with the drug addiction phenomenon. Thus, the subsequent increase reflects not only – as it will be seen later – an increase in drug consumption with its correlate of drug trafficking, but also a change in the drug policy and in police recording practices. Assault increased by almost 90% between 1990 and 1997, decreased slightly in 1998 and remained at that level – roughly 70% higher than in 1985 – until 2002. Unfortunately – from a scientific point of view – in 2003, a series of changes in data recording methods in several countries¹¹ led to an artificial increase of the assault rate. Assault increased again in 2004 and 2005, and remained stable at the 2005 level during the last 2 years of the series. As a consequence of the changes in

data recording methods introduced in 2003, the 1985 assault rate cannot be compared with the 2008 rate. The latter is indeed 300% higher than the former, but roughly one third of the increase took place in 2003. Finally, theft rates followed a curvilinear upward trend until 2001 – when the rate was almost 80% higher than in 1985 – and, despite punctual decreases in 2002 and 2007, remained more or less stable during the last period of the series. In 2007, the theft rate was 56% higher than in 1985.

Correlations

Table 5.1 presents the correlations between homicide, according to WHO statistics, and (a) other external causes of death according to WHO statistics, and (b) selected police recorded offences. As the relationship between these variables is not linear, we use the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Spearman's Rho) as a non-parametric measure of their association. N refers to the number of years covered by the time series: 39 years (1970–2008) in the case of suicide and deaths due to traffic accidents, 29 years (1980–2008) for deaths related to work accidents and 18 years (1990–2007) for police recorded offences.

As can be seen in Table 5.1, all correlations are statistically significant. In particular, trends in homicide according to WHO data are very strongly and positively correlated with trends in intentional completed homicide (0.91) according to police statistics and strongly correlated with the trends in total homicide (0.84) shown by such statistics. Trends in homicide according to WHO statistics are also strongly correlated with trends in theft (0.91) and in work accidents (0.87), and moderately correlated with trends in suicide (0.69) and traffic accidents (0.53). Finally, they are very strongly but *negatively* correlated with trends in assault (–0.98) and in drug offences (–0.97), while their negative correlation with trends in robbery is only moderate (–0.61).

Data not presented here show that the rest of the correlations between WHO measures are positive and significant. In particular, there are almost perfect correlations between trends in

¹¹For example, since 2003 the Czech Republic started including assault leading to death in the total number of assault, Lithuania started including minor assault, and Romania started including body injury and aggravated body injury (Aebi et al., 2006: 51–52).

work accidents and traffic accidents (0.98), in work accidents and suicide (0.96), and a strong correlation between trends in suicide and traffic accidents (0.79). In the case of police statistics, trends in assault are very strongly and positively correlated with trends in drug offences (0.99), and very strongly and negatively correlated with trends in theft (−0.92), both correlations being statistically significant.

Table 5.2 presents the same correlations as Table 5.1, but for Central and Eastern European countries. *N* refers also to the number of years covered by the time series: 24 years (1985–2008) in the case of suicide and deaths due to traffic accidents, 22 years (1987–2008) in the case of deaths related to work accidents, and 18 years (1990–2007) for police recorded offences.

Contrary to what has been observed in Table 5.1, not all the correlations shown in Table 5.2 are statistically significant. Once more, the different measures of homicide are very strongly and *positively* correlated with each other, and the correlations are statistically significant. At the same time, the correlations between homicide and the rest of police recorded offences are systematically *negative*, and they range between strong (−0.88 for drug offences), moderate (−0.65 for assault and −0.61 for robbery) and relatively weak (−0.35 for theft). The only non-significant correlation is the one between homicide and theft. In that context, it must be pointed out that, for Western European countries, the correlation between these two measures was very strong and positive. Another interesting difference is that the positive correlation between homicide and work accidents is relatively weak (0.38) and not significant in Central and Eastern Europe, while it was strong and significant in Western Europe. Finally the correlations of homicide with suicide and traffic accidents are similar in both regions. In particular, in Central and Eastern Europe, the correlation between homicide and suicide (0.78) is strong and positive, and the correlation between homicide and traffic accidents is moderate and positive (0.55), both being statistically significant.

Data not presented here show that – as was the case for Western Europe – the rest of the correlations between WHO measures are positive and

statistically significant. However, the only strong correlation is the one between trends in work accidents and traffic accidents (0.87), while the correlations are only moderate between trends in work accidents and suicide (0.46) and between trends in suicide and traffic accidents (0.57). In the case of police statistics, trends in assault are strongly and positively correlated with trends in drug offences (0.84; $p \leq 0.001$). That was also the case in Western Europe; but the situation is completely different for trends in assault and theft because in Central and Eastern Europe they are *positively* correlated (0.42), although the correlation is not statistically significant.

Ratios

Figure 5.4 shows the trends in the measures provided by WHO statistics for Western Europe, presented as rates per 100,000 population. Trends in police recorded offences are not included because the large difference in the rates would make the Figure difficult to interpret (e.g. in 1990, there were on average 3,577 thefts and only 1.3 homicides per 100,000 population).

The comparison of deaths due to homicides, suicides, traffic accidents and work accidents presented in Fig. 5.4 shows that, during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, traffic accidents were the most important cause of death, followed by suicide, work accidents (for which data are available since the 1980s only) and homicide. That order changed since 2002, as suicide became the main cause of death, followed by traffic accidents, work accidents and homicide.

In particular, in 1970, there were approximately 23 deaths due to traffic accidents for each homicide. This ratio has been decreasing systematically during the period studied, in such a way that in 2008, there were roughly nine deaths due to traffic accidents for each homicide. At the same time, in 1970, there were almost 14 suicides for each homicide. This ratio decreased constantly during the 1970s and 1980s, reaching a minimum of nine suicides for each homicide in 1991, and started increasing after that, attaining a proportion of approximately 12.5 to 1 between 2005 and 2008.

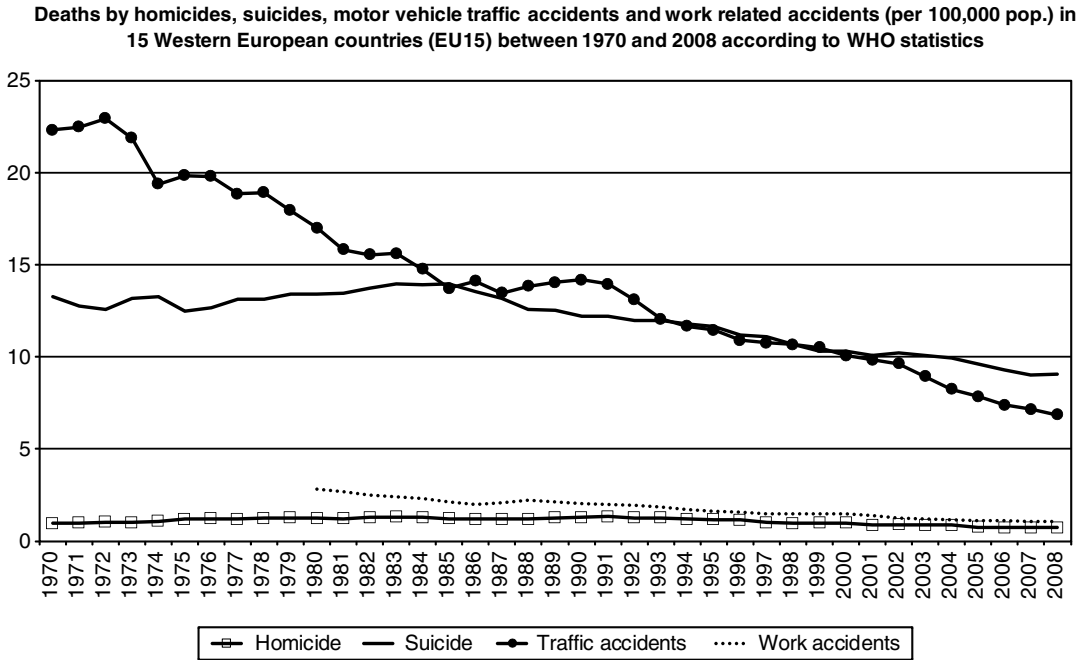


Fig. 5.4 Deaths by homicides, suicides, traffic accidents and work accidents in 15 Western European countries (EU15) between 1970 and 2008 according to WHO statistics

The evolution of the ratio between homicide and suicide since the 1990s is due to the fact that homicide decreased in a more pronounced way than suicide during that period. Finally, the ratio between deaths due to work accidents and homicides was 2.3 to 1 in 1980 and decreased during the following years until stabilizing itself at around 1.5 work accidents per each homicide since 1991.

Figure 5.5 presents the same trends as Fig. 5.4, but for Central and Eastern European countries. For these countries, data are available since 1985 (homicide, suicide and traffic accidents) and 1987 (work accidents).

The comparison of deaths due to homicides, suicides, traffic accidents and work accidents presented in Fig. 5.5 shows that, in the late 1980s, suicide was the most important cause of death, followed by traffic accidents, work accidents and homicide. That order changed in 1990, when traffic accidents overcame suicide, and homicide rose above work accidents. Since 1992, suicide became once more the main cause of death, followed by traffic accidents, homicide and work accidents. In 1987, there were 7.1 suicides, 5 traffic accidents and 1.3 work accidents for each homicide. In

2008, there were 6 suicides, 4.2 traffic accidents and 0.6 work accidents for each homicide.

Finally, in Table 5.3 we present, for selected years, the rates of the four measures provided by WHO statistics both for Western and for Central and Eastern European countries, as well as the ratios between both regions. For example, in 1987, there were 1.2 homicides per 100,000 population in Western European countries and 3.1 in Central and Eastern European countries. This means that for each homicide in Western Europe there were 2.6 homicides in Central and Eastern Europe.¹²

For the four measures included in Table 5.3, the cluster of Central and Eastern European countries presents rates that are systematically higher than those of the cluster of Western European countries. In the case of homicide and suicide, the ratio between both regions increased constantly during the 1990s and, even if it decreased during the 2000s, in 2008 there were still almost 4 homicides in Central and Eastern European countries for each homicide in the Western European ones, and the ratio was of almost 2:1 for suicide.

¹²To simplify the reading, figures are presented with only one decimal in Table 5.3.

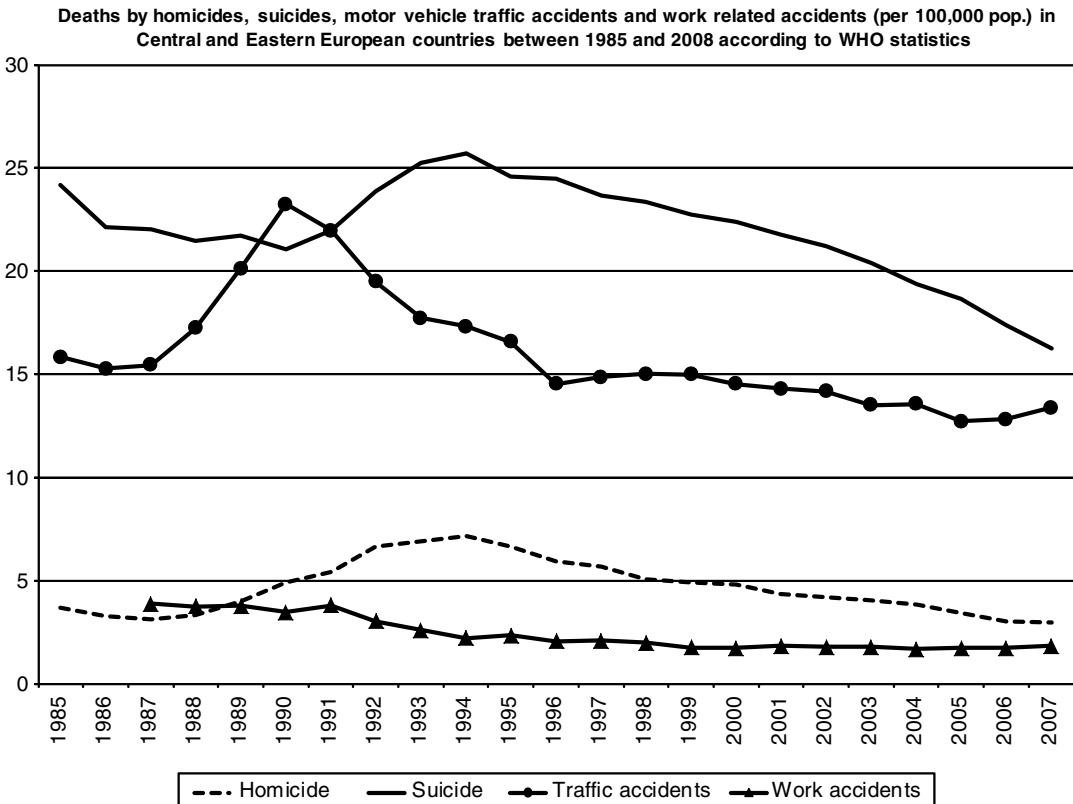


Fig. 5.5 Deaths by homicides, suicides, traffic accidents and work accidents in 12 Central and Eastern European countries between 1985 and 2008 according to WHO statistics

Table 5.3 Deaths by homicides, suicides, traffic accidents and work accidents per 100,000 population, according to WHO statistics, in 15 Western and 12 Central and Eastern European countries, and ratios between both regions (selected years between 1987 and 2008)

		1987	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005	2008
Homicide	West	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7
	Central/East	3.1	4.9	6.9	6.0	4.9	4.2	3.4	2.8
	Ratio	2.6	3.8	5.4	5.2	5.0	4.8	4.5	3.8
Suicide	West	13.2	12.2	12.0	11.2	10.3	10.2	9.6	9.1
	Central/East	22.0	21.0	25.2	24.5	22.7	21.2	18.7	16.8
	Ratio	1.7	1.7	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.8
Traffic accidents	West	13.5	14.2	12.1	10.9	10.5	9.6	7.9	6.9
	Central/East	15.4	23.2	17.7	14.5	15.0	14.2	12.7	11.7
	Ratio	1.1	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7
Work accidents	West	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.1
	Central/East	3.9	3.5	2.6	2.1	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6
	Ratio	1.9	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.5

For deaths due to traffic accidents, the ratio increased in a curvilinear way during the whole period, passing from 1.1 to 1 (in 1987) to 1.7 to 1 (in 2008). Only in the case of deaths related to work accidents has the ratio decreased, shifting

from 1.9 to 1 (in 1987) to 1.5 to 1 (in 2008). The evolution of these ratios is explained by the fact that, even if all the measures included in Table 5.3 have been decreasing in both regions since the mid-1990s, the decrease has been systematically

more pronounced in Western Europe than in Central and Eastern Europe.

Discussion

In this section, we propose some explanations to the trends, correlations and ratios presented in the previous figures and tables. We concentrate first in deaths due to traffic accidents, deaths related to work accidents and suicides. Then we analyze criminal offences, including homicide. Finally, we present a comprehensive explanation of the regional variation between homicide, other forms of external death and criminal offences in Europe.

Traffic Accidents

In Western Europe, deaths due to traffic accidents per 100,000 population have been decreasing constantly since 1970, although the number of vehicles in circulation increased in a very important way during that period. In Central and Eastern Europe, the levels of car ownership and use increased dramatically between the late 1980s and early 1990s (Pucher & Buehler, 2005). This increase was accompanied by a raise in the number of deaths due to traffic accidents. However, since 1995, the number of such deaths has been decreasing continuously.¹³

According to the OECD (2008: 202) 'Although it is difficult to identify and quantify specific causes for the improvements that have been made especially in the best-performing countries, at least some factors can be confidently identified. For example, it is evident that vehicles have become safer in terms of both ability to avoid crashes and crashworthiness compared to 35 years ago, and roadways are being designed to better separate and hence protect road users. In addition, seat belt and helmet use laws, anti-impaired driving laws and enforcement technology such as

speed cameras are having a substantial impact on the behaviour of road users in many countries'.

Some countries have tried to estimate the impact of traffic accident prevention strategies. For example, a comparative study on the development of road safety was conducted in the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Koorstra et al., 2002). In Great Britain, where the number of road fatalities diminished by 50% between 1970 and 2005, it is believed that three policy areas contributed significantly to the reduction: (a) improved standards of passive/secondary safety in cars, (b) measures to reduce the level of drink/driving and (c) road infrastructure engineering (OECD, 2008: 203). At the same time, in Germany, it is considered that the reduction of more than 50% in road fatalities between 1991 and 2005 is mainly due to (a) the implementation of active and passive safety features in vehicles, such as the Electronic Stability Program, front passengers airbags and side protection systems, and (b) the development and implementation of governmental road safety programmes such as the 2001 'Programme for More Safety in Road Traffic' (OECD, 2008: 204).

Moreover, a review of data from 1970 to 1996 in several OECD countries suggested that between 5 and 25% of the reductions in road crash, deaths may have been due to improvements in medical care and technology (Noland, 2004: 10). Indeed, a review of European studies of death in traffic crashes concluded that about 50% of all deaths occurred within a few minutes of the crash, either at the crash scene or on the way to a hospital, and that many of these deaths could have been prevented if more immediate medical care had been available (WHO, 2004: 1). In that context, it must be mentioned that the increase in deaths due to traffic accidents in Central and Eastern Europe at the turn of the 1990s coincides not only with an increase in the number of car owners, but also with a period in which, according to Shelley (2002) there was an important deterioration of the health care system, at least in Russia.

In sum, the decrease in deaths due to traffic accidents seems due mainly to improved standards of passive/secondary safety in cars, road infrastructure engineering, the enforcement of specific laws

¹³For example, in Russia, between the beginning of the 1990s and 2005, the car fleet increased by 260% but road deaths increased only by 15% (OECD, 2008: 204).

(e.g. laws on speed limits, seat belt and helmet use or driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol), as well as to improvements in medical care.

Work Accidents

Both in Western and in Central and Eastern European countries, deaths related to work accidents have been decreasing regularly since the beginning of the periods under study.¹⁴ This decrease seems due to an improvement of safety measures, many of which became mandatory through European legislation.

Thus, on 12 June 1989, the Council of the European Communities (1989) produced the Council Directive on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (89/391/EEC). This Directive ‘contains general principles concerning the prevention of occupational risks, the protection of safety and health, the elimination of risk and accident factors, the informing, consultation, balanced participation in accordance with national laws and/ or practices and training of workers and their representatives, as well as general guidelines for the implementation of the said principles’. This Directive – amended in 2003 and 2007 – led to a more homogeneous strategy across Europe on the prevention of work accidents because it forced Member States to adapt their national legislations by 31st December 1992. However, it is difficult to assess the impact of the national laws on the reduction of work accidents.

The introduction of economic incentives has also proved to be effective in promoting health and safety at work. These may take the form of insurance-related economic incentives, subsidies to stimulate occupational safety and health investments or tax reductions (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2010: 8–10).

¹⁴The European Commission (2008: 24) points out that, in the EU15, 73% of the deaths related to work accidents concentrated in the sectors of agriculture, manufacturing, construction and transport, and that 95% of the fatal victims were men, a percentage that reflects the low proportion of women working in those sectors.

Finally, the already mentioned improvements in medical care and technology could have also played a role in the evolution of deaths related to work accidents. Not only is the progress in medical care associated with the decrease of such deaths in Western Europe but, in Central and Eastern Europe, there was no decrease at the turn of the 1990s, when the health care system was seriously deteriorated.

Suicide

In Western Europe, suicide remained relatively stable in the 1970s, increased slightly at the beginning of the 1980s and has been decreasing since the mid-1980s. In Eastern Europe, it was also decreasing in the second half of the 1980s, but it underwent an increase in the first half of the 1990s, followed by a decrease.

Main Correlates of Suicide

Reviewing the empirical evidence on the influence of factors that have traditionally been considered as the main correlates of suicide, De Leo and Evans (2004) conclude that many of these correlates have a neutral impact on suicide. That is the case for mental health programmes (De Leo & Evans, 2004: 100), antidepressant medication (De Leo & Evans, 2004: 121) – which can even increase the risk of suicide (Jureidini et al., 2004) – and cohort effects (De Leo & Evans, 2004: 132). In contrast, there seems to be a close association between suicide and unemployment (De Leo & Evans, 2004: 124). Finally, some factors have a differential impact on suicide. That is the case for national substance abuse policies – which have a neutral impact on adolescents’ suicide but seem to have a positive impact on the overall level of suicide (De Leo & Evans, 2004: 112) – national suicide prevention strategies – which show positive impacts in some countries and negative effects in others (De Leo & Evans, 2004: 91), and alcohol, whose impact is conditioned by the national consumption patterns.

The latter means that alcohol consumption can be a risk factor for suicide in some countries, but a neutral factor in others (De Leo & Evans, 2004: 104), as it will be explained in the next section.

Alcohol and Suicide

The influence of alcohol consumption on suicide has been the object of many studies. Generally, positive correlations have been found in some Nordic as well as in some Central and Eastern European countries. For instance, a time series analysis of the relationship between alcohol consumption and suicide rates in five Western European countries found a positive association between per capita alcohol consumption and suicide in Finland and Sweden, but no relationship in France, Spain and the United Kingdom (De Leo & Evans, 2004: 102). A time series analysis of four Nordic countries – Denmark (from 1931 to 1980), Finland (1932–1980), Norway (1931–1980) and Sweden (1922–1970) – showed a positive and statistically significant correlation in Sweden and Norway (Norstrom, 1988). Another time series analyses, covering the years 1950–1972, showed a positive correlation between alcohol consumption and suicidal behaviour in 10 out of 13 countries (Lester, 1995). Skog and Elekes (1993) found an almost perfect correlation between the suicide rate in Hungary from 1950 to 1990 and the annual sales per capita of alcoholic beverages, and the same is true for the analysis of Pridemore and Chamlin (2006) of the situation in Russia from 1956 to 2002. For example, in the case of Russia, the economic stagnation during the Brezhnev period was associated with an increase of suicides, but the anti-alcohol campaign launched by Gorbachev in May 1985 – mainly through an increase of the prices and a cut of production – led to a decrease of them (Pridemore & Kim, 2006, with references). Similarly, in Slovenia – whose levels of suicide and of alcohol consumption were among the highest in Europe in the late 1990s – the implementation of a new alcohol policy, fixing a minimum age of 18 years for drinking and purchasing alcohol and limiting the stores that can sell them as well as their opening hours, led in 2 years to a

decrease of 12% in alcohol consumption and of 10% in male suicide (Pridemore & Snowden, 2009). These results corroborate the hypothesis that the link between alcohol consumption and suicide is influenced by national consumption patterns. In particular, according to research conducted by Landberg (2008), the link is stronger in countries where spirits are the preferred form of alcohol than in countries where beer and wine are preferred.

Situational Suicide Prevention

Another effective strategy for reducing suicide rates consists in restricting access to the means of suicide (WHO, 2002: 202–203). European examples of such strategy include the reduction in suicides produced by the introduction of catalytic converters, which remove carbon monoxide from car exhausts (Clarke & Lester, 1987; Lester, 1998), as well as by gas detoxification in Great Britain.¹⁵ The latter have been carefully studied and compared to the effects of gas detoxification in other countries. Indeed, in the long run, gas detoxification led to a decline of suicide in Scotland and England and Wales, but not in the Netherlands, where a displacement effect – from gas intoxication to other forms of suicide – was observed. This differential effect seems due to the fact that gas suicide was far more common in Great Britain – where it represented 50% of all suicides by the end of the 1950s – than in the Netherlands, where it represented only 25% of all suicides (Clarke & Mayhew, 1989). Taking into account that there is also a relationship between possession of handguns at home and suicide rates, another successful strategy applied in Australia and Canada consisted in introducing restrictions on the ownership of firearms (WHO, 2002, with references).

¹⁵ Other well known examples are those of Australia – where the restriction of access to sedatives led to a reduction in suicide rates (Oliver & Hetzel, 1972) – and Samoa – where the introduction of a pesticide (paraquat) in the 1970s was followed by a multiplication by five of the number of suicides in 10 years but, within 3 years of the moment when the availability of the pesticide was controlled, the suicide rate went back to its former level (Bowles, 1995).

Anomie and Suicide

Apart from all these factors, major socio-political and socio-economic changes are frequently correlated with changes in suicide rates. This correlation usually leads to explanations inspired by the work of Durkheim on suicide and its contemporary interpretations. Thus, the crisis introduced by the breakup of the Soviet Union led to an important increase of suicide rates that, according to Pridemore, Chamlin, and Cochran (2007), seems consistent with the hypothesis that rapid social change disrupts social order, thereby increasing the level of deviant behaviours. However, the rapid socio-political and socio-economic changes introduced by *perestroika* a few years before (1984–1990) were accompanied by a decrease of suicide rates in the former Soviet Union that reached 32% for men and 19% for women between 1984 and 1988, a period when suicide was also decreasing in Western Europe (Wasserman, Varnik, & Dankowicz, 1998). As we have seen, Pridemore and Kim (2006) suggest that such decrease could be explained by an anti-alcohol campaign launched in the Soviet Union during that period. Indeed, from a scientific point of view, the lack of reliable measures makes it almost impossible to test empirically whether the effect of the anti-alcohol campaign overwhelmed the changes in social order introduced by *perestroika*.

Overview of the Influence of the Main Correlates of Suicide

Applying the factors presented in the previous sections to the evolution of suicide in Europe, we have seen that changes in alcohol consumption were related to changes in suicide rates only in some Nordic and Central and Eastern European countries. The impact of unemployment is a matter of debate. In Central and Eastern Europe, the breakup of the Soviet Union led to an economic crisis that was accompanied by an increase both in unemployment and in suicide, while the subsequent decrease of suicide matches the improvement of the economic situation. However, in Western Europe, suicide remained stable during

the economic crisis of the 1970s and increase slightly at the beginning of the 1980s, when the economic situation had already improved. These differential and sometimes contradictory effects of the main correlates of suicide suggests that macro-sociological explanations of trends in suicide provide only limited insight and must be complemented with factors playing a role at the meso and micro level.

Homicide and Other Criminal Offences

Western Europe

The evolution of property, violent and drug offences in Western Europe from 1990 to 2007 has been analyzed by Aebi and Linde (2010a) combining data from police statistics and victimization surveys. These authors point out that there is no general drop in crime in that region. Even if property offences and homicide have been decreasing since the mid-1990s, violent and drug offences have increased during the period covered by their analyses. This evolution highlights the limits of the explanations to the crime drop in the United States, which are based on the premise of a correlation in the evolution of all offences. It also falsifies the explanations provided by classical theories of crime, which are based on the same premise. For example, the anomic situation created by the social changes experienced in Europe since the 1990s could generate strain or stress that could lead to delinquency but, if that is the case, one should predict an increase both in violent and in property offences and not, as in Western Europe, an increase in the former and a decrease in the latter. As a consequence, to explain Western European trends, Aebi and Linde (2010a) propose a multifactor model that is inspired mainly by opportunity-based theories. Thus, the increase of property offences in the early 1990s would be related to the consequences of the political and socioeconomic changes produced by the collapse of the Soviet Union, which led, in particular, to the development of a black market in Central and Eastern Europe and of new

lines of transportation for illegal goods and commodities across Europe. Their subsequent decrease seems related to the saturation of that black market, a reinforcement of police measures against transnational crime at the borders of the EU, an improvement of the socioeconomic situation in many Central and Eastern European countries, an improvement of security measures in Western European households and a substantial increase in private security in most Western European countries. At the same time, the increase in violent offences can be explained by the combination of several factors, including changes in youth's free time provoked by the development of the Internet, changing demographics and the rise of episodic heavy alcohol consumption and street gangs (Aebi & Linde, 2010a). In particular, the rise of violent offences is not due to an increase in reporting rates of assault, which, according to victimization surveys, remained stable from 1989 to 2004/2005 (Aebi & Linde, 2010a).

Central and Eastern Europe

The consequences of the break up of the Soviet Union mentioned by Aebi and Linde (2010a) played a similar role on crime trends in Central and Eastern Europe, where property, violent and drug offences increased in a very important way since the beginning of the 1990s. Both Aebi (2004) and Gruszczynska (2004) explain these trends mainly in terms of opportunity-based theories, such as the routine activities approach (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson & Boba, 2010), pointing out that social changes increase criminal opportunities. In that context, the development of a market economy multiplied the number of consumer goods – suitable targets for theft – and was accompanied by a social fracture between those with power or influence and the rest of the population, creating thus the setting for an increase of property offences (Aebi, 2004). Analyzing the case of Russia, Shelley (2002) considers that the increase in violent crime during the 1990s is a consequence of the transition – characterized by a huge growth of unemployment (especially among women), a collapse of the social safety net, and

the bankrupt of unofficial financial entities with the consequent loss of the savings of many citizens – and the rise of organized and youth crime. The main explanations of Shelley (2002, with references) can be summarized as follows: The growth of youth crime lasted until the mid-1990s and was related to increasing problems of homelessness, alcoholism, drug use, unemployment and domestic violence. Adult violent crime continued rising until the end of the 1990s. This upward trend is partially explained by the increased availability of weapons, which is related to the trade of small guns controlled by organized crime and former militaries. Moreover, there were many killings related to organized crime (which developed through the corruption of government officials), banditry and the division of the territory of major cities among crime groups. At the same time, the deterioration of the health care system implied that persons that could have been victims of assault became homicide victims (Shelley, 2002). The situation was quite similar in the rest of Central and Eastern Europe. In that context, the hypothesis suggesting that the rise of assault in these countries is, at least partially, due to an increase of reporting rates of assault cannot be tested properly because only Poland and Estonia dispose of time series since 1991, based on data from the International Crime Victim Survey (Van Dijk, van Kesteren, & Smit, 2007). These data show a moderate increase in Estonia – from 22 to 26% – and a medium increase in Poland – from 25 to 38% – in the percentage of assault victimisations reported to the police from 1991 to 2004/2005.¹⁶ This increase is associated with an amelioration of police confidence – measured in terms of the percentage of respondents that think that police is doing a good job in controlling crime in the local area – in both countries during the same period (Van Dijk et al., 2007: 142).

Finally, Central and Eastern European countries experienced, during the period under study, a huge increase of alcohol consumption and drug use.

¹⁶The authors wish to thank John van Kesteren, who provided them with the figures required to calculate these rates (van Kesteren, personal communication, 14 October 2009).

This increase has been confirmed by different sources (see e.g. EMCDDA, 2008; Hibell et al., 2009; Pridemore, 2002b) and – as far as drugs are concerned – is mirrored in the evolution of drug offences recorded by the police. The upward trend in drug use seems related to the increased availability of drugs in the markets provoked by the opening of the European borders, which facilitated the distribution of drugs and led also to struggles between the criminal organizations that were fighting to take control of the illegal drug market. However, as we have already mentioned, the skyrocketing increase in police recorded drug offences is also explained by changes in police recording practices.

During the 2000s, the upward trend in property offences in Central and Eastern Europe was interrupted. In that period, property offences remained more or less stable and even registered punctual decreases. This inflexion in the trend seems related to the multiplication of private security companies and household security measures, which occupied the role vacated by the criminal justice system, whose police forces and public prosecutors were not properly prepared to react to the rise of criminality in the early 1990s (Gruszczynska, 2004). It also seems to reflect an improvement of the socioeconomic situation in most Central and Eastern European countries – especially those that joined the EU – as well as the simple fact that rates cannot continue to rise endlessly. Indeed, the trend in property offences since the 2000s, as well as the downward trend in homicide since the mid-1990s, could also be due, at least partially, to the phenomenon known in statistics as regression toward the mean. The increase registered by these offences in the early 1990s was so extreme that it is not a surprise if later they started to decrease.

Alcohol and Homicide

Finally it must be mentioned that, as it was the case with suicide, the influence of alcohol consumption on homicide seems conditioned by the national drinking patterns. Thus, a time series analysis – from the 1960s to the 2000s – showed

that annual changes in alcohol consumption were positively and significantly associated with homicide rates; but that the correlations were stronger in countries with a more detrimental drinking pattern such as Russia and Belarus, compared with those with a less hazardous drinking pattern such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and former Czechoslovakia (Bye, 2008). The correlation between levels of alcohol consumption and homicide in Russia has also been corroborated by Pridemore and Chamlin (2006) for the period 1956–2002. Further, analyzing the situation in Russia's 89 regions in 1995, Pridemore (2002a) found a positive and significant relationship between alcohol consumption and homicide, where a 1% increase in the regional consumption of alcohol was associated with an increase of approximately 0.25% in homicide rates. According to Bye (2008), an increase in alcohol consumption of 1 L of pure alcohol led to an estimated change in the absolute homicide rate that was twice as high in Eastern Europe (0.25) than in Western Europe (0.11). At the same time, the magnitude of the change in Eastern Europe was similar to the one found in the Nordic countries (0.22). These findings give 'some support to the hypothesis that the association between changes in alcohol consumption and homicide in Eastern European countries is stronger than in Western European countries because of a more detrimental drinking pattern and high levels of homicide rate' (Bye, 2008: 21).

Towards a Comprehensive Explanation of European Trends and Variations in Homicide, Other Causes of External Mortality and Criminal Offences

Since the mid-1990s, homicide has been decreasing in Europe. At the same time, deaths due to traffic accidents and work accidents have followed a downward trend in Western Europe since the beginning of the period studied in this chapter – 1970 and 1980, respectively, – and have been decreasing in Central and Eastern Europe since the beginning of the 1990s. The decrease in traffic and work accidents should not have any influence

on homicide trends, even if some deaths due to such causes could, under certain circumstances, be considered as negligent homicide – involuntary manslaughter – because that category of homicides is included neither in the WHO statistics nor in the police statistics used for our analyses. In that context, we have seen that the decrease in deaths due to traffic and work accidents is associated with an increase of law enforcement, advances in health care and a major improvement of security measures. The latter, coupled with an increase of private security companies and a reinforcement of police measures against transnational crime, have also played a major role in stopping – in Central and Eastern Europe – and even reversing – in Western Europe – the upward trend in property offences that had started also at the beginning of the 1990s.

Indeed it seems that the whole Europe has shifted towards a security approach. This shift can be observed not only through the increase of security measures and private security companies, but also through the multiplication of restrictive laws covering all aspects of social life, from banning smoking in public places to tougher immigration laws, passing through speed and alcohol controls on the road. This increase in security has been effective in reducing property crimes and deaths due to traffic and work accidents, though its influence on homicide is hard to assess. At the same time, it did not have any effect on assault rates, which have been increasing continuously since the beginning of the 1990s.

As we have seen, the contradiction between the decrease of homicide and the increase of assault in the whole Europe defies the explanations given by most classic criminological theories as well as the explanations proposed for the crime drop in the United States, because all of them propose explanatory factors that should have an impact on all kinds of offences. The idea that the increase in assaults is due to the fact that violent offences are being more often reported to the police – because developed societies have become more sensitive to violence – has been rejected on the basis of the available victimization data for Western Europe and finds very limited support in Estonia and Poland. At the same

time, the comparison of Western and Central and Eastern Europe reveals a logical contradiction in the hypothesis that our societies have become more sensitive to violence, which finds its roots in the thesis of the civilizing process proposed by Elias (1997/1939). Although the idea of a more peaceful society could eventually hold true – at least theoretically – for Western Europe in the 1990s, the huge increase of homicides in Central and Eastern Europe during that period shows empirically that the situation was quite different in that region. However, and contradicting the predictions that could be drawn from the hypothesis of the civilizing process, reporting rates remained stable in Western Europe and increased in Central and Eastern Europe.

In fact, the increase of all offences in Europe at the beginning of the 1990s gives empirical support to opportunity-based theories. The collapse of the Soviet Union generated a handful of opportunities to commit crimes in the former socialist republics, while the opening of the borders with Western Europe enlarged the number of suitable targets and locations where these crimes could take place.

At the same time, there is no doubt that the collapse of the Soviet Union had extremely damaging effects on the social fabric of Central and Eastern European countries and reduced formal and informal social control. That is the reason why Gruszczynska (2004) suggests that, apart from the routine activities approach, explanations inspired by the concepts of anomie (Merton, 1938) and relative deprivation can also fit the trends in criminal offences. However, from an empirical point of view, the available indicators do not allow a distinction of the effects of relative deprivation from the ones of absolute deprivation (Land, McCall, & Cohen, 1990). Anomie has also been applied by Pridemore and Kim (2007) and Pridemore et al. (2007) to explain the increases of homicide and suicide in Russia, though it was not useful to explain the evolution of robbery in that country (Kim & Pridemore, 2005).

Although Durkheim (1897) developed the concept of anomie to explain mainly suicide rates, his ideas were later transformed by Merton (1938) and revised by Agnew (1985) to apply them to explain deviant behaviour under the

name, proposed by Hirschi (1969), of strain theory. Afterwards, they were adapted once more and led to the development of Institutional Anomie Theory, a macro-sociological explanation of crime (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994, 2001) which, as most macro-sociological theories, is quite difficult to falsify (Chamlin & Cochran, 2007; Lenski, 1988). Indeed, the concept of anomie is so flexible that it can be adapted in many different ways and becomes seldom falsifiable. Thus, from a cross-sectional perspective, it can be used to explain the high rates of homicide in peripheral countries such as those in South America, although it is contradicted by the fact that these countries present low rates of suicide. From a longitudinal point of view, it has also been associated with increases in homicides and suicides produced during periods of rapid social change, as the ones that took place in Central and Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 1990s. However, if the concept of anomie provides a suitable explanation of such increases, it finds its limits when it comes to explain the decline of homicides and suicides since the mid-1990s.

Merton (1938) defined anomie as the result of a discrepancy between cultural goals and the institutionally appropriate modes of attaining these goals. Accordingly, Hirschi (1969) concluded that ‘strain theories are class theories. In most cases, they begin by assuming a strong relation between social class and delinquency’ (Hirschi, 1969: 226). Empirically, strain theories have been mainly used to explain the implication in delinquency of people with a low socioeconomic status. However, the rise of crime in Central and Eastern Europe affected all types of offences, including white collar crime and corruption, whose authors usually have a medium or high socioeconomic status. In that context, the only way of applying the concepts developed by Merton (1938) is to force them once more by saying, for example, that the engagement in delinquency of these authors is part of their *innovation* mode of adjustment or adaptation to the new society conditions. Nevertheless, the only way of affirming that these offenders were suffering of a discrepancy between cultural goals and the institutionally appropriate modes of attaining these

goals is to expand to its maximum the concept of relative deprivation. By denaturalizing in this way the concepts of adaptation and relative deprivation, we would be building a perfectly non-falsifiable theory that, therefore, cannot be considered scientific. In that context, it seems more plausible to accept the idea – proposed by the routine activities approach – that one can always find a motivated offender ready to take a chance of committing a crime for profit (Felson & Boba, 2010).¹⁷ Opportunity makes the thief (Felson & Clarke, 1998).

Of course, many factors play a role in increasing opportunities to commit offences. Thus, the low availability of guns in Western Europe has often been invoked as one of the main causes of the very low rates of homicide in that region of the world, and may explain a part of the difference in the levels of homicide with Central and Eastern Europe, where more guns are available and more homicides are committed. The break-up of the Soviet Union contributed to the circulation of guns that were held in former arsenals and became the object of an organized traffic. The increase in homicides during the years that follow that break-up gives some empirical support to that hypothesis.¹⁸ Indeed, guns have a clear influence on the fatal outcome of cases of assault and domestic

¹⁷In the same perspective, analyzing the relationship between unemployment and homicide rates, Land et al. (1990) found few statistically significant associations. However, when the association was significant, the correlation was negative, a result that is consistent with the predictions of routine activities theory and contrary to those of strain or relative deprivation theory.

¹⁸Reliable data on homicide committed by firearms in Central and Eastern European countries are difficult to find. Chervyakov, Shkolnikov, Pridemore, and McKee (2002) analyzed 225 homicide verdicts (concerning 294 offenders), pronounced in the Udmurt Republic (Russia) during the years 1989–1991 and 1998, and found that the percentage of convicted offenders using firearms represented only about 10% of them. Chervyakov et al. (2002) acknowledge that their data is not representative of the whole Russia (were approximately 38,000 persons died from homicide in 1999) and that firearms might be used more frequently in metropolitan areas. According to an analysis of the ninth UNCTS data, approximately 60% of all homicides in the World are committed with a gun, but this percentage varies from 77% in Central America to 24% in South-east Europe and 19% in West and Central Europe (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008: 75).

violence (Cook & Moore, 1999: 281, with references). The weight of the latter should not be underestimated as research has shown that women generally account for about 10% of the victims of homicide in high-violence countries, but they represent up to 30% in low-violence countries, such as the Western European ones (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008: 5).

In that context, the quality of health services in Western Europe could also be one of the explanatory factors of the low levels of homicide in that region. On the contrary, the deterioration of such services in Central and Eastern European countries during the years that preceded and followed the collapse of the Soviet Union could be one of the causes of the increase of completed homicide in that regions. This hypothesis is indirectly supported by the fact that deaths due to traffic accidents also increased during that period in Central and Eastern Europe, while deaths due to work accidents remained more or less stable and only started to decrease in 1992. In contrast, in Western Europe, where the quality of health services was not affected by the political and socioeconomic turmoil generated by the fall of the Berlin wall, deaths due to work accidents and to traffic accidents have been decreasing constantly since the 1970s.¹⁹

Finally, alcohol use and abuse can also be considered as a factor increasing the opportunities to commit not only offences, but also suicide. According to Pompili et al. (2010: 1414) 'suicide is the result of complex interactions between biological, psychological, social and environmental factors and all of these conditions impact on one another. [...] Alcohol abuse is a means of easing one's psychological stress but, at the same time, impacts on all other factors, rendering suicide more likely'. Reviewing the research on this topic, Lester (1995) points out that suicidal individuals have high rates of alcohol use and abuse (Hawton, Fagg, & McKeown, 1989) and alcohol

abusers have high rates of suicidal behaviour (Wilhelmsen, Elmfeldt, & Wedel, 1983). If alcoholics are overrepresented among suicidal individuals, it seems logical to conclude that when the number of alcoholics among the population of a country increases, the number of suicides should also increase. However, according to Kendall (1983), suicide occurs at a late stage in the alcoholic career and is associated with other high risk factors for suicide such as divorce, previous suicide attempts and increasing age. The problem is related to the fact that the approach of Kendall (1983) is focused on individuals, while other researchers focus their approach on groups. Indeed, the main problem for researchers is, as in many other cases, to establish the weight of the different risk factors and, in particular, to distinguish between those that have an effect at the individual level and those that have an effect at the micro, meso or macro level.

Empirically, researchers, interested in the relationship between alcohol and suicide or homicide, have used alcohol consumption per capita as a measure of alcohol abuse. In the case of suicide, such increase should have an effect in the long run – due to the probable raise in the number of alcoholics that may commit suicide at a late stage – but can also have an effect in the short run by increasing the rates of impulsive suicides. The latter effect is more clearly seen in the case of homicide, as alcohol decreases the individual's level of self-awareness (Hull, 1981) and could lead to an increase of non-premeditated homicides. Indeed, research on the correlation between changes in alcohol consumption and their influence on suicide and homicide rates has shown that this correlation is conditioned by the national drinking patterns. In countries with a more detrimental drinking pattern, the link between alcohol consumption and suicide or homicide is stronger than in the ones with a less detrimental drinking pattern, where sometimes the link cannot be observed, at least with the available indicators and methods of analysis.²⁰

¹⁹Panel reviews conducted mainly in Australia, Canada and the United States shows that advances in health care led to an average reduction of 50% in medically preventable deaths; while trauma registry studies show a reduction of approximately 15–20% reduction (Brennan et al., 2002; Jurkovich, Mock, & Charles, 1999).

²⁰For example, countries may not be the right unit of analysis for assessing the correlates of homicides. Regions, cities or neighbourhoods would probably be a better unit.

Thus, in some Eastern European countries, increases in the alcohol consumption per capita were associated with increases in the number of homicides. The same is true for some Nordic countries, although the effect is less visible because the overall rate of homicide is quite low. As the levels of alcohol consumption are generally higher in Central and Eastern European countries than in Western European ones, the use of alcohol could also be an explanatory factor of the differences in the levels of homicide between both regions. At the same time, the development of binge-drinking among European adolescents is correlated with a general increase in assault rates.

These findings suggest that a series of conditions must be met in order for a factor to have a visible influence on homicide and suicide trends. Taking alcohol consumption as an example, the conditions would be that (a) the levels of alcohol consumption among the population must be very high,²¹ (b) the percentage of individuals committing homicide and suicide under the influence of alcohol must be very high too, and (c) the changes in alcohol consumption must be very important. These are the general conditions for any intervention to have an effect at the macro-level. As we have already seen, gas detoxification had a clear impact on suicide rates in Great Britain – where 50% of the suicidal individuals used that method to commit suicide – but no significant effect in the Netherlands, where the percentage was 25%. Another example can be found in the heroin prescription programs in Switzerland, which led to a huge decrease of the offences committed by the drug-addicts participating in the programme, but whose effect on the general crime rates were less visible, because only a limited number of persons (1,000) participated in those programs (Killias & Aebi, 2000).

²¹For example, in Russia, the estimated average rate of annual alcohol consumption in the late 1990s was 15 L per person; while in the European Union it was 10 L (Nemtsov, 2000; Trembl, 1997).

Conclusion

Although homicide occupies the front pages of the newspapers almost daily, the data presented in this chapter shows that it is far from being the main cause of external death in Europe. In 2008, in Western Europe, for each homicide there were roughly 12 deaths due to suicides, 9 due to traffic accidents and 2 due to work accidents. At the same time, in Central and Eastern Europe there were 6 deaths due to suicides and 4 due to traffic accidents for each homicide. In that region, only work accidents produced lesser deaths than homicides (0.6 for each homicide).

The main influence on homicide rates from 1980 to 2008 has been the breakup of the Soviet Union. Thus, during the early 1990s, homicide increased in the whole Europe, but especially in Central and Eastern European countries, where its rate almost doubled. Indeed, the cluster of Central and Eastern European countries has always shown higher rates of homicide than the one of Western European countries, varying from 3 homicides to 1 in the mid-1980s to almost 4 to 1 in 2008, after reaching more than 5 to 1 in the mid-1990s. The same is true for suicide, deaths due to traffic accidents and deaths related to work accidents, for which the 2008 ratios were respectively 1.8, 1.7 and 1.5 in Central and Eastern Europe for each case in Western Europe.

Opportunity-based theories seem to provide the more plausible explanation to the regional variation in homicide and other causes of external mortality, as well as in criminal offences. The collapse of the Soviet Union facilitated transnational crime, increased the number of guns circulating in the continent and weakened social control in Central and Eastern Europe where many countries also experienced a major increase in alcohol consumption and a clear deterioration of their health care system. As a consequence, the rate of homicide and other offences increased in both sides of the continent, but particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. In this region, suicide experienced also an increase and, in addition, the deterioration of the health care system was associated with a continuous upward trend in

deaths due to traffic accidents and a stable rate of deaths related to work accidents. On the contrary, in Western Europe, deaths due to these two causes have been decreasing since the beginning – 1970 and 1980, respectively – of the time series studied as a consequence of a strengthening of law enforcement, advancements in health care and a major improvement of security measures.

During the 1990s, the slow amelioration of the socioeconomic situation in Central and Eastern Europe was accompanied, in Europe as a whole, by an important rise of private security, formal social control and security measures in households and stores. These developments reduced the number of opportunities to commit crimes and seem responsible for the following decrease, in both sides of the continent, of homicides and property offences, with only drug trafficking remaining as a fast way of obtaining an illegal income. At the same time, in Central and Eastern Europe, suicides and deaths related to traffic and work accidents joined the trend observed in Western Europe and started decreasing. In that context, part of the decrease in homicides, suicides, property offences and deaths related to traffic and work accidents could be due to regression toward the mean, because their rates could not continue to grow endlessly.

Finally, since the 1990s, there have been major changes in youth lifestyle provoked mainly by the development of the internet and the growth of drug use and binge drinking. As explained by Aebi and Linde (2010a), ‘youths who have unlimited access to the internet spend more time at home – and are more exposed to the risk of engaging in computer related offences, which have been increasing constantly – while those who have a limited access to the Web spend more time in the streets and are differentially exposed to the risk of engaging in conventional delinquency’. Among the latter, there is an overrepresentation of youths with a low socioeconomic status and, particularly in Western Europe, of youths from who are second-generation ethnic minorities. The number of the latter has clearly increased during the last decades, and research suggests that their presence is associated with the recent development of European street gangs, which are often

involved in drug trafficking and group fighting (Aebi & Linde, 2010a). These changes in youth lifestyle seem to be the main cause of the increase of violent and drug related offences in Europe.

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Theory and Explanation in Contemporary European Homicide Research

6

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In this chapter, we review recent European homicide research from the point of view of criminological theory. We draw on the standard canon of theoretical perspectives used in scientific explanations of criminal behaviour. Research on homicide tends to be dominated by social structural explanations such as strain theory and social disorganization theory. Examples of alternative perspectives include evolutionary psychology and feminist theories of violence. Given that a single study may include elements from multiple theoretical perspectives, some studies will be discussed under more than one heading. For example, historical research informed by the theory of the civilizing process (Elias, 2004 [1939]) contains elements of what later came to be known as self-control theory and institutional (anomie) theory.

Any review is bound to be influenced by the authors' subjective perspectives. In order to reduce such bias, we conducted a small-scale systematic search of European homicide research published in mainstream criminological peer-review journals. Limited to articles published since 2000, the emphasis is on *contemporary* research. In order for a study to be counted as "European" at least one of the authors had to be affiliated with a European institution – either an academic department or a research agency. Given our focus on etiological theories of homicidal

behaviour (offending and/or victimization), we excluded studies of social reactions to homicide. Thus, research that examines, for example, how the problem of lethal violence is covered in the media or addressed in public policy, is not included in this review.

Since this review is limited to studies published in international (i.e., English language) journals, it is not meant to be representative of the full spectrum of European homicide research. Instead, the purpose is to focus on the "cutting-edge". Scholars who publish in international journals make their work visible to the global community, unobstructed by language barriers. Moreover, the fact that these contributions were subjected to the peer-review process serves as a rough indicator of their quality and relevance. Given our interest in current work, exclusive focus on English language articles is far less restrictive than it would have been some decades ago (Bjarnason & Sigfúsdóttir, 2002).

The journals used in our literature search are listed in Table 6.1. Our search identified 38 research articles on homicidal behaviour featuring at least one European author. Of the 38 first authors,¹ almost two-thirds (63%) represented institutions located in the continental Europe, while the others were from the UK, USA, or Ireland (with one Swiss and one Swedish researcher affiliated with an UK institution). These facts suggest that our search is not overly

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¹The gross number of authors was 92, of whom 88% were from European research institutions.

Table 6.1 Articles on homicide offending or victimization published by European scholars in selected journals, 2000 to present^a

Journal	Number of articles	%
<i>Aggression and Violent Behavior</i>	0	
<i>British Journal of Criminology</i>	8	21
<i>Criminology</i>	0	
<i>Criminology & Public Policy</i>	0	
<i>European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research</i>	1	3
<i>European Journal of Criminology</i>	0	
<i>European Journal of Public Health</i>	3	8
<i>Feminist criminology</i>	1	3
<i>Homicide Studies</i>	13	34
<i>International Criminal Justice Review</i>	0	
<i>Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention</i>	8	21
<i>Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health</i>	0	
<i>Journal of Quantitative Criminology</i>	1	3
<i>Social Science and Medicine</i>	1	3
<i>Violence Against Women</i>	2	5
<i>Violence and Victims</i>	0	
<i>N</i>	38	100

^aThe searches were conducted in October, 2010

biased towards the Anglophone cultural sphere. The 38 entries generated by the formal literature search constitute the core source material for our review. In addition, drawing on our personal knowledge of the field, we have added to this list a small number of studies from sources ignored in the formal search.

Our goal is to describe *theories-in-use* as opposed to theories-in-textbooks. However, as we quickly discovered, criminological theory plays a relatively limited role in European homicide research. It was more typical for us to encounter descriptive or epidemiological studies. Sometimes description was very detailed, informed by the framework of forensic science. Following in the footsteps of Marvin Wolfgang's

classic *Patterns of Criminal Homicide* (1958), many of the studies adhere to multiple-factor approach. Research following this tradition describes the socio-demographic distribution as well as spatial and temporal dynamics of lethal violence. This style of research qualifies as “explanatory” in a very limited sense. It describes outcomes in a specific population by generating a detailed (disaggregated) profile of the homicide problem. Research of this variety is likely to serve as a useful first step towards developing theoretical knowledge about the causes of homicide.

A Historical Prelude: Verkko's Laws

It is debatable whether any single scholar can be regarded as a classic of European homicide research. Among possible contenders, the Finnish scholar Veli Verkko is a strong candidate. From the 1920s to 1950s, he published several studies on homicide combining strong empirical foundation with a quest to identify general patterns and invariant features of lethal violence. Today, he is best known as the author of the so-called “Verkko's laws” (Verkko, 1951).

Drawing on extensive statistical research, Verkko observed that the proportion of female homicide victims was higher when the overall homicide rate was low, and vice versa. Modern homicide researchers may regard Verkko's use of the concept “law” as hyperbolic, but the basic idea is still valid. When homicide is disaggregated to its constituent parts, the various components tend to manifest differential variability (Daly & Wilson, 1988, pp. 284–286). Crimes involving unrelated young males as offender and victim tend to be the most variable part. Thus, increases and decreases of homicide are typically explained by the frequency of such male-to-male incidents. If male-to-male killings increase, the proportions of other types of homicide tend to decrease, and vice versa. This regularity is of considerable importance in theoretical explanations of homicide rates. The question why the level of homicide has decreased or increased should focus on young males (Eisner, 2008, 311–312; Courtwright, 2001). Eisner has correctly observed

that the full theoretical significance and promise of Verkko's laws has not been sufficiently appreciated (Eisner, 2008, 312). Verkko appears to be more often quoted by epidemiologically oriented researchers as opposed to scholars interested in the theoretical explanations (for exceptions, see Daly & Wilson, 1988 and Eisner, 2008).

Verkko pioneered research on alcohol consumption as a predictor of homicide rates. His research in this area was focused on the wave of lethal violence in Finland during the first decades of the twentieth century. He explained this phenomenon as a function of increased availability of alcohol in a population characterized by dysfunctional drinking habits. Verkko's treatment of alcohol effects as culturally mediated is indicative of his interdisciplinary orientation. Furthermore, Verkko (1951) combined sociological thinking and ideas from biological research, including the earliest behaviour genetic research based on twin studies. These pioneering contributions aside, Verkko serves as an intriguing starting point for this review in that he largely omitted some of the core themes characterizing contemporary homicide research, especially the role of social stratification and inequality in lethal violence.

Social Structural Explanations of Homicide

Strain and Economic Deprivation

The link between economic deprivation and criminal offending is among the most widely held assumptions in criminology (Savolainen, 2010). In European homicide research, the question of social class has occupied a central place. Studies of class differences in offending have found that homicide is concentrated on the lowest social strata (Kivivuori & Lehti, 2006). One of the most influential conceptualisations of economic strain was articulated by the American sociologist Robert K. Merton, who suggested that crime stems from a discrepancy between culturally induced goals and structurally limited opportunities to achieve them (Merton, 1938). Theories informed by this perspective suggest that economic deprivation is related

to resentment, frustration, and aggression – psychological states expected to reduce the threshold of violent behaviour in micro-level social interaction (Nieuwbeerta, McCall, Elffers, & Wittebrood, 2008).

Recently, scholars have employed sophisticated research designs in an effort to examine the role of economic strain in rates of criminal homicide. McCall and Nieuwbeerta (2007) studied the capacity of economic deprivation to account for variation in the homicide rates of 117 European cities. Their index of economic deprivation was based on the following variables: percentage of single-parent households, percentage of households reliant on social security, percentage of households below 50% of national mean income, and median annual household income. This indicator of economic deprivation emerged as a robust predictor of city-level homicide rates, net of level of urbanism, male unemployment, immigrant population, age composition and the East/West divide. The finding that male unemployment was not associated with homicide rates is interesting for the theoretical explanation of homicide. Unemployment as such does not explain city-level variation in homicide when economic deprivation is controlled. The variable measuring whether the city was West European or East European was also independently related to homicide rate. This variable was interpreted as a measure of economic development. McCall and Nieuwbeerta concluded that social and economic forces associated with large urban settings and economic hardships are conducive to homicide offending in the cities of the European Union (p. 180).

A roughly similar analysis has been conducted using Dutch communities as the units of analysis, using multilevel regression with controls for individual (age and sex) and city related characteristics (Nieuwbeerta et al., 2008). The findings again indicate that neighbourhood socioeconomic disadvantage is a robust predictor of homicide victimization net of social cohesion, percentage of non-natives, residential mobility, and confidence in police. The effect of economic disadvantage on homicide risk was the same in all homicide types and partially mediated by neighbourhood social cohesion.

Most of the studies focusing on the link between economic strain and lethal violence have used aggregate level data (cities, areas, nations). As an important exception, a recent study from Denmark used individual-level register data to explore risk factors of lethal violence (Christoffersen, Sothill, & Francis, 2007). The findings singled out family dissolution during childhood and long-term unemployment as the strongest individual-level predictors of homicide. It is notable that, in an effort to control selection effects, the study controlled for involvement in prior criminality, alcohol abuse, and psychiatric disorders.

In homicide–suicide research, the link between economic deprivation and homicidal behaviour has been established by European researchers. Homicide–suicide is associated with socioeconomic deprivation as measured by unemployment (Liem, 2010, 142, 151) and low income (Kivivuori & Lehti, 2003, 230–231).

Social Disorganization

In criminology, the concept of social disorganization refers to deficits in the normative regulation of human behaviour. The origins of this notion can be traced to classics of European sociology such as Durkheim and Tönnies. They witnessed and theorized about the rapid social change following industrialization and urbanization during the nineteenth century. Rapid changes in the social order led to normative upheavals allowing people to express their idiosyncratic preferences more freely than before. Sometimes this resulted in elevated levels of criminal offending (McCall & Nieuwebeerta, 2007, 169–170). In the early twentieth century, Chicago-based sociologists adapted this mode of thinking to the study of urban areas undergoing massive waves of immigration and residential turnover. Scholars like Shaw and McKay defined social disorganization as a function of population heterogeneity, poverty, and residential instability. They discovered that the level of criminal behaviour was related to neighbourhood social disorganization (McCall & Nieuwebeerta, 2007, 170).

McCall and Nieuwebeerta (2007) tested social disorganization theory by examining variation in the homicide rates of 117 European cities. They started by observing that social disorganization has been verified as a major factor explaining variation in US-based research and examined whether this was so also in Europe. They used the percentage of residents born in non-EU countries as the measure of city-level social disorganization. The variable “urbanism” (operationalized as population density) can also be interpreted as related to social disorganization. Additionally, since there is overlap between social disorganization and economic strain theories, McCall and Nieuwebeerta used a composite measure of economic deprivation that included items relevant for the social disorganization perspective. As reported earlier, this research finds strong support for the link between economic deprivation and homicide. Population heterogeneity and other indicators derived from the social disorganization theory do not perform as well.

As an application of social disorganization theory in historical homicide research, Stickley and Pridemore (2007) examined the consequences of family instability, population change, and population density in early twentieth century Russia. This study found no support for social disorganization theory. In fact, population density was associated with *reduced* levels of homicide.

Social Institutions and Social Capital as Sources of Control

Criminologists have studied whether social control, typically informal social control, explains variation in violence between individuals and aggregates. For instance, the informal social control available to residents in local neighbourhoods has received considerable attention. Social institutions assumed to exert social control range from childhood family ties to educational institutions, employment, and marriage. Following this paradigm, Pridemore and Shkolnikov (2004) examined marital status and educational attainment as antecedents of homicide victimization in Moscow. Consistent with the theory, they found out that

unmarried persons and people with low educational attainment were at increased risk of homicide victimization.

Sometimes the related concepts of social cohesion and collective efficacy are used to describe the capacity of a local community to keep in check individual-level propensities to violence (Nieuwebeerta et al., 2008, 93). To some extent, social control theory has been used to specify the link between economic strain and the risk of violence. It has been proposed that economic deprivation may lead to reduced levels of social cohesion, a presumably more proximate community-level cause of violence (Nieuwebeerta et al., 2008, 94). In the Dutch study cited earlier, the authors found that the effect of neighbourhood economic disadvantage on homicide risk was indeed partially mediated by social cohesion.

The dramatic long-term decline in homicide has been a major focus among European homicide scholars. The theory of the civilizing process by Norbert (Elias 2004 [1939]) is the most widely examined explanation of this phenomenon. According to this explanation, the decline in homicide is a reflection of general decrease in violent interactions resulting from the interplay between macro-level social changes and the development of a more inner-directed and regulated psychological structure (Eisner, 2001, 2003, 51–52). The relevant macro-processes include the rise of the centralized state and the development of the modern economy which requires controlled and reliable (i.e., “civil”) behaviour to facilitate increased cooperation among strangers (Elias, 2004 [1939], 161–172).

The theory of the civilizing process contains clear elements of social control theory: as external sources of social control become more efficient, homicide is expected to decrease. Additional modern support for the importance of centralized state monopolies of violence as homicide suppressors can be found in extreme situations of state collapse. For instance, the Rwandan genocide of 1994 was unleashed by a sudden collapse of ordinary checks and balances. In that situation, behavioural restraints withered away as ordinary norms and values no longer seemed to apply (Smeulers & Hoex, 2010, 449).

Drawing on Messner and Rosenfeld’s (2007) institutional anomie theory, Savolainen (2000) examined cross-national differences in the association between levels of economic inequality and homicide. As the main finding, this research found that economic inequality is not predictive homicide in countries featuring *strong policies of collective social protection* (e.g., Denmark, Finland, and Sweden). This result was later replicated by Neumayer (2003) who also discovered that, in a sample featuring developing as well as economically advanced nations, more basic aspects of the institutional order such as human rights and democracy explain global differences in rates of lethal violence.

Although cross-national research clearly shows that, on the whole, strong welfare policies tend to reduce violence, it has been suggested that *some* practises of this description may entail unintended homicide increasing consequences. Continuing the argument developed in the prior work by Kivivuori and Lehti (2006), Savolainen, Lehti and Kivivuori (2008) suggested that specific features of the Finnish welfare state inadvertently sustain a subculture of alcohol-related lethal violence. The post-1960s move from *particularistic* and control-related social policies such as relief work to *universalistic* benefits such as income transfers, detached social assistance from social control, a shift which may have removed some options to influence the homicide-prone population of seriously marginalized males. Similarly, the improving housing conditions of the lowest social stratum have moved homicide indoors, from public and semi-public areas to private apartments. While these changes are in many ways salutary, they have also reduced processes of informal and formal social control capable of protecting typical homicide victims and offenders (Kivivuori & Lehti, 2006; Savolainen et al., 2008). As the main message, this example illustrates that decommodification of life chances may not be enough to combat homicide especially if it facilitates marginalization from the mainstream.

Some European homicide researchers have used the concept of *social capital* in explaining individual or aggregate level variation in homicide.

In particular, Gatti, Tremblay and Schadee (2007) have studied the association between civic participation and homicide rates in Italy. The findings were mixed as high civic participation was associated with low homicide rates only in Southern Italy. Others have conceptualized social capital as an asset that protects middle and upper echelons of society from the risks involved in macro-social changes. Thus, in discussing their findings on the effects of education and marriage on homicide risk in Russia, Pridemore and Shkolnikov (2004, 183) suggested that married persons and those with elevated educational attainment possess social capital that helps them to adjust to the rapidly changing Russian society.

Civilizing Process as Self-Control

Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory argues that variation in criminal behaviour is a direct function of a single, life-stable personality trait they call low self-control. In their pursuit of instant gratification, individuals with low self-control tend to break norms of each variety. We are not aware of any direct applications of this theory by European scholars of lethal violence. Most data sources used in criminological studies of homicide typically lack information on the personality of homicide offenders and victims. However, there is one field in which the concept of self-control has occupied a central place, namely historical homicide studies.

The civilization theory identified the rise of the nation-state as the main source of external social control and discipline. However, the theory also proposed that external controls gradually became internalized. Elias himself frequently used the concept of self-control in describing the effects of the civilizing process (Elias, 2004 [1939]). After the mediaeval period, a new personality type became more prevalent in the population, characterized by increasing capacity to exercise self-regulation and self-control. The rise of the centralized state was not alone in producing this effect. In addition, religious reform movements, the expansion of schooling and literacy, and the capitalist organization of labour in manufacturing, contributed to the emergence

of a more internally restrained personality type (Eisner, 2001, 631; on literacy, see also Stickley & Pridemore, 2007). In the theory of the civilizing process, the decrease of homicide rates is explained by two factors: first, the state as a new style of social organization made external social control more efficient; second, cultural and educational developments in society converged to produce more self-control within individuals' psychological constitution. Similar to Gottfredson and Hirschi, Elias saw self-control as shaped by early childhood learning process (Elias, 2004 [1939], 368, 374). In this respect, civilization theory resembles the self-control theory as developed by Gottfredson and Hirschi (Eisner, 2001, 619). The theory thus combined elements of social control and self-control theories. The historically developing centralized state functioned as a controlling agency "forming itself as part of the individual's personality structure", i.e., as internalized self-control (Elias, 2004 [1939], 373).

Alternatives to Social Structural Perspectives

Evolutionary Theory

The basic idea of evolutionary psychology is that, following the process of natural selection, human behavioural strategies and properties of social cognition have evolved over the sequence of innumerable generations. This process cultivates psychological propensities and cognitions that have resulted in increased fitness as manifested in the number of offspring or offspring by kin (Daly & Wilson, 1999). The applicability and relevance of evolutionary theory to homicide studies was highlighted in a monograph by Daly and Wilson (1988). Roughly speaking, there are two ways in which evolutionary perspective has been applied to homicide studies: as a framework in special empirical studies, and as a promising general framework for violence research.

Empirical research. Santtila et al. (2001) applied the evolutionary psychological perspective in their analysis of crime scene actions in 502

Finnish homicides from the period 1980–1994. The aim of the authors was to analyse individual-level variation in crime scene behaviour, a task that could help the police to clear unsolved cases. Since major homicidal themes were interpreted as reflecting evolutionary motives, they were expected to be roughly similar in different countries. This hypothesis was corroborated in the analysis. In both Finland and the United Kingdom, a large subgroup dominated homicide scene behaviour: impulsive offences where there is no preparation or post-homicide dealing with the body. The crime scene actions of offenders in this group reflect aggression as a reaction to threats to life, status or resources, or aggression aroused by sexual jealousy (p. 382). This homicide type reflected the “least deviant” homicides and this was so in both Finland and the United Kingdom, mainly because the psychological processes underlying homicidal behaviour are fundamentally the same (p. 383). While the Finnish-United Kingdom comparison does not cover that much variation in the full range of human societies, the findings are nevertheless informative.

Santtila et al. argued that the evolutionary perspective can be used as a unifying theoretical framework in homicide research. More recently, Manuel Eisner has explored this prospect in greater detail, suggesting that a general theory of violence, including homicide, should be based on evolutionary theory. By general theory he means a meta-theory as a set of general principles that organizes local theories (Eisner, 2009, 44). He sees violence as strategic, goal-directed behaviour moulded by the evolution of human species and transformed in social institutions (p. 41). An evolutionary perspective predicts that evolved behavioural strategies should be cross-culturally widespread, both in terms of temporal and geographical variation. According to archaeological evidence, lethal interpersonal violence was widespread in prehistoric times (p. 45), so it cannot be seen as malaise of modern or even historic societies. Today, it is known that many aspects of violence are similar in different parts of the world. Universal features include the sex distribution of offenders, the basic shape of the age-crime curve, the core repertoire of goals, motives

and emotions that instigate violent interactions, violence-prone situations, and individual traits that are associated with violence (p. 47). Additionally, while the culturally available discourses of neutralization manifest large variation, the basic structure of justifying and/or excusing violent behaviour appears to be universal (p. 53–54). Eisner concludes that such universals are difficult to explain by cultural factors or individual-level pathologies.

Evolutionary explanation suggests that violent and homicidal behavioural strategies have been successful in the environment of evolutionary adaptation, success being defined as capacity of genes to transmit themselves to next generations in the form of direct or kindred offspring. This does not mean that such strategies are necessarily “successful” in modern societies in the technical sense of gene transmission or in some commonsensical meaning of the term. Modern societies are very exceptional in the long course of evolutionary and historical time. Behaviours that today are often very counter-productive and unsuccessful may have been productive and successful in earlier periods (Eisner, 2009, 45, see also Daly & Wilson, 1999). Additionally, it is possible that homicidal behaviour can benefit some offenders in their local cultural contexts in modernity as well.

Eisner suggests that since violence is embedded in a variety of social institutions, violence research will always need local theories that explain specific manifestations and short-term variation in violence. Social structures create and limit the situations in which violence is seen as a promising strategy to achieve a goal. Social institutions themselves organize and distribute violence to achieve goals, produce normative behavioural expectations, and operate as selection filters in terms of individual character traits for example by favouring specific character traits (Eisner, 2009, 46, 48).

Learning Theory and Cultural Perspectives

According to learning theory, criminal motivation and skills are learned in normal processes of

socialization. Broadly conceived, learning processes include material and symbolic rewards that reinforce criminal behaviour without anyone necessarily “teaching” crime. Thus, learning can take place simply by observing directly or indirectly other people’s behaviour (Vold, Bernard, & Snipes, 2002, 172–173). In the United States, cultural theories have been prominent, for instance, among scholars studying the violent subculture of the American South (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996).

In our small sample of recent European homicide research, there were no articles explicitly testing learning theoretical explanations of homicide. However, Europeans have conducted research that suggests that cultural learning processes are involved in homicide causation. Cultures or subcultures can provide people with “definitions favourable to the violation of law”, to use a concept coined by Sutherland in his theory of differential association. Most prominently, some qualitative studies have engaged in this type of explanation. For example, Belur (2010) examined why the Mumbai police is relatively “trigger-happy” in its encounters with criminals. Part of the cultural explanation referred to general features of police culture, while others were related to India’s peculiar cultural and religious heritage. Additionally, police violence was reinforced by favourable reactions from the general public. Similar findings regarding learning theory emerged from a study of the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Smeulers and Hoex (2010) examined the social interaction dynamics of the groups that engaged in genocidal murder sprees, and observed that social conformism to perceived group norms was an important factor. Justifications and rationalizations, taught by the ruling clique and learned by their audiences, functioned as techniques of neutralization that made killing easier. Smeulers and Hoex concluded that within the genocidal gangs, social mechanisms such as social learning and differential association were operating (p. 448).

The studies on police violence in Mumbai and ethnic violence in Rwanda both discussed a particular channel of criminogenic learning: the mass media. According to Belur (2010, 330), the

press and the media supported police officers who used violence, a significant moral boost for violent action. Similarly, the techniques of neutralization used in Rwandan mass killings were purposively disseminated by the political clique instigating violence (Smeulers & Hoex, 2010, 448). Clearly, the possibility of media impact on lethal violence is one of the interesting points raised by learning theoretical approaches to homicide. The question whether such modelling effects exist in the normal conditions of developed democracies is of considerable interest but has not been extensively researched by European homicide scholars. A notable exception to this rule, a recent Spanish study presents a fairly sophisticated quantitative assessment of media effects (Vives-Cases, Torrubiano-Dominquez, & Alvarez-Dardet, 2009). As the main research question, it examined the influence of media representations on intimate partner homicide offending. The findings suggest that television reports of intimate partner violence increase the incidence of intimate partner homicide. It seems that social learning processes may play a role in homicide causation in developed nations as well.

Cultural explanations can be seen as belonging to a larger category of learning theory, as culture can be defined as the totality of learned expectations and behavioural norms in a given community or era. Indeed, national differences have been interpreted as ultimately reflecting cultural patterns (Stickley & Mäkinen, 2005, 662). Moreover, the civilization theory of Norbert Elias can be seen as referring to learning processes. According to civilization theorists, the pacification of society started from the upper social strata, which were the first to exit from the typical homicidal interaction patterns of the Middle Ages. More recently, this theory has been developed to incorporate concepts of masculinity, honour and lifestyle (Spierenburg, 2008, 7–10). The spread of literacy, which reflects the penetration of schooling to new social strata, has similarly been linked to reduced levels of homicide (Stickley & Pridemore, 2007). Spierenburg even argues that medieval-style impulsive and uncontrolled behaviour is a learned response because “human behaviour, in any society, depends on prior

learning” (Spierenburg, 2008, 36). These aspects of the civilizing theory are consistent with learning theory. The new kind of society disciplined by the state and other disciplinary mechanisms rewards and reinforces controlled behaviour and discourages pre-modern notions of manly honour.

Feminist Theory

In a general sense, feminist theories can be seen as a variant of learning theory in that they understand male violence as a reflection of the socialization processes in which males are taught to assume hegemony and proprietary rights over women. In the Nordic area, many if not most anti-violence initiatives are guided by the feminist paradigm (Leander, 2005).

There are types of feminist theorizing that reject the notion that violence against women is caused by individual deviance or social disadvantage. Instead, the most important causal factor is presumed to be the power structure that buttresses societal gender inequality. “Deviation-based interpretations” are rejected because such interpretations dissociate the offender from the average man, and the “link between violence, gender and power disappears” (Leander, quoting a Swedish official document). The question whether violent men are ordinary or deviant has focal relevance for feminist anti-violence work as well (Edin et al., 2008). It is therefore hardly surprising that the sharp juxtaposition of deviance-based models against normality-based power models has developed into a field of study where feminist theory has empirical contact with reality. Although homicide research may be somewhat peripheral for feminist theorizing, the question of normality vs. conventionality has been empirically examined in recent research.

While feminist theory can be used to predict that intimate partner homicide is not associated with social disadvantage and psychological deviance, research has shown that on average, intimate partner homicide offenders are recruited from the socially disadvantaged strata, though less so than other types of homicide (Dobash, Dobash, & Cavanagh, 2009; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh,

& Lewis, 2004). Dobash et al. (2004) have in particular contributed to the theoretical debate on normality vs. conventionality by comparing men who committed intimate partner murder (IPM) with men who murdered men (MM). Interestingly, Dobash et al. (2004) suggest that the “ordinary guy” rhetoric is used as a means of exonerating intimate partner offenders. Thus, they take exception to the view that personal and social deviation exonerates offenders by making their behaviour unrelated to inequality and power.

The analysis of Dobash et al. (2004) indicates that in many respects, the intimate partner murderers were, as a group, more conventional than male-to-male murderers. On average, they had less instability in childhood family of origin, better education, and less alcohol abuse during adulthood. A vast majority of both IPM and MM murderers were employed in unskilled or skilled blue collar jobs, while managerial or professional position was very rare but slightly more prevalent in IPM group. However, in some respects the IPM offenders were less conventional than MM offenders. Intimate partner murderers were more likely to have experienced at least one broken relationship, and they had been previously more violent towards women. Interestingly, childhood and adulthood mental health problems were equally prevalent in both IPM and MM groups. In an additional analysis, Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh and Medina-Ariza (2007) compared intimate partner murderers to a sample of men who had been non-lethally violent against their intimate partners. Once again, the intimate partner murderers turned out to be comparatively more conventional and ordinary than non-lethally violent men in terms of childhood backgrounds, education, employment, and criminal career.

Taken together, the findings of Dobash et al. (2004; 2007) appear to be ambivalent with respect to the normality-conventionality debate. In many respects, intimate partner murderers manifest relative conventionality in comparison with the rather heterogeneous group of male-to-male murderers and non-lethal domestic violence offenders. It is possible that the limitation of the sample to murder offenders as opposed to manslaughter offenders has some relevance here.

But more importantly, the conventionality or normality of the intimate partner murderer must be seen as relative. In other words, the IPM group is deviant from a random sample of the adult male population.

The question of whether intimate partner homicide offenders tend to resemble the “average man” has been addressed outside the feminist framework as well. In Sweden, Belfrage and Rying (2004) reported that psychiatric disorders are more prevalent among intimate partner homicide offenders than other homicide offenders, suggesting that such disorders play an important role in the causation of IPV-related homicide. In the Netherlands, Liem compared men who committed a self-destructive act (SDA) after having killed an intimate partner with those perpetrators who did not commit SDA. It appears that intimate partner killing linked to SDA was associated with prior depression and even more deprived social backgrounds than “typical” intimate partner killing (Liem, 2009).

The previously described Dutch study of neighbourhood effects (Nieuwbeerta et al., 2008) estimated separate multivariate models for four varieties of homicide: family homicides, argument-related (non-family) homicides, felony homicides, and other homicides. Neighbourhood socioeconomic disadvantage was a robust predictor of all subtypes of homicides; and low social cohesion and percentage of non-natives were strong predictors of all except argument-related non-family homicides (Nieuwbeerta et al., 2008, 110). Judging from these results, homicide in the family domain is caused by similar factors as other homicide types. While this study failed to differentiate intimate partner homicide from other domestic incidents, the findings are inconsistent with the gender-specific model of violence (e.g., Felson & Lane, 2010). The study suggests that social deprivation and lack of social cohesion are among general risk factors that cause both family-related and other homicides.

Finally, in the spirit of “Verkko’s laws”, Messner and Savolainen (2001), examined gender differences in homicide in Finland and the United States. Specifically, this study hypothesized that national differences in the status of

women – economic independence and domesticity – may have consequences for the sex ratio of intimate partner homicide. According to this theory, Finnish women are less constrained to tolerate abusive domestic unions and, as a result, are less likely to kill their male partners in an act of self-defence. Consistent with this assumption, the Finnish male intimate partner homicide victimization rate was found to be significantly smaller in Finland (0.18) than in the United States (0.51). Interestingly, *among females* the equivalent risk was higher in Finland (1.18) than in the United States (1.09) despite the fact that the overall rate of female homicide in Finland was lower.

Routine Activities Theory

Criminological routine activity theories see criminal behaviour as an outcome of *opportunities* arising from the structure and dynamics of ordinary routines, such as shopping, working, and recreation (Felson, 2006). So far, this theory has not been widely used in European homicide studies. In the literature identified by our search, we found few references to routine activity theory, typically in footnotes (McCall & Nieuwbeerta, 2007: 172; Pridemore & Shkolnikov, 2004, 183; Stickley & Mäkinen, 2005: 659). However, two central topics of contemporary homicide research, alcohol consumption and gun availability, are examples of legal “routine activities” that increase the lethality of violent interactions.

European homicide studies have observed the strong link between alcohol consumption and homicide both in the analysis of aggregates and individuals or incidents (for instance, Stickley & Mäkinen, 2005, 660–661). While this is rarely explicitly linked to any theory, one potential theoretical interpretation is that drinking as a routine activity creates an opportunity structure where likelihood of lethal encounter is high (Savolainen et al., 2008).

Another topic that connects homicide research and routine activity theory is the role of firearm availability in violence causation. Gun ownership is a legal routine activity for significant segments of population. Firearms are used for hunting,

sports, and in some countries for protection. To study the role of gun availability on homicide is to study how a legal routine activity can influence homicide. Perhaps not surprisingly, European homicide researchers have examined this question against the backdrop of United States homicide patterns. For example, Titterington and Grundies (2007) compared the patterns of youth homicide in Houston, Texas, USA, and the state of Baden-Württemberg, Germany, and observed that United States offenders are much more likely to use firearms as weapons. Savolainen, Messner and Kivivuori (2000: 51) had earlier made a similar observation based on their comparison of United States and Finnish homicides. The comparatively low Finnish rate was related to the relative absence of incidents involving the use of a handgun in a criminal context. Taken together, there is evidence that patterns of legal behaviour can influence the rare occurrence of homicide in a given society.

Patterns of Research Activity

Our review of the contributions of European homicide research to criminological theory was based on a systematic review of contemporary articles published in criminological and epidemiological journals. The list of journals included in the search is presented in Table 6.1. All articles had a homicide related word in the title,² and at least one of the authors was affiliated with a European institution. The sample was designed to catch important theoretical resources used by European homicide researchers within criminological and epidemiological scholarship. The small sample shows that within these disciplinary boundaries, European homicide research is most often published in the US-based journal *Homicide Studies*. The *British Journal of Criminology* and the *Journal of Scandinavian Studies on Criminology and Crime Prevention* (JSSCCP)

come next. Researchers affiliated with UK-based institutions came up with most publications. Of all 92 authors, 28 were from United Kingdom institutions, while there were 15 authors from both Dutch and Finnish institutions and five authors from German and Swedish institutions. Counting from first authors, the situation is fairly similar: United Kingdom (10), Finnish (8), Dutch (6) and Swedish (4) researchers had more than one first-authored article. All non-European co-authors were from North America: ten from the USA and one from Canada.

Needless to say, these findings are heavily influenced by our focus on work published in English, and on the selection of particular journals. For instance, the JSSCCP is mainly a local forum for Scandinavian researchers. Moreover, these findings are only tangentially related to the question of theory and explanation in European homicide research. Both theoretical-explanatory and atheoretical (descriptive, epidemiological, and forensic) homicide research, more often than not, comes from scholars working in the UK-Dutch-Finnish zone. Our impression is that the theories described here cannot be linked to specific national sources (unless the USA is considered as such a source). A possible exception is that homicide research explicitly relating to feminist theory has so far been conducted mainly by British scholars.

Discussion

The main conclusion from our review of the theories used by European homicide researchers is that *theory-testing is seldom used as the principal point of departure*. The typical approach can be described as descriptive, epidemiological or forensics-related multiple-factor model. One reason for this state of affairs is that homicide research can rarely construct measures of predictor variables as freely as, say, survey-based delinquency research. However, in orienting their research and in interpreting the findings, European homicide scholars have drawn widely from the classical theoretical canon of criminology. The relevant examples include at least strain, social control, self-control, learning, social capital,

²The search string was “homicide* homicidal lethal deadly murder* manslaughter* infanticide* neonaticide* filicide* uxoricide* familicide* parricide* genocide*”. The asterisks mainly stand for plural forms of the words.

evolutionary and feminist perspectives. These appear to be the main theories-in-use in contemporary European homicide research.

The standard sociological theories of crime causation, including homicide causation, can be described as variations of a single theme. The concept of social disorganization is partially overlapping with economic strain theory, and both are closely associated with social control theory. The social capital framework integrates control and strain theoretical variables, and the feminist perspective views violence as culturally learned behaviour. While the borders of theories and explanations are fuzzy, their core elements capture distinct traditions and unique areas of focus.

The distinctively European tradition of explaining historical megatrends of homicide by recourse to the civilizing process combines elements of social control, self-control and cultural learning approaches. Inspired by the seminal work of Norbert Elias, this theory may be the one that is the least influenced by American criminology, and as such can be characterized as the most “purely” European theory. Partially this is explained by the banal fact that the USA does not have a medieval history of its own. However, it appears to us that the way civilization theory has been used has converged to the criminological mainstream. The theory of the civilizing process was originally based on the assumption that culturally induced norm internalization comes from the outside to suppress internal drives, including violent potential (Elias, 2004 [1939], 161–172; Eisner, 2003: 54). The vocabulary of Norbert Elias was shot through with hydraulic metaphors of human motivation. Social control “exerted a constant pressure to inhibit affective outbursts”, so that affects, when denied external expression, “struggled violently within the individual” only to incur “wounds” or to lie dormant and “buried” until pushing through again, forever seeking to “open to breakthrough” (Elias, 2004 [1939], 373, 375, 377). This conceptual framework derives from European Romanticism as adopted and mediated by the Freudian movement, heavily inspiring Elias’ theory. Clearly, modern versions of the civilization theory have forsaken most traces

of the hydraulic drive and ventilation rhetoric and replaced them with references to social control, self-control and learning processes.³

It is, of course, possible to claim that all classical criminological theories are originally European, and are merely transported back to the old continent. Indeed, it is common for European homicide research to frame its goals in terms defined by American scholars. Many of these articles choose to motivate research questions with explicit reference to American studies, and then proceed to examine whether similar effects or associations can be replicated with European data (e.g., Pridemore & Shkolnikov, 2004, 174; Gatti, Tremblay, & Schadee, 2007). A related procedure is to compare patterns of homicide in the United States and in some European locale (e.g., Savolainen et al., 2000; Titterington & Grundies, 2007).

Social selection refers to a process whereby individuals select or are sorted into social categories as a function of their individual attributes, such as intelligence, personality, or physique. It is the mechanism which translates micro-level phenomena into social facts (Hedström & Bearman, 2009, 7–8). For example, all else equal, we might expect people with explosive personalities to be at increased risk of downward socio-economic mobility because their behavioural response patterns are inconsistent with developing stable bonds to employment, marital relationships, and education (Caspi, Elder, & Bem, 1987). With respect to homicide, when a given social variable is associated with an elevated homicide risk, one should not ignore the possibility that this might be explained by social selection. For example, associations between homicide risk and family dissolution can reflect selection processes if people with specific propensities

³Hydraulic “stream” theory, according to which violent energies seek expression but find differential outlets depending on socially produced blocks, is still occasionally discussed (Gatti et al., 2007, 256–258). According to aggression researchers, violent behaviour tends to increase subsequent violent behaviour rather than leading to reduced tensions and less violence (Baumeister & Bushman, 2003, 485–487).

(e.g., low self-control) are unlikely to remain married. Consider the theory of the civilizing process: The finding that upper social strata have become less prone to homicide does not necessarily mean that an internally reproducing stable elite has changed over time. Instead, *elite pacification* may be based on an historical elite transfer process: in earlier periods, aggressive persons could achieve elite status as warriors, while today aggressive people tend to end up in lower social strata because of selection and self-selection processes. Seldom explicitly discussed in European homicide research (but see, for example, Pridemore & Shkolnikov, 2004, 184), selection effects remain a challenge for homicide research. Partially this reflects the scarcity of suitable data and/or research designs that allow analysts to control simultaneously for social position and individual-level traits.

Most homicide research with theoretical and causal-explanatory aims is carried out with quantitative data. It is not uncommon for homicide researchers to suggest that more ethnographic and qualitative research is needed to further illuminate the logic of homicide causation. For instance, Nieuwebeerta et al. (2008, 112) refer to Elijah Anderson's ethnographic work and suggest that the mechanism through which socioeconomic disadvantage transforms into homicide risk is based on a "set of codes about how to carry oneself in interpersonal interaction". Analogously, American researchers have suggested that trait explanations need to be supplemented with more subtle cultural-contextual interpretations. Accordingly, Piquero et al. (2005) refer to Anderson's concept of street code as a contextual factor that may trigger violence in the context of structural disadvantage. Some European work has progressed to this direction in the study of non-European homicidal behaviour (Belur, 2010; Smeulders & Hoex, 2010). As it stands, there appears to be plenty of room for qualitatively oriented contributions in European homicide research.

In sum, contemporary European homicide researchers draw on a comprehensive selection of mainstream criminological theories. To the extent that this work is informed by the classical

intellectual heritage of Europe, it tends to be "recycled" from the American literature. Partial exceptions include the historical analyses inspired by the civilizing process theory, but even there some of the original (perhaps outdated) components, such as strong hydraulic metaphors of human motivation, have been replaced by modern theoretical elements. Europe has a lot to offer for scholarship on lethal violence as a source of high-quality data sets from societies that are different from the United States and other nations in terms of institutional/historical context and important ecological and cultural features (the urban environment, gun culture, the context of alcohol and drug use, ethnic composition, etc.). We also believe that, following the examples set by Norbert Elias and Veli Verkko, European scholars have strong potential to increase their impact on the theoretical development of homicide research.

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A Review of the Cross-National Empirical Literature on Social Structure and Homicide

7

Carol L.S. Trent and William Alex Pridemore

A decade ago LaFree (1999) published his *Summary and Review of Cross-National Comparative Studies of Homicide* in an edited sourcebook of homicide research. At that time, LaFree noted several “formidable challenges” to comparative cross-national homicide studies (p. 140): “small-N” studies, limitations due to missing data, definitional diversity, and classification difficulties across nations. He concluded that the most popular structural explanations for homicide were not systematically supported by the empirical data.

In LaFree’s assessment (1999), development/modernization explanations consistently showed that frequent indicators of these theoretical frameworks (e.g., GDP/GNP per capita and urbanization levels) showed no relation or even a negative effect on homicide rates, contrary to theory. Situational/opportunity theories, which propose that variation in crime rates is dependent upon the pool of potential offenders and opportunities to offend, were rarely tested in the studies LaFree reviewed. He also concluded that support for economic stress/resource deprivation explanations depended largely on the indicators used. The effect of unemployment rates on homicide was unsupported, while economic equality was the most consistent promoter of violent crime in the literature. Finally, no definitive evidence was found for cultural integration perspectives, which

posit that a lack of social cohesion (typically operationalized as measures of population heterogeneity (ethnic, linguistic, and/or religious)) is associated with higher homicide rates, though there was a paucity of research in this area.

The purpose of this chapter is to expand on the work of LaFree (1999) by compiling a summary of the cross-national research on social structure and homicide and to assess possible points of convergence and inform future research. We used prior reviews (Archer & Gartner, 1984; LaFree, 1999; Pridemore, 2011; Pridemore & Trent, 2010; Stamatel, 2009b) to help us locate these studies and did our own search to discover recent research or those overlooked in prior reviews. Studies in which the research question was related to the circumstances surrounding the murder (e.g., victim-offender relationship, motive) were not included, nor were single-nation studies or studies of homicide trends that did not include independent variables (e.g., Gartner & Parker, 1990; Killias & Aebi, 2000; LaFree & Drass, 2002). Only published, peer-reviewed research available in English was included in our final sample of studies. This search yielded a list of 70 studies that we reviewed for the present assessment.

The Cross-National Empirical Homicide Studies

Table 7.1 provides, to the best of our knowledge, the most comprehensive list of peer-reviewed cross-national homicide studies to date. The table

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Table 7.1 Cross-national homicide studies

Study, outcome measure(s)	Data year(s)	Sample size	Significant predictors	Other variables
Agha (2009), Homicide rates (disaggregated by sex)	1993–1999	48	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per cap. – People/household – Sex-specified % young – % Homicide cases cleared – (female only)	% Urban Gini coefficient
Alzheimer (2008), Homicide rates	1996–1999	51	Ratio of income/consumption of the richest to the poorest 20% + GDP per cap. – General social support (% of GDP spent on pensions, health care, unemployment injury, sickness, family, housing, and social assistance) – Public health expend. – Human development index – Ethnic heterogeneity + Sex ratio – Decommodification of labor – Urbanization –	% Population 15–34 Education expend.
Antonaccio and Tittle (2007), Homicide rates	1997–2002	100	Capitalism (social sec. taxes as % of revenues, private health expend./total health spending, union density, Gini index) + Development (GDP, life expectancy, literacy rates, educational enrollment, urbanization, and youth population) – Sex ratio – Eastern religion – Corruption +	Ethno-linguistic and religious fractionalization
Avison and Loring (1986), Homicide rates	1967–1971 (Homicide) 1964–1972 (Income) 1965 (ethnic hetero)	32 (First analysis) 27 (Second analysis w/ Eastern Bloc excluded)	Gini coefficient + Ethnic fractionalization + Males in labor force – (only when Eastern Bloc excluded)	Population density Youths, 15–24 Level of economic. production (energy consumption)

Barber (2006), Murder rates (rape and assaults also studied)	1990 (Homicide) 1972, 1990s (Independent variables)	39	Illegitimacy rates 1991 + Americas +	Illegitimacy rates 1972 Gini coefficient Sex ratio for 15–64 y.o.
Bennett (1991a), Homicide rates (theft rates also studied)	1960–1984	52 (In sample) 38 (In analysis)	Ray and Singer's (1973) index of concentration ± (negative to the moderate high level then levels off and becomes positive) Form of development ± (depends on level of manufacturing) Juvenile proportion +	GDP per cap. Urbanization Rate of economic growth
Bennett (1991b), Personal and property crime	1960–1984	52 (In sample) 43 (In analysis)	Motivation (Ray and Singer's index of concentration) – Proximity (urbanization) +	Accessible targets (GDP manu./GDP) Attractive targets (GDP/population) Motivated offenders (juveniles) Guardianship (female labor force)
Bjerregaard and Cochran (2008a), Homicide rates (theft rates also studied)	1997–1999	49	Gini coefficient + Divorce rate + Lack of voter turnout + Demographic factor (sex ratio, racial hetero., and % of population 15–29) + National affluence (GDP, life expectancy health expend.) –	Social security expend. Economic freedom Strength of education
Bjerregaard and Cochran (2008b), Homicide rates (theft rates also studied)	1997–1999 (Homicide) 1996–1999 (Independent variables)	Nations 49	Gini coefficient + GDP – Lack of voter turnout +	Economic freedom Economic growth Educational expend. Divorce rate
Braithwaite (1979), Homicide rates	1955–1964	20–29	Lydall's ordinal scaling on earnings inequality + Social security/Gross National Product (GNP) –	GNP level (high/low)
Braithwaite and Braithwaite (1980), Homicide rates	1955–1974	19–31	Gini coefficient + Ethnic fractionalization + Political freedom – Protein grams per cap. –	GDP per cap. GNP per cap. Type of political system Urbanism

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Study, outcome measure(s)	Data year(s)	Sample size	Significant predictors	Other variables
Chamlin and Cochran (2006), Homicide rates	1998–2000 (Homicide) 1995–1997 (Independent variables)	33	Gini coefficient +	Economic illegitimacy Political illegitimacy Modernity (population 15–24, GDP, % urbanization, telephone lines, and elec. consumption) Population size Sex ratio
Cochran and Bjerregaard (2011), Homicide rates (theft also studied)	1997	49	Structural anomie (economic freedom \times GDP \times Gini) – Lack of voter turnout + Lack of education spending –	Divorce rates
Cole and Gramajo (2009), Homicide rates	2002	187 (In sample) 88–91 (In analysis)	Gini coefficient + Infant mortality (indicator of poverty) ELF index + Ethnic + Language Religion Male schooling years – Female schooling years + Male literacy – Female literacy + Governance index – Latin America +	Population density Young men, 15–29 Urbanization Δ Urbanization (1980–2002)
Conklin and Simpson (1985), Homicide rates (log)	1967–1970	52	Infant mortality (indicator of social inequality) + Population size + Population density + % Males, 15–29 + % Urban +	Energy consumption School enrollment ratio Life expectancy Sex ratio Telephones per 100

<p>Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza (2002), Homicide rates and lagged homicide (robbery rates also studied)</p>	<p>1965–1994</p>	<p>39 (In sample) 27–39 (In analysis)</p>	<p>Gini coefficient + Ratio poorest to richest income quintile shares + Index of income polarization + GNP per capita – GDP growth rate – Ethno-ling. fract. + Avg. years education – (lagged model only) Urbanization – (lagged model only)</p>	<p>Geographic location Cultural heritage (controlled by pooled time-series) Police per cap. Latin America % Young males, 15–29</p>
<p>Gartner (1990), Homicide rates</p>	<p>1950–1984 1950–1984 (first analysis – female and male) 1965–1980 (second analysis – child and adult)</p>	<p>18 at 7 time points (Developed nations)</p>	<p>Social security exp as % of GDP (Absolute dep.) – Gini index (Relative dep.) + (first analysis and >14 y.o. only) + Ratio of divorcees to marriages + (first analysis and 5–14 y.o., >14 y.o. only) % of Sig. ethnic and linguistic groups + (first analysis and >14 y.o. only) Death penalty + (first analysis, females >14 y.o. and 1–4 y.o. only) Ratio of female labor force to total households (population density proxy) + (males and second analysis only) Total battle deaths + (except 5–14 y.o.)</p>	<p>% of Population 15–29</p>
<p>Groves, McCleary, and Newman (1985), Homicide rates</p>	<p>1970–1975</p>	<p>50</p>	<p>Judges ratio +</p>	<p>Gini coefficient (sign reversed to measure equality) GDP per cap. Religious ecology Infant mortality (sign reversed to measure quality of health care) % Labor force in agriculture School enrollment ratio</p>

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Study, outcome measure(s)	Data year(s)	Sample size	Significant predictors	Other variables
Hansmann and Quigley (1982), Homicide rates	Not reported	58 (In sample) 40–58 (In analysis)	Gini coefficient + Ethnic heterogeneity + Religious heterogeneity – Linguistic heterogeneity – % of Population 15–24 +	GNP per capita Urbanization Population density
He, Cao, Wells, and Maguire (2003), Lethal violence (homicide) rate and tendency of suicide over homicide	1989–1993	64	Gini index + (<i>only Gini² is significant</i>) Divorce/marriage ratio + Unemployment rate –	GNP per cap.
Huang (1995), Murder rates	1975–1980	29	Population density – GDP per cap. + Female labor force participation + (indicator of maternal absence)	Level of individualism (Σ political and civil rights) – Level of communitarianism (soc. sec. and health care expend.) Ray and Singer's index of concentration Urbanization Population growth
Huang (2001), Homicide and murder rates	1975–1980	24–42	Population size + Population growth + Unemployment rate +	Population density GDP per cap. % Enrolled in college Urbanization Female labor force participation
Jacobs and Richardson (2008), Murder rates (log)	1975–1995	14 Nations 240 Nation-years (developed democracies)	Gini coefficient (lagged) + Unemployment rate + GDP per cap. (lagged) + % Minorities + (<i>only for nonlinear inequality model</i>) % Urban (lagged) + % Males, 15–29 (lagged) + Infant mortality (indicator of social disorg., lagged) +	

Jensen (2006), Homicide rates (suicide rates also studied)	1992–1998	41–46	Latin America + Civil War + New government + Multicultural + Religiosity + Intensity + Malevolent beliefs + Benevolent beliefs – Passionate dualism +	Religiosity Ritualistic dimensions Welfare exp. Gini index
Kick and LaFree (1985), Murder rates (log) (theft also studied)	1968–1973	40	Gini coefficient + Development index – Household size +	Urbanization
Krahn, Hartnagel, and Gartrell (1986), Homicide rates (log)	1960, 1965, 1971, 1975 (Homicide) 1967–1979 (Other variables)	65 (Homicide) 32–72 (Other variables)	Gini coefficient + Population growth + Democracy index +	% Males in agriculture Divorce rate Capital formation/GDP Collective violence Defense spending Ethno-linguistic fract.
Krohn (1976), Homicide rate (property and total crime rate also studied)	1959–1966 (Crime) 1972 (Inequality) 1967 (Unemployment)	38 (Unemployment) 27 (Inequality) 24 (Both)	Gini coefficient + GNP per cap. – Unemployment rate + Energy consumption –	
Krohn (1978), Homicide rate (property and total crime rate also studied)	1965, 1972	33	Population size – Urbanity/moral density – Energy consumption – Systemic frustration/anomie (literacy rates minus radios, telephones and newspapers per cap. and GNP per cap.) + Gibbs and Martin’s measure of the division of labor +	
Krohn and Wellford (1977), Homicide rate (property and total crime rate also studied)	Not reported	59	Population size – GNP per cap. – Political orientation –	
LaFree and Kick (1986), Murder rates (log) (theft also studied)	1968–1973	47	Gini coefficient + Population growth + Economic development –	Urbanism Population size

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Study, outcome measure(s)	Data year(s)	Sample size	Significant predictors	Other variables
LaFree and Tseloni (2006), Homicide rates	1950–2000	44 Nations 1,827 Nation-years	Transitional democracy + Years of democracy + Prosperity index (factor score of GDP and Gini index) – % Population 15–24 + East Europe + Latin America/Carib. + United States +	Full democracy
Landau (1984), Homicide rate (robbery, major larceny, rape, suicide, and total offenses also studied)	1965–1980	14	Divorce/marriage ratio – Births to unmarried Mothers + Inflation + Mental health contacts +	
Leavitt (1992), Homicide (measured as absent/rare, occasional, common, or perpetual) (assault, rape/sexual attack, robbery, larceny, burglary, and vandalism also studied) [Significance is for rank order correlations (1 = weakest, 5 = strongest)]	Not indicated	60 (Nonindustrial cultural areas)	Structural (includes settlement size) Social stratification (2) Political differentiation (3) Div. of labor: Metal working (5) Weaving (1) Tech. development (type) Subsistence (1) Military (3) Weapons (5) Transportation (4) Communication (2) Ideological Wealth distinctions (2) Value of land ownership (3) Cooperation vs. competition (4) Lending (1) Settlement size (4)	Social capital Membership Secular membership Participation Religiosity Church attendance
Lederman, Loayza, and Menendez (2002), Homicide rates (log)	1980–1994	25–39	Gini coefficient + GDP growth rate – Social capital Trust –	Social capital Membership Secular membership Participation Religiosity Church attendance

Lee (2001), Homicide rates	1987–1993 (Homicide) 1985–1990 (Population growth) 1993 (Inequality)	50	% of Nation's wealth held by richest 20% + Population growth + (<i>indirect effect only</i>)	Development index (political rights and civil liberties, infant mortality rate, population 15–29, % urbanization, and GDP per cap.) Population size Population density
Lee and Bankston (1999), Homicide rates (log)	1987–1993	50	% of Nation's wealth held by richest 20% + Males, 15–29 –	GDP per cap. Infant mortality (indicator of development) Political rights Civil liberties Status of freedom Urban Population size Population density Population growth
Li (1995), Murder rates	1970–1975 (Although some independent variables are from the 1960s)	39	Mass communication (<i>only interaction demo-comm sig. and neg.</i>) Population growth +	Gini coefficient Political democracy Economic development Ethnic fractionalization Urbanism Population size Population density % Males, 15–29
Lim, Bond, and Bond (2005), Homicide rates	1992–1996 (Homicide) 1970–2001 (Independent variables)	56 (In sample) 28–56 (In analysis)	Gini coefficient + Societal factors GDP per cap. – Sex ratio – Human right observance – (<i>only without Columbia</i>) Corruption (coded so that higher scores indicate purity) – (<i>only without Columbia</i>) Psychological factors Mate preference (love over status) – Trust – Belief in social complexity –	GNP growth rate Unemployment rate Competition Total recorded crime % GNP spent on health Relative status of women Divorce rate Alcohol consumption Psychological factors Emotionality Neuroticism Fate control

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Study, outcome measure(s)	Data year(s)	Sample size	Significant predictors	Other variables
Lin (2007), Homicide rates (criminal victimization also studied)	1971–1996	957–1,196 Observations	Gini coefficient + Democracy – GDP per cap. – Urban – Inflation + Homicide clearance rate –	GDP growth rate
McDonald (1976), Murderers (total reported offenders per 100,000) (also studied juv. court convictions/sanctions, theft offenders, property offenders and total offenders using a number of different indicators of conflict and/or consensus theory and 18th, 19th, and 20th c. data – only homicide findings reported here)	1961–1966	40	Lorenz coefficient of intersectoral inequality + Gini index of land inequality + GNP per cap. – Government stability + Linguistic heterogeneity + Population growth +	Labor force participation as % of population School enrollment Family size Urbanism Mass media (newspaper circ. and radios per cap.) Efficient/universal bureaucracy Police force size Extent of data collection (indicator of social control) Racial heterogeneity Religious heterogeneity Proportion voting Political representation Executive stability Unemployment rate (also serves as an indicator of poverty and “misery” in general)
Messner (1980), Murder rates (log)	Early 1960s (independent variables) 1952–1970 (homicide) Early 1960s (independent variables)	39	Gini coefficient +	GDP per cap. Urbanization Population size Population density
Messner (1982), Homicide rates (log)	“The 1960s” (exact years vary depending on income distribution data)	50	1-Gini coefficient (social equality) – Population growth +	GDP per cap. Individualism (% protestant and educational enrollment) Urbanism Population size Population density

Messner (1985), Homicide rates (men and women)	1970–1974 (Homicide) Early 1960s (inequality) 1976 (Demographics) 1972 (GDP)	29	Gini coefficient + (male only) % Never married + (female only)	GDP per cap. Gender Population size
Messner (1986), Larceny/murder ratio	1968–1972	52 (in Sample) 35–52 (in Analyses)	1- Gini coefficient (social equality) + Economic development +	Fractionalization Occupational heterogeneity Proportion in cities <100,000
Messner (1989), Homicide rates (log)	1976–1982 (Homicide) 1983 (Economic discrimination) Late 1960s–early 1970s (income inequality) Target measure = 1980	52 (In sample) 32 (In analysis)	Gini coefficient + Economic discrimination + Development index (GNP, life expectancy and infant mortality, to measure absolute deprivation) – (only for baseline, Gini only, model) % of Population <15 + Urbanization –	Ethno-linguistic hetero. Democracy index % Males, 15–19 Population size Population density
Messner, Raffalovich, and Shrock (2002), Homicide rate	1975–1994 (Cross-sectional) 1795–1979, 1980–1984, 1985–1989 and 1190–1994 (Longitudinal panel model)	67 (In sample) 27–65 (In analysis)	Gini coefficient + Males per 100 females – Development index – Annual GDP growth – (panel model only)	Decommodification Population size Population density
Messner, Raffalovich, and Sutton (2010), Homicide rates	1993–2000	13 (119 Nation-years)	Relative poverty + (1 year lag) Infant mortality + Divorce –	Absolute poverty GDP per cap. Population % 15–24 Males/females % Urban
Messner and Rosenfeld (1997), Homicide rates (log)	1980–1990	45 (In sample) 39–45 (In analysis)	Labor decommodification – Economic discrimination index + Males per 100 females – Development index (high life expectancy, GNP, low infant mortality, % population >64, slow population growth, and high urbanization development) –	Gini coefficient

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Study, outcome measure(s)	Data year(s)	Sample size	Significant predictors	Other variables
Neapolitan (1994), Homicide rates	1978–1980 1986–1990	67 (WHO/UN) 106 (INTERPOL)	% Income of richest 10% minus income of poorest 20% + Population size – Economic discrimination + GDP per cap. – Latin American +	Population <15 Population density
Neapolitan (1996), Murder rates (log) (theft also studied)	1986–1990 (Homicide) 1985 (Inequality)	63 (UN) 69 (WHO) 105 (INTERPOL)	Ratio % income of richest 10% to poorest 20% + Population size – GNP per cap. –	Population density
Neapolitan (1997), Murder rate	1988–1994 (Murder rates) 1991–1992 (Independent variables)	96 (In sample) 44–93 (In analysis) (Developing nations)	% Christian + % Islamic – Household size + Proportion in cities >750,000 – % Male –	GNP per cap. % Urban % Youth Ethnic heterogeneity Ratio of % income of top 10% to bottom 20% Infant mortality Unemployment Population density
Neapolitan (1998), Homicide rates (log) and homicide (adjusted for attempts)	1988–1994 (Though income inequality data may be from the late 1960s)	118 (In sample) 115 (Urbanization) 78 (Inequality)	Ratio of % income of top 10% to bottom 20% + GNP per cap. – Household size – Black + (n.s. when controls entered into analysis)	Development index Urbanization % of Population 15–29 Ethnic heterogeneity Asian Divorce rates (tested but not included in article)
Neumayer (2003), Homicide rates	1980–1997	75–117 273–537 Observations	Population density + % of Population male, 15–64 + Anomie (female labor force participation) + GDP per cap. (PPP) – GDP growth – Democracy ± (nonlinear) Death penalty + Human rights violations + Avg. household size ± (depends on model spec.) % Urban +	Gini coefficient Decommodification Discrimination of ethnic minorities Country-specific cultural factors

<p>Ortega, Corzine, Burnett, and Poyer (1992), Homicide rates (theft also studied)</p>	<p>1969–1982 (Varies by data avail.)</p>	<p>51 234 Observations</p>	<p>GNP per cap. + Region – Data year – Urban – Age structure Youth + Middle age –</p>	<p>Age structure Elderly Young adults</p>
<p>Pampel and Gartner (1995), Homicide rates disaggregated by sex</p>	<p>1951–1986</p>	<p>18 Nations 648 Nation-years (Advanced industrial nations)</p>	<p>Divorce rates + Female labor force participation + Collectivism (corporatism, consensus govt, years left rule, universalism, governability) – Population 15–29 + Social welfare spending – (males only)</p>	<p>GDP per cap. Unemployment</p>
<p>Pampel and Williamson (2001), Homicides disaggregated by sex (suicide rates also studied)</p>	<p>1955–1994</p>	<p>18 Nations 720 Nation-years (high-income nations)</p>	<p>Income <i>equality</i> (100-Gini) – % 15–24 + % 65–74 + Collectivism – Age equality in govt spending – Family change index (divorce rates, female labor force participation, and reverse-coded marriage and total fertility rates – to indicate the decline of traditional family roles) +</p>	
<p>Pratt and Godsey (2002), Homicide rate</p>	<p>1989–1995</p>	<p>46</p>	<p>Ratio of richest to poorest 20% + Social support (% of GDP spent on health care and education) – Males per 100 female –</p>	<p>Urbanization Human development index Western nation</p>
<p>Pratt and Godsey (2003), Homicide rate</p>	<p>1989–1995</p>	<p>46</p>	<p>Ratio of richest to poorest 20% + Sex ratio – Age structure + Incarceration rate + Social support (% GDP spent on health care) – % Urban +</p>	<p>Human development index % Immunized for measles Disorganization index (age structure, sex ratio, infant mortality % population age 15–19 never married, population growth)</p>

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Study, outcome measure(s)	Data year(s)	Sample size	Significant predictors	Other variables
Pridemore (2008), Homicide rate	2000	46	Gini coefficient + (<i>only when poverty is excluded</i>) Infant mortality (indicator of poverty) +	GDP per cap. Urbanization Education % Young males
Pridemore (2011) [Note: There are two analyses in this article. The first replicates Fajnzylber et al. (2002), the second replicates Savolainen (2000). Info on each is separated by a space in the following columns.] Homicide rates and homicide rates disaggregated by sex	1965–1994 1990	37 32	GNP – Education + Inequality + (becomes null when poverty added) Poverty (infant mortality) + Sex ratio – Welfare – Inequality + (becomes null when poverty added, females only) Poverty (infant mortality) +	GDP growth Urban GNP % 15–24
Quinney (1965), Homicide rates (suicides also studied)	1953–1960	48	Industrialization – Urbanization –	Stratification (class and caste) Relative dep. (composite of diff. between culturally prescribed and actually achieved wealth, power, and status) Change in moral codes Change in traditional auth. Change in subsistence occupation Judicial authority
Rosenfeld and Messner (1991), Classification of defendant homicides (frequent/infrequent or wabsent)	Multiple	32 (Nonindustrial cultural areas)	Political oppression – Population size – Typical settlement size – Drunken brawling + Wife beating + Military authority – Political authority –	Organizational complexity Technological complexity Internal population density Size of largest place Divorce rates

<p>Savolainen (2000) [Note: There are two analyses in this article. The first uses Messner and Rosenfeld's data/variables, the second is a supplementary sample. Info on each is separated by a space in the following columns.] Homicide rates and homicide rates disaggregated by sex</p>	<p>1980–1990 (First analysis) 1990 (Second analysis)</p>	<p>45 (First analysis) 32 (Second analysis)</p>	<p>Gini coefficient Labor de Commodification – Males per 100 females – Gini coefficient + GNP per cap. – Welfare spending – Males per 100 females –</p>	<p>Economic discrimination Development index (GNP per cap., life expectancy, infant mortality, elderly population, population growth, and urbanization development) Age structure (15–24)</p>
<p>Schaible and Hughes (2011), Homicide rates</p>	<p>1999–2004</p>	<p>46</p>	<p>Modernity – Heterogeneity + Sex ratio – Communitarianism – Informal stigma + Ratio of richest to poorest 20% +</p>	<p>Formal stigma Deviant values</p>
<p>Shichor (1990), Homicide rates</p>	<p>1967–1968 1972–1973 1976–1978</p>	<p>44</p>	<p>Population growth + Infant mortality rate + Rate population to hosp. beds + Ratio population to physicians + Newspapers per 1,000 –</p>	<p>% GNP spent on education Population size</p>
<p>Stamatel (2009a), Homicide victimization rates/completed homicide rate (logged/not)</p>	<p>1990–2003</p>	<p>9 Nations 126 Nation-years (East-Central European nations)</p>	<p>Gini coefficient + (completed homicides (log) full model only) Population density + GDP per cap. – Ethnic diversity (intergroup cohesion) + % Population 15–24 – Political violence + Democratization – Economic reform –</p>	<p>Divorce rate (indicator of intragroup cohesion)</p>
<p>Unnithan and Whitt (1992), Homicide rates, lethal violence (homicide + suicide) (suicide rate and proportion of suicides to homicides also studied)</p>	<p>1950–1970</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>Kuznets index ± (homicides only, curvilinear relationship) GNP per cap. – (homicides only)</p>	<p>(continued)</p>

Table 7.1 (continued)

Study, outcome measure(s)	Data year(s)	Sample size	Significant predictors	Other variables
Van Wilsem (2004), Homicide rates (log)	1996–2000 (Homicide) 1990s (Independent variables)	27 (In sample) 26 (In analysis)	Gini index + GDP per cap. (PPP) – Theft + Nonlethal violence +	% Living in large city >100,000 Japan
Wellford (1974), Murder rates (major larceny, and total crime also studied)	Not reported	75	Population size – GNP per. cap. – Political orientation –	
Wolf (1971), Murder/larceny ratio	1958–1964	17	GNP per cap. + % Labor force in agri. + Infant mortality rate + Adult illiteracy rate + Newspapers per cap. + Telephones per cap. + Urbanization + Non-Western nations +	

provides the following information for each of 66 studies: citation and dependent variable(s), data years, sample size, significant predictor(s) of the dependent variable, and a final column indicating the other variables tested in the study. The algebraic direction (+, -) indicates a significant association with homicide in the main model tested in each study. In studies where the author(s) did not conduct significance tests, we based our inferences on their conclusions about key predictors. In the studies sampled, methods of estimation ranged from cross-tabular classifications and bivariate associations to pooled times-series analysis, though the majority employed cross-sectional multivariate regression analysis. The number of nations included in the studies ranged from a low of 14 (Landau, 1984) to a high of 106 (Neapolitan, 1994).

Homicide rates are generally accepted as both the most reliably measured crime and as an accurate indicator of a nation's overall level of criminal violence (Fox & Zawitz, 1998; Howard, Newman, & Pridemore, 2000). The bulk of the studies in our review used homicide/murder data from conventional sources like the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the World Health Organization (WHO), and/or the United Nations. Archer and Gartner's (1984) extensive Comparative Crime Data File (CCDF) was also used in several early studies, though the CCDF (covering the years 1900–1970) has not been continuously collected and thus has become dated. Two studies (Leavitt, 1992; Rosenfeld & Messner, 1991) derived homicide measures and unique predictor variables from the Probability Sample Files (PSF) of the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF), an ethnographic database on nearly 400 ethnic, cultural, religious, and natural groups worldwide.

Given the variation in the operationalization of key theoretical constructs, summarizing the findings across studies proved difficult. Most of the studies tested more than one theoretical perspective and different authors employed different measures for similar theoretical constructs. Furthermore, none of these studies employed the same set of variables (making direct comparison impossible), and the operationalization

of key constructs was sometimes questionable. Nonetheless, we do our best to summarize this literature as it relates to the findings summarized previously by LaFree (1999) and attempt to generalize when possible.

Findings from the Cross-National Literature

Economic Development and Industrialization

Economic development is most often used in the literature as an indicator of modernization or development. These indicators are typically operationalized as Gross National Product (GNP) or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and/or via a development index and are the ones most often included in the studies we reviewed. The majority of studies find a negative association between GDP/GNP and homicide rates (Agha, 2009; Altheimer, 2008; Antonaccio & Tittle, 2007 (as part of development index); Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008a (as part of national affluence measure), b; Cochran & Bjerregaard, 2011 (as part of structural anomie measure); Fajnzylber et al., 2002 (also GDP growth rate); Krohn, 1976; Krohn & Wellford, 1977; LaFree & Tseloni, 2006 (as part of prosperity index); Lederman et al., 2002 (GDP growth rate); Lim et al., 2005 (included in development index); Lin, 2007; McDonald, 1976; Messner, 1989 (included in development index); Messner et al., 2002 (GDP growth rate); Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997 (included in development index); Neapolitan, 1994, 1996, 1998; Neumayer, 2003 (also GDP growth rate); Pridemore, 2011 (GDP growth rate); Savolainen, 2000; Stamatel, 2009a; Unnithan & Whitt, 1992; Van Wilsem, 2004; Wellford, 1974). However, this finding is not definitive, as several studies show a positive association (Bennett & Lynch, 1990 (as measure of economic development); Huang, 1995; Jacobs & Richardson, 2008 (2 year lag); Krohn, 1978 (part of Feierabend's measure of systemic frustration); Messner, 1986 (part of economic development

index); Ortega et al., 1992; Wolf, 1971), or a null association (Bennett, 1991a, 1991b; Braithwaite, 1979 (measured as high/low); Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 1980; Chamlin & Cochran, 2006 (part of modernity score); Groves et al., 1985; Hansmann & Quigley, 1982; He et al., 2003 (measure of economic development); Huang, 2001; Lee, 2001; Lee & Bankston, 1999; Messner, 1980, 1982, 1985; Messner et al., 2010; Neapolitan, 1997; Pampel & Gartner, 1995; Pridemore, 2008, 2011).

Other noneconomic indicators have been used to measure societal levels of development and industrialization. These include various measures of energy consumption, proportions of the labor force in manufacturing or agriculture, number of radios, telephones and/or televisions per some proportion of the population, newspaper circulation rates, life expectancy, systemic frustration, and organizational and technological complexity measures. The majority of these measures have exhibited negative effects on rates of violent crime (Alzheimer, 2008; Antonaccio & Tittle, 2007; Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008a; Schaible & Hughes, 2011 (part of modernity measure); Fajnzylber et al., 2002; Krohn, 1976; LaFree & Kick, 1986; Leavitt, 1992 (based upon a categorical measure of technological development); Messner et al., 2002; Quinney, 1965; Shichor, 1990) or were found to be nonsignificant (Avison & Loring, 1986; Chamlin & Cochran, 2006; Conklin & Simpson, 1985; Groves et al., 1985; He et al., 2003; Krahn et al., 1986; Lee, 2001; Lee & Bankston, 1999; McDonald, 1976; Neapolitan, 1998; Pratt & Godsey, 2002, 2003; Pridemore, 2008, 2011; Rosenfeld & Messner, 1991; Savolainen, 2000). Bennett (1991a) found that the form of development, a measure that taps into the ratio of GDP through manufacturing vs. agriculture, exhibits a nonlinear relationship with homicide rates, such that the positive relationship for nations with high levels of GDP through agriculture becomes negative about halfway through the distribution, or as the nation shifts to a more manufacturing-based GDP (p. 352). Finally, Ortega et al. (1992) found positive associations between industrialization and homicide rates in their pooled time-series analysis.

Economic Deprivation

The majority of socio-structural research findings hypothesize a positive link between resource deprivation and violent crime, consistent with theories of anomie/economic deprivation. The association between inequality and homicide at the cross-national level has gained the status of stylized fact. According to Messner and Rosenfeld (1997), “a finding that has emerged with remarkable consistency is that high rates of homicide tend to accompany high levels of inequality in the distribution of income” (p. 1394). Neapolitan (1999) noted that “the most consistent finding in cross-national research on homicides has been that of a positive association between income inequality and homicides” (p. 260). Fajnzylber et al. (2002) go as far as to state that, for this association, “correlation reflects causation” (p. 26).

Indeed, relative deprivation is the second most tested concept in the cross-national studies we reviewed. The Gini index, a measure of statistical dispersion that captures income inequality, was the most often used operationalization of resource deprivation. The majority of the studies sampled found this indicator to be positively associated with homicide, as predicted by theory (Avison & Loring, 1986; Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008a, 2008b; Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 1980; Chamlin & Cochran, 2006; Cochran & Bjerregaard, 2011 (part of structural anomie measure); Cole & Gramajo, 2009; Fajnzylber et al., 2002; Gartner, 1990 (for select models, see Table 7.1); Hansmann & Quigley, 1982; He et al., 2003 (only nonlinear squared term is significant); Jacobs & Richardson, 2008 (2 year lag); Kick & LaFree, 1985; Krahn et al., 1986; Krohn, 1976; LaFree & Kick, 1986; Lederman et al., 2002; Lim et al., 2005; Lin, 2007; McDonald, 1976 (land inequality); Messner, 1982, 1986 (reverse coded to indicate equality), 1980, 1985, 1989; Messner et al., 2002; Pampel & Williamson, 2001 (100-Gini to indicate equality); Pridemore, 2008, 2011 (note: this association was null when a proxy for poverty was included in the regression equation); Savolainen, 2000; Stamatel, 2009a; and Van Wilsem, 2004).

A number of additional covariates have been used to capture resource inequality, which also exhibit a positive relationship with homicide. These include ratios of income or wealth or income polarization (Alzheimer, 2008; Fajnzylber et al., 2002; Lee, 2001; Lee & Bankston, 1999; Neapolitan, 1994, 1996, 1998; Pratt & Godsey, 2002, 2003; Schaible & Hughes, 2011), Lydell's ordinal scaling on earnings equality and the Lorenz coefficient of intersectoral inequality (Braithwaite, 1979, and McDonald, 1976, respectively), Gibbs and Martin's measure of the division of labor (Krohn, 1978), unemployment rates (Jacobs & Richardson, 2008), social security as a percentage of GDP (Gartner, 1990, low scores indicate absolute deprivation), and infant mortality (Conklin & Simpson, 1985; Messner et al., 2010; Pridemore, 2008, 2011).

When inequality was operationalized as Ray and Singer's (1973) index of concentration (Bennett, 1991a, 1991b (as an indicator of "motivation" when testing routine activities theory)) or political oppression (Rosenfeld & Messner, 1991), the association was negative, contrary to theory. A possible reason for the inverse finding in the latter (i.e., nations included in analysis), was discussed earlier. In the Bennett studies (1991a, 1991b), Ray and Singer's index measures status equality and is derived from primary, secondary, and tertiary school enrollment rates, standardized to the population. This measure is generally taken as an indicator of a nation's level of development, which suggests that this variable is a questionable measure of resource deprivation. A similar inverse relationship is found where deprivation is operationalized as development (Messner, 1989), capitalism, (Antonaccio & Tittle, 2007), social support (Gartner, 1990), or prosperity (LaFree & Tseloni, 2006). In only a minority of studies did the measure of resource deprivation fail to produce any effect on homicide rates (Agha, 2009; Barber, 2006; Groves et al., 1985; Huang, 1995; McDonald, 1976; Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997; Neapolitan, 1997; Neumayer, 2003; Rosenfeld & Messner, 1991; Unnithan & Whitt, 1992).

While the findings for resource deprivation are generally consistent, there are important

theoretical and methodological caveats to consider (Chamlin & Cochran, 2005). Recent empirical evidence suggests that inequality is not in fact concerned with resource deprivation in itself, but rather with deprivation relative to others. When absolute deprivation is tested (Paré & Felson, 2010; Pridemore, 2008), it is significant and positively associated to violent crime and measures of inequality drop out. This finding holds even when using data culled directly from two of the prior studies cited earlier which claim support for the inequality-crime hypothesis (Pridemore, 2011).

Urbanism and Homicide

It is expected that more urbanized countries are more likely to have higher rates of homicide. In the studies that we reviewed, urbanism was considered in four main ways: population growth, population size, population, and percent urban. No clear pattern of association emerged for any of these variables. Population growth was perhaps the most consistent in our studies: in all cases where this variable was significantly related to homicide, a positive sign was attached (Huang, 2001; Krahn et al., 1986; LaFree & Kick, 1986; Lee, 2001 (indirect effect); Li, 1995; McDonald, 1976; Messner, 1982; Shichor, 1990). Where population size was significantly related to homicide, it was typically in an unexpected, negative direction (Krohn, 1978; Krohn & Wellford, 1977; Neapolitan, 1994, 1996; Rosenfeld & Messner, 1991; and Wellford, 1974), although Conklin and Simpson (1985), and Huang (1995, 2001) did find positive associations. A majority of studies found no relationship between population density and homicide rates, though exceptions were Agha (2009, measured as persons per household), Conklin and Simpson (1985), Gartner (1990, using an unconventional measure of density, the ratio of female labor force to total households), Neumayer (2003), Stamatel (2009a, positive association as suggested by social disorganization theory), and Huang (1995, negative relationship when the variable was log-transformed). In the latter study,

this unexpected finding was attributed to possible increases in individual's respect for privacy and rights in a dense and crowded society which may provide a buffer to murder (p. 72). This interpretation reinforces our statement about the difficulty in summarizing this literature earlier in the chapter. Not only do authors often use different measures for the same theoretical concept, but also in these studies the same or similar measures are often interpreted in relation to different ideas and theories.

Several studies show a negative relationship between the proportion of the population residing in urban areas, which is inconsistent with theories that associate cities with greater social problems and crime and instead might suggest that as social collectives modernize violent crime decreases (Alzheimer, 2008; Antonaccio & Tittle, 2007 (part of development index); Fajnzylber et al., 2002 (lagged model only); Krohn, 1978; Lin, 2007; Messner, 1989; Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997 (part of development index); Neapolitan, 1997; Neumayer, 2003; Ortega et al., 1992; Schaible & Hughes, 2011 (part of modernity measure); Quinney, 1965). Conversely, a number of cross-national studies found the inverse, such that urbanization increases with the homicide rate, a finding that is consistent with anomie and social disorganization theories (Bennett, 1991b (measure of proximity); Conklin & Simpson, 1985; Jacobs & Richardson, 2008 (2 year lag); Pratt & Godsey, 2003; and Wolf, 1971). A plurality of studies found no association at all (Agha, 2009; Bennett, 1991a; Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 1980; Chamlin & Cochran, 2006 (part of modernity measure); Cole & Gramajo, 2009 (change in urbanization also studied with null results); Hansmann & Quigley, 1982; Huang, 1995, 2001; Kick & LaFree, 1985; LaFree & Kick, 1986; Lee, 2001 (part of development index); Lee & Bankston, 1999; Li, 1995; McDonald, 1976; Messner, 1980, 1982, 1986; Messner et al., 2010; Neapolitan, 1998; Neumayer, 2003; Pratt & Godsey, 2002; Pridemore, 2008, 2011; Savolainen, 2000 (as part of development index); Van Wilsem, 2004).

Population Structure

For some of the cross-national studies, youth population¹ was positively associated with homicide, consistent with tenets of opportunity/routine activities theories (Agha, 2009 (sex-specified percent young for female homicides only); Bennett, 1991a (juvenile proportion, size of potential offender pool); Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008a; Conklin & Simpson, 1985; Pampel & Gartner, 1995; Hansmann & Quigley, 1982 (population 15–24 was strongest predictor in the model); Jacobs & Richardson, 2008 (percentage of males 15–29, 2 year lag); LaFree & Tseloni, 2006; Messner, 1989; Ortega et al., 1992; Pratt & Godsey, 2003 (age structure measure)). Lee and Bankston (1999) found a strong *negative* relationship between males 15 and 29 and homicide rates, which they attribute to small sample size ($n=50$), citing Messner (1989), who found a similar negative yet nonsignificant relationship in a sample of 52 nations. Stamatel (2009a), who examined Gartner's integrated theoretical model (1990) in a sample of East-Central European nations, also found a negative association between the proportion of youth (total and male only) and both completed homicides and homicide victimization rates. To explain this, the author points out that homicide offenders and victims tend to be much older in Russia and Eastern Europe than in Western nations.

A number of studies reported null results for various measures of youth population, often when the variable was limited to young males (Alzheimer, 2008; Avison & Loring, 1986; Bennett, 1991b (motivated offenders); Chamlin & Cochran, 2006 (part of modernity measure); Cole & Gramajo, 2009; Fajnzylber et al., 2002;

¹The age range that constituted "youth population" varied in the studies reviewed, though as noted by Land et al. (1990) several variations on the definition of this percentage are highly correlated, thus, "the particular age range used in a given study is not likely to be of great importance" (f.n. 9).

Gartner, 1990; Lee, 2001 (part of development index); Li, 1995; Messner, 1989; Neapolitan, 1994, 1997, 1998; Pampel & Williamson, 2001; Pridemore, 2008; 2011; Savolainen, 2000). Interestingly, Pampel and Williamson (2001) note higher homicide rates in high-income nations with larger proportions of elderly individuals (65–74 year olds).

Similar to age, the proportion of males in a given population is also generally associated with higher homicide rates, as crime statistics indicate that males are more likely to commit offenses than females. In our sample, several cross-national studies used some measure of a sex ratio, generally as a control, and found the expected relationship between the male–female ratio and homicide rates (Alzheimer, 2008; Antonaccio & Tittle, 2007; Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008a; Messner et al., 2002; Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997; Neumayer, 2003; Pratt & Godsey, 2002, 2003; and Savolainen, 2000). Neapolitan (1997) found a negative relationship between the percent of the population that is male and the murder rate in a sample of developing nations, but this association was weak and sensitive to the nations included in the analysis. Lim et al. (2005) and Pridemore (2011) also found unexpectedly higher homicide rates for societies with a higher proportion of females. Furthermore, in contrast to the weak effects found by Neapolitan (1997), in the Lim et al. study the sex ratio emerged as one of the strongest predictors of homicide. When the researchers added individual level predictors into the multilevel analysis, however, the effects of the sex ratio on homicide were mediated by a psychological measure of fate control. The authors suggest that, for nations where females are dominant in number, there are higher levels of competition among members of society who experience “status hunger,” conducive to homicide (p. 533). Finally, similar to other measures, a number of other studies found no association between the ratio of males to females and homicide rates (Barber, 2006; Cole & Gramajo, 2009; Conklin & Simpson, 1985; Messner, 1985, 1989; Pridemore, 2008).

Social and Cultural Heterogeneity

Measures of heterogeneity or fractionalization (ethnic/racial, religious, and/or linguistic) are frequently included in cross-national studies, and again the findings are inconsistent. Several analyses found a positive relationship between homicide rates and ethnic fractionalization (Alzheimer, 2008; Avison & Loring, 1986; Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008a (part of demographic measure); Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 1980; Cole & Gramajo, 2009; Jacobs & Richardson, 2008 (percent minority); Stamatel, 2009a (ethnic diversity)), and between homicide and linguistic heterogeneity (Fajnzylber et al., 2002; Gartner, 1990 (percent of significant ethnic and linguistic groups; Jensen, 2006 (measure of multiculturalism); McDonald, 1976; Schaible & Hughes, 2011). Other studies found no association (Antonaccio & Tittle, 2007; Krahn et al., 1986; Messner, 1989; and Neapolitan, 1997, 1998)). Hansmann and Quigley (1982) found a positive relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and violent crime, but a negative association for religious and linguistic heterogeneity.

Other Covariates

Two additional theoretical constructs that are appearing more often in this literature are social support and the related concept of the de-commodification of labor. Social support is generally measured as the percentage of various social program expenditures to a nation’s GDP and has been shown to be negatively associated with lower rates of violent crime (Alzheimer, 2008; Braithwaite, 1979; Pampel & Gartner, 1995 (male homicides only); Pratt & Godsey, 2002, 2003; Pridemore, 2011; Savolainen, 2000; Schaible & Hughes, 2011 (part of modernity measure)). Decommmodification of labor refers to initiatives that buffer the criminogenic effects of the free market (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997; Savolainen, 2000). The findings for each of these are not definitive, however, as several of studies found no

support for either (Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008a; Huang, 1995 (as a communitarian measure); Lim et al., 2005; McDonald, 1976; Messner et al., 2002; and Neumayer, 2003).

Finally, while population divorce rates are often tested in United States studies of social structure and homicide, at the cross-national level such data are typically only available for advanced nations and so this measure is often omitted to allow for a more diverse sample of countries in the analysis. In our sample, only 14 studies include some measure of divorce or other proxies meant to capture family disruption. Where significant, all save one were in the expected direction, with homicides higher in nations with higher divorce rates, supportive of social disorganization theory (Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008a; He et al., 2003; Pampel & Gartner, 1995 (divorce rates); Huang, 1995 (female labor force participation as a measure of maternal absence); Landau, 1984 (negative finding for marriage-to-divorce ratio); Messner, 1982 (percent never married); Pampel & Williamson, 2001 (female change index)). Messner et al. (2010) found an unexpected negative relationship between the divorce rate and homicides in a time-series analysis. Bjerregaard and Cochran (2008b), Cochran & Bjerregaard, 2011; Gartner (1990), Krahn et al. (1986), Lim et al (2005) Rosenfeld and Messner (1991), and Stamatel (2009a) all reported null findings.

Critical Assessment of the Literature

The final aim of this chapter is to provide a critical assessment of the method and data used in the studies we reviewed. A serious methodological limitation in the cross-national literature on social structure and homicide is the lack of critical evaluation of the data used. Too often, scholars obtain data with little regard for how the data was collected, what the data truly represent, the integrity of the data collection within nations, and the comparability of data collected by different sources for different purposes. This is especially true of the independent variables used.

A related limitation concerns the care given when operationalizing core theoretical constructs. While macro-level theoretical concepts almost always necessitate the use of indirect proxy measure, this does not mean that researchers should use anything available. A version of this problem occurs when authors attempt to maximize sample size. This often results in a sacrifice of validity, especially when nations at different levels of development are included, nations on which data are often lacking. While a body of literature exists and discusses at length, the strengths and weaknesses of the dependent variable used, little consideration is given to independent measures. For example, indicators such as GNP/GDP are often employed with little care as to what these variables are measuring. In the studies we reviewed, these measures have been used as indicators of general economic well-being of a nation, level of development, level of capitalism, social support, and economic deprivation. This is a case where a broader reading across disciplines would be fruitful. Economics, political science, development, epidemiology and demography, disciplines and subdisciplines that do considerable cross-national research, often provide extensive theoretical discussion of many of the concepts that we measure and measurement research that presents evidence for or against the use of specific indicators.

Finally, two hallmarks of science are the accumulation of knowledge and replication. The cross-national social structure and crime literature that we reviewed falls short in these areas. A chronological reading of the literature that we review fails to provide one with the notion that we are getting closer to answer the question: "Why national homicide rates vary?" Many studies largely disregard prior research and fail to discard theories and measures that do not work. When one looks at the literature as a whole, it appears directionless, making drawing conclusions difficult. In addition, the literature we review lacks replication. It is rare for two studies to employ the same measures for the same measures, and, when the same or similar measures are used, different authors discuss them in relation to different theories. This further complicates any attempt to generalize from the studies compiled.

Conclusion

Our brief review and summary of this extensive empirical literature on cross-national homicide studies largely fail to lead to any definite generalizations on the strength of key theoretical perspectives or even individual variables. Save for the association between economic inequality and violent crime, the literature fails to converge and few conclusions can be drawn. Moreover, we are able to point out several limitations in this body of research and suggest directions for future study.

A serious limitation is the lack of consistency in the operationalization of key theoretical constructs. Beyond operationalization issues, the need for proxy measures where direct measurements are unavailable has led to questionable measures meant to represent key theoretical constructs. Moreover, data are often used without regard for how it was collected and for its validity and reliability. Finally, in an attempt to maximize the sample size for a population whose universe is relatively small (relative to microlevel research), key indicators are often dropped from the analysis or little attention is paid to the nations included and the possible sampling bias that may result. A minority of studies perform some sort of sensitivity analysis in an attempt to address these issues, while others simply present the results of analysis with the caveat that cross-national data are difficult to compile.

The present review, undertaken a decade after LaFree's original summary indicates that while the number of studies has grown, data has become more available, and statistical analysis has become more sophisticated, there is little convergence in the research and few attempts to address the limitations and inconsistencies outlined here. The studies that do find support for some of the most popular macro-level theoretical perspectives have not been subjected to replication using different samples or subsamples of nations. In his (1999) conclusion, LaFree expressed hope that "[o]ur knowledge of homicide will continue to be enhanced as we build on this foundation in the years ahead." We express the same hope, but we

are skeptical about further advances until this empirical literature confronts key limitations and reconciles inconsistencies.

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Explaining Variation in Homicide Rates Across Eastern and Western European Cities: The Effects of Social, Political, and Economic Forces*

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Studies of the spatial distribution of crime, including homicide, have their origins in the cartographic or statistical school in the nineteenth century in Europe. Pioneers such as Guerry (1833), Fletcher (1849), and Quetelet (1847) started empirical studies investigating differences in crime rates across European geographical areas. In the same century, the French scholar Durkheim (1982[1895]) questioned how and why rapid socioeconomic changes in European societies caused by industrialization and urbanization fragmented people's social ties, thereby freeing them to deviate from social norms and engage in deviant behavior including crime and homicide. Durkheim was the first scholar to address the crime problem at a structural theoretical level.

In the twentieth century, the focus of empirical ecological research and the development of theories on the geographical distribution of crime

moved away from Europe toward the United States. Ecological research made enormous progress in the first decades of the twentieth century, especially at the University of Chicago. Studying the city of Chicago, scholars described the distribution of crime and delinquency, including homicide, across neighborhoods and identified structural factors responsible for that clustering (Burgess, 1925; Park, 1925; Park & Burgess, 1925; Shaw & McKay, 1942; Wirth, 1938). In their study of Chicago neighborhoods in the early 1900s, guided by their social disorganization perspective, they in particular found high rates of delinquency in socially disorganized areas often characterized by population heterogeneity, poverty, and high population turnover.

A review of current ecological research on crime in general and on homicide in particular shows that the vast majority of today's research is carried out in the United States.¹ A vast body of homicide research exists in the United States that covers a variety of topics, time periods, and levels of analysis. Because of ready availability of macro-level social indicators, aggregate-level studies of homicide characterize much of this literature, typically examining homicide rates across states, metropolitan areas, and/or cities within the United States. These analyses have done particularly well to identify classic covariates of homicide at these various levels of geographic location in the United States.

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¹For a thorough review on the history of European and North American research on urban crime see Bruinsma (2007).

In this article, we build on the theoretical and empirical work in the United States, but aim to bring the discussion back to its theoretical and empirical origin, that is, the European continent. Following the lead of most criminologists who have studied U.S. homicide rates, we also use a structural approach in our research and argue that the same theories used to explain city-level homicide rates in the United States also are applicable to studies of cross-national city-level European homicide rates. Yet this remains an empirical question.

We address two research questions in this chapter. The first question is do those structural forces identified by criminologists as important in explaining homicide rates in the United States also apply in understanding the extent to which social and economic factors affect homicide rates in European cities and countries? We address this question by analyzing data on homicide rates and structural covariates from more than 100 cities from 16 Eastern and Western European countries.

Our second research question is to what extent do the structural covariates identified in studies of U.S. homicide rates also account for the variation in city-level homicide rates across European countries, taking into account the effect of a city's location in Western vs. Eastern² Europe and its commensurate level of economic development? Research using data from the United Nations, Interpol, the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics, and the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that homicide rates in Eastern European countries are substantially higher than in Western nations (Estes, 1997; Gruszczyńska, 2002; Killias & Aebi, 2000; Kube, 1993; Pridemore, 2003; Stamatel, 2008; Zvekić, 1998). Although a few Eastern European countries' homicide rates are lower than some countries in Western Europe (Stamatel, 2008), Eastern European homicide rates by and large are substantially higher (ranging from 1.2 to 10.6, excluding the outlier, Russia) than those of Western Europe, which range between 0.95 and 2.9 (Barclay & Tavares, 2003). These striking differences between

Eastern and Western European violent crime rates call for explanation. Killias and Aebi (2000) as well as Kube (1993) attribute changes in violent crime trends in Europe during the early 1990s to changing routine activities corresponding with the opening of borders across Europe. Such border changes supposedly contributed to new supply lines for drugs and to new struggles over illegal markets (Killias and Aebi, 2000, p. 58). In addition, Kube (1993) and Stamatel (2009) each highlights the influence of postcommunist era political and economic reforms on crime in Eastern Europe, noting that in many countries these reforms – which led to unemployment and impoverishment in the absence of social benefits – resulted in instability and may have affected crime rates. We therefore investigate the extent to which the structural forces identified by criminologists as important in explaining homicide rates in the U.S. also explain city-level homicide rates across European countries and between Eastern and Western Europe?

By analyzing city-level homicide rates from several European countries, our study is the first that studies aggregate homicide rates in a large sample of European subnational (city) units cross-nationally. There have been a limited number of European studies on homicide that examine the extent to which social and economic factors explain the variation in homicide rates across European cities; however, these typically analyze cities within a single European country (Gartner & McCarthy, 1991; Kim & Pridemore, 2005; Liu, 2005; Pridemore, 2005; Villarreal, 2004). Furthermore, there have also been studies analyzing European homicide cross-nationally. However, almost without exception, cross-national homicide studies have been conducted using national-level data. Limitations of data availability and comparability across countries, to a large extent, have restricted cross-national homicide research to the national level.³ Not only have varying definitions of *homicide* across nations made such

²For the sake of brevity, the term “Eastern Europe” will be used to refer to Eastern and Central Europe.

³National-level data used in cross-national analyses primarily have been compiled over time by the World Health Organization (WHO), Interpol, and the United Nations' *Demographic Yearbook* (a source for covariates of crime) and provide researchers with measures of homicide and some of the classic covariates of homicide.

cross-national analyses difficult if not impossible, but also the challenge of finding comparable social and economic indicators across nations and at the city-level has been insurmountable.

Fortunately, recent efforts have been undertaken to investigate common issues shared by member nations of the European Union (EU) and have produced new sources of data that may serve criminologists in their study of cross-national homicide at subnational levels of analysis. The European Commission's Eurostat has compiled subnational level data from many EU member countries and has worked carefully to ensure comparability of social indicators across countries. The purpose of the current study is to take advantage of the newly available data in order to explore homicide rates across this sample of EU cities and examine the extent to which classic covariates of homicide identified in extant U.S. subnational and in cross-national homicide studies explain the variation in their homicide rates.

Theoretical Perspectives on City-Level Homicide Rates

A review of cross-sectional and cross-national analyses of homicide rates finds common theoretical traditions that are grounded in classic criminological theories. Structural theories, including social disorganization, urbanism, and strain/anomie theory, provide central explanations for variations in crime rates and are found in most aggregate-level homicide studies (for an overview, see Ousey, 2000; Parker, McCall, & Land, 1999).⁴ We build on these earlier studies

⁴The culture of violence is another perspective found in the U.S. homicide literature but is excluded from the current analysis because this unique characteristic associated with the southern region of the United States does not have an identified corollary in Europe. Furthermore, because the body of homicide studies is so vast, to make the review more manageable we omit cross-national level homicide studies and those U.S. and cross-national studies that employ disaggregated (race-, sex-, relationship-specific) homicide rates, as well as intranational and times-series, cross-national homicide studies.

and test the classic criminological theories that provide structural explanations for homicide. We include social disorganization theory that posits higher crime rates are a result of weakened social bonds and networks, Wirth's (1938) urbanism theory that explores the deleterious effects of population growth in urban areas, and Merton's (1938) strain theory that describes the role structural inequalities and relative deprivation play in criminal and deviant behavior.

Social Disorganization Theory

Durkheim (1951[1897]) theorized that rapid social change creates conditions conducive to normative boundlessness and anomie among individuals that lead some people to engage in deviant or criminal behavior. Durkheim (1982[1895]) also posited that crime rates are related to a society's stage of development. He (1957[1900]) posited that simple, "mechanical" societies were characterized by higher homicide rates because their members upheld allegiance to family, state, and god and were willing to murder in defense of these loyalties (pp. 114–117). Societies undergoing dynamic social and economic transformations from simple agrarian to modern, industrialized stages experience turmoil, weakened social integration, and rising homicide rates. As societies reach a more advanced industrialized stage, homicide rates decline as human sentiment among individuals becomes stronger (Durkheim, 1982[1895], p. 100). Durkheim's structural approach to analyzing social conditions and social problems among European countries became a basis for the theoretical development of many mainstream sociological perspectives.

Structural sociological theories have been applied to the field of criminology providing criminologists with various theoretical foundations for studying the effects that structural forces have on crime. Shaw and McKay (1942), for example, developed the social disorganization perspective in their study of Chicago neighborhoods in the early 1900s and found high rates of juvenile delinquency in socially disorganized

areas often characterized by population heterogeneity, poverty, and high population turnover. This theory has been modified by subsequent scholarly efforts that focus mainly on social control (e.g., Bursik, 1988, 1999; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Morenoff, Sampson, & Raudenbush, 2001; Sampson, 1987; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Bursik and Grasmick (1993) further developed this perspective by arguing that these types of structural barriers impede development of formal and informal ties that promote mechanisms to control a community's common problems, including crime. As did Shaw and McKay, some of the more recent of these efforts analyzed crime at the neighborhood level, although a large body of literature has employed these concepts to study larger ecological units such as cities, metropolitan areas, and states (e.g., Parker et al., 1999).⁵

Numerous U.S. homicide studies have reported evidence consistent with the social disorganization perspective. An impetus for social transition and one of the more consistent predictors of the U.S. homicide rate is family dissolution – typically measured as the percentage of the population that is divorced (Blau & Blau, 1982; Blau & Golden, 1986; Land, McCall, & Cohen, 1990; Lee, Maume, & Ousey, 2003; Maume & Lee, 2003; Rosenfeld, Messner, & Baumer, 2001; Sampson, 1986; Stretesky, Schuck, & Hogan, 2004). Other indicators representing family bonds and the controlling influence of parental supervision include the percentage of female-headed households, percentage of single-parent households, and the percentage of children not living with both parents. In various studies, one or another of these indicators has been combined with other indicators of social disorganization into indexes to measure the concept – often finding support when incorporated into homicide analyses. Examples of such indexes include the structural poverty index (Huff-Corzine, Corzine, & Moore, 1986; Loftin

& Hill, 1974; Messner, 1983b; Parker, 1989; Parker & Smith, 1979) or the resource deprivation/affluence index (Land et al., 1990; Messner & Golden, 1992).

Urbanism

Wirth (1938) identified social pathologies related to urban settings, such as how population size and population density potentially affect social relationships, reducing social integration and social control. Crime, including homicide, is theoretically one of the resulting problems stemming from urban anonymity and weak social control. Hence, a city's urban population structure or urbanism is related to crime. A review of the empirical findings shows mixed support for the influence of urbanism on homicide offending. In predicting homicide in the United States, indicators of urbanism such as size of place have shown mixed effects – ranging from statistically significant positive effects (Bailey, 1984; Blau & Golden, 1986; Chamlin, 1989; Messner, 1982; Messner, 1983a, b; Parker, 1989; Sampson, 1986) and no effect (Loftin & Parker, 1985; Messner, Baumer, & Rosenfeld, 2004; Reid, Weiss, Adelman, & Jaret, 2005; Rosenfeld et al., 2001) to statistically significant negative effects (Bailey, 1984; Chamlin, 1989). Some of these studies have combined city size and population density (population per square mile) into a population structure index that typically finds support in the literature (Land et al., 1990; Lee et al., 2003; Maume & Lee, 2003; Messner & Golden, 1992).

Strain/Anomie Theory

Merton's (1938) strain/anomie theory has directed attention to the potential criminogenic influences of structural inequality. He argued that individuals facing economic hardship and blocked opportunities also may experience feelings of injustice and resentment. Scholars have argued that economic strain, or economic deprivation, may either result in offenders striking out against

⁵Some of the same ideas from classic versions of social disorganization have generated the systemic theory that also has been used to explain urban crime.

the sources of strain or produce diffused aggression that stimulates violent behavior (Messner & Golden, 1992). From a macrostructural perspective, in areas suffering an economic decline criminally predisposed individuals may become further marginalized and the social bonds and networks that might otherwise support law-abiding behavior may be compromised.

While strain/anomie theory and social disorganization posit that poverty levels should be related to crime rates, strain theory also emphasizes the importance of inequality on criminal offending (for a review, see Ousey, 2000). Previous homicide research has reported evidence that generalized aggression generated by absolute deprivation in the form of poverty and poverty concentration (Lee et al., 2003; Peterson & Krivo, 1993; Sampson, 1986; Stretesky et al., 2004) and relative deprivation, typically measured with the Gini index of income concentration (Harer & Steffensmeier, 1992; Maume & Lee, 2003), are predictive of homicide rates. However, some have found little association between homicide and absolute (Harer & Steffensmeier, 1992) or relative deprivation (Parker, 1989). Trying to address the disparate findings associated with these economic variables, Land et al. (1990) established that a statistical interrelationship exists among many of these deprivation indicators and combined them into a resource deprivation/affluence index. This composite index included indicators of poverty and income inequality, as well as other related social and economic forces. Other researchers, using similar techniques, have reported relatively consistent support for the notion that structural indicators of economic deprivation predict homicide rates (Lee et al., 2003; Messner et al., 2004; Reid et al., 2005; Rosenfeld et al., 2001; Stretesky et al., 2004).

The unemployment rate has often been used as an indicator of economic hardship to test hypotheses from strain/anomie theory. Results have been inconsistent, though, with most researchers reporting a negative relationship between unemployment and homicide rates rather than the expected positive relationship (Crutchfield, Geerken, & Gove, 1982; Land et al., 1990;

Sampson, 1985). Often, no statistically significant association is found for the unemployment–homicide relationship (Reid et al., 2005; Rosenfeld et al., 2001). Cantor and Land (1985) explained such inconsistencies as reflecting countervailing forces of motivation and opportunity, though the fact of inconsistent findings remains.

Demographic Composition

Theories related to demographic composition, particularly race and age, have been used to explain homicide rates (Messner & Blau, 1987; Messner & Sampson, 1991). For example, the racial composition of a geographic location, typically operationalized as percentage Black, is often found to be a strong covariate of violent crime rates in U.S. studies. Blau and Golden (1986) suggest that higher violence rates among Blacks might result from frustration and alienation stemming from discrimination. Anderson (1997) argued that violent behavior among some African Americans is a response to the harsh realities of urban underclass living. However, studies often find that percentage Black predicts violent crime even when indicators of strain and social disorganization are controlled (Blau & Blau, 1982). Another interpretation of the race–homicide relationship is that Blacks and southern Whites with high rates of violence share a culture of violence, often rooted in poverty and obsession with honor or respect (Anderson, 1999; Miller, 1958; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1967).

The age structure of a population is proposed to affect rates of violence (Cohen & Land, 1987; Fox, 1978). Arguments regarding the age–crime–propensity relationship have been advanced by Greenberg (1985) and by Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983). Moreover, the routine activities perspective posits that the presence of large numbers of potential youthful victims can elevate rates of violence (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Cohen, Felson, & Land, 1980; Cohen, Kluegel, & Land, 1981).

Among the demographic indicators incorporated in homicide research, percentage Black is

often positively associated with homicide rates and explains a substantial amount of the variance (Blau & Blau, 1982; Maume & Lee, 2003; Messner, 1983b; Sampson, 1985, 1986), though sometimes no relationship between percentage Black and homicide rates has been found (Parker, 1989). Some studies have used population heterogeneity indexes to measure the effects of racial population composition and find support for its relationship with homicide (Stretesky et al., 2004). The age structure, typically measured as the percentage of the population age 15–29 years or age 20–34 years, is not consistently linked to homicide rates. Findings in cross-sectional studies for that variable are contradictory – rarely positive as predicted (Land et al., 1990; Loftin & Hill, 1974), typically with null effects (Huff-Corzine et al., 1986; Lee et al., 2003; Maume & Lee, 2003; Messner, 1983a, b; Parker, 1989; Reid et al., 2005; Rosenfeld et al., 2001), and sometimes negatively correlated (Crutchfield et al., 1982; Land et al., 1990; Lee et al., 2003; Loftin & Parker, 1985) – often differing according to level of aggregation. However, time series studies tend to show a positive relationship between the proportion of youth in a population and its homicide rate (Fox & Piquero, 2003; Phillips, 2006).

Explaining Eastern vs. Western European Homicide Rates

Our second research question relates to the extent to which the structural covariates identified above also account for the variation in city-level homicide rates across European countries, taking into account the effect of a city's location in Western vs. Eastern Europe and its commensurate level of economic development. Or in other words: to what extent do these structural covariates also explain the differences in homicide rates between Eastern and Western European cities? These questions are related to classic sociological and criminological theories.

Durkheim (1951[1897]), for example, already theorized that rapid social change creates conditions conducive to normative boundlessness that

leads some people to engage in deviant or criminal behavior. He also posited that crime rates are related to a society's stage of development (1982[1895]) and that simple, "mechanical" societies were characterized by higher homicide rates because their members upheld allegiance to family, state, and god and were willing to murder in defense of these loyalties (1957[1900], pp. 114–117).

Societies undergoing dynamic social and economic transformations from simple agrarian to modern, industrialized stages experience turmoil, weakened social integration and rising homicide rates (see also LaFree & Tseloni, 2006). As societies reach a more advanced industrialized stage, human sentiment among individuals becomes stronger and homicide rates decline (1982[1895], p. 100). Eastern European countries more closely resemble this mechanical stage of economic development than the more advanced industrialized countries of Western Europe. If so, this might account for the large differences in homicide rates.

Other contemporary works examining cross-national variation in violent crime point to social disorganization and social justice as critical factors. While the level of economic development has been important in studies of the impact of industrialization and modernization on crime rates as theorized by Durkheim, the deleterious effects of modernization might be more directly traced to conditions of social disorganization. Thus, increasing levels of social disorganization produced by the normative collapse associated with modernization may be elevating rates of violent crime (LaFree & Tseloni, 2006).

Extensive political and economic transformations experienced by Eastern European countries since the fall of communism in 1989 have led to mass unemployment, growing mortality rates, and alarming increases in poverty and inequality (Kim & Pridemore, 2005; Stamatel, 2009; Standing, 1996). But, following recent global trends of neoliberalization, Western European countries have also experienced some economic and social policy turbulence (Esping-Andersen, 1996; Harvey, 2005). However, unlike Western European states, Eastern governments have been

unable to quell intensifying economic deprivation (Esping-Andersen, 1996), suggesting the possibility that Eastern European countries have experienced higher levels of social disorganization than those of Western Europe.

What is more, the neoliberal character of the economic systems introduced following the anti-communist revolutions in Eastern Europe represents a sharp ideological shift from the social and economic philosophies inherited from socialist economies. Research investigating public perceptions of social justice in the wake of the post-communist transition finds that Eastern European publics are more likely than those of Western Europe to support highly egalitarian economic systems of rewards based on need (as opposed to merit) with high levels of government intervention and “pro-socialist” ideologies incompatible with those of the newly imposed neoliberal systems, which have mandated the retrenchment of social welfare (Mason, 1995, p. 60; Mason & Kluegel, 2000). Closely related to this philosophical divergence, Eastern European publics are also found to exhibit significantly lower levels of overall life satisfaction and are more likely to indicate perceptions of economic injustice than their Western counterparts (Mason, 1995; Mason & Kluegel, 2000). An unstable economy incompatible with deeply rooted ideology, the dissolution of the once universal social welfare safety net (upon which a large proportion of Eastern European citizens depended), and growing perceptions of social injustice produce an anomic potential that is unique to postcommunist Eastern Europe. Therefore, not only would Durkheim’s stages of societal development provide an aspect of comparison between Eastern and Western Europe that is posited to differentially influence crime, but arguments based in social disorganization and social justice perspectives also underscore this distinction.

Recently, several empirical studies have examined homicide rates in Eastern Europe and the validity of the aforementioned explanations for cross-city and cross-national variation. Stamatel (2009), for example, examines the extent to which postcommunist political and economic reforms explain variation in homicide rates across nine

East-Central European countries between 1990 and 2003. She finds that during the postcommunist era lower homicide rates were associated with reforms toward economic marketization and political democratization, a finding consistent with recent homicide studies of postcommunist Russia.

Furthermore, Kim and Pridemore examined homicide rates across regions in Russia to determine the impact of the postcommunist transition. In Pridemore’s (2005) cross-sectional study of the social structural characteristics of 78 regions in 1995 Russia and their influence on homicide rates, he found support for theories of economic deprivation and social cohesion as well as the lethal role of alcohol use. Pridemore, however, found no effects of inequality, mobility, diversity, or urbanism. Kim and Pridemore (2005) argue that rapid social change results in an anomic environment undermining conventional institutions (family, education, polity, and economy). Yet, they found no indication that strength of noneconomic institutions condition or temper the effects of poverty and socioeconomic change on homicide across regions in Russia. They argue that the postcommunist transition left noneconomic institutions weakened and unable to dampen the deleterious effects of poverty and socioeconomic change. Finally, in a more recent study of homicide in Russia, Pridemore and Kim’s (2006) results indicate support for Durkheim’s hypothesis about the positive association between the strength of collective sentiments and homicide rates, finding that net of other factors’ political change (away from the collective sentiments of communism) was associated with increasing homicide rates following the collapse of the Soviet Union. They conclude that in Russia, rapid social change seems to have threatened collective sentiments and resulted in rising homicide trends.

Data and Measures

We aim to address our two research questions by analyzing a unique data set: Eurostat’s (2004) Urban Audit. Eurostat is the statistical agency of the European Commission, and the agency’s

mission is to provide the EU with a high-quality statistical information service. Compiled by Eurostat, the Urban Audit provides social and economic indicators for large- and medium-sized cities within the EU and the candidate countries.⁶

All variables in the current analysis are derived from the Urban Audit data set. The reporting countries provided data for which they had information – either for 2001, which was the target year for data collection by Eurostat, or the most recent information available prior to 2001. The data set used in the current study represents the city-level of analysis and includes information for 285 large- and medium-sized cities within the EU.⁷ Unfortunately, homicide data and variables we identified as the best indicators of the social and economic forces for our study are not available for all 285 cities included in the Urban Audit. The data set contains information on homicide rates for only 152 cities. In addition, in 35 of these 152 cities, one or more indicators of selected explanatory variables are missing. Therefore, our analyses are based on 117 cities representing 16 European countries.⁸ Appendix 1 presents a list of the cities in each country.

⁶For more details about these data, we refer the reader to the *Urban Audit Methodological Handbook* on the Eurostat Web site at <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/> and the Urban Audit data on “New Cronos” at http://www.esds.ac.uk/international/support/user_guides/eurostat/cronos.asp#description.

⁷The “sampling” procedure was designed by Eurostat, each European country’s national statistical organizations, and the cities within the countries (Eurostat, 2004, p. 9).

⁸On closer inspection of the homicide data, homicides for Belgium cities seemed suspiciously high is – for example, more than 3 times higher than data reported for Brussels by the British Home Office. Therefore our analyses were conducted excluding Belgium cities except Brussels, for which we estimated their homicides (30 for 2001) based on data from the Home Office report (Barclay & Tavares, 2003, p. 11). To determine the degree to which our sub-sample of 117 cases may create a selection bias, we compared descriptive statistics for the full set of data 285 with our reduced sample of 117 cases. The only substantial difference between the cities’ mean statistics was the percentage of non-EU nationals, which was larger in our sub-sample than the total sample (6% vs. 3.5%). This is largely because much of the missing homicide data was in some of the Eastern European countries.

Dependent Variable: Homicide Rate

The dependent variable in our analysis is the city homicide rate for 2001 and is calculated as the number of homicides reported to the Eurostat office divided by the number of residents of each city and then multiplied by 100,000. Eurostat collected data from the member and candidate countries for 2001 or for the year for which homicide data were most recently available. Therefore, homicide data mostly represent 2001 statistics. However, for some countries, the most recent are homicide data that represent 1999 or 2000 figures.⁹ The homicide data were derived either from each country’s vital statistics offices (cause of death mortality statistics) or from their official police statistics (crimes reported to the police).¹⁰ Nevertheless, when comparing Eurostat’s homicide measure with the police statistics from a recent U.K.’s Home Office report of average homicide rates for 15 European country’s capital cities, we find a bivariate correlation of 0.94 (Barclay & Tavares, 2003). Therefore, these data seem to be relatively good indicators of homicide across these cities. The mean homicide rate for our sample of cities is 2.1 per 100,000. However, substantial variation exists, with homicide rates ranging from 0 to 13.96 across cities. To reduce skewness and induce homogeneity in error variance, we converted the homicide rates to their natural logarithmic form.¹¹ The logged homicide rates for our sample of cities closely approximate a normal distribution.

⁹We caution the reader that any one of these city’s data may not represent typical homicide rates because we have access only to one year of data from the Urban Audit. Nevertheless, we are somewhat confident with these data to the extent that they are comparable with the 15 cases from the British Home Office.

¹⁰We have no indication of the extent to which the data included in this analysis represent cause of death statistics or police statistics (see LaFree, 1999, for a discussion of data sources for cross-national homicide).

¹¹Five cities reported zero homicides. Therefore when calculating the natural logarithm we added 0.5 to each homicide rate.

Explanatory Variables

The key explanatory variables in our analyses are indicators of the central concepts hypothesized to be related to homicide rates: population structure, population heterogeneity, economic deprivation, levels of unemployment, proportions of youthful populations in a city, and level of economic development.

To measure the urbanism of a city, we constructed a population structure index. This is an additive index consisting of the residential population size and population density variables (both in natural log forms) – a measure established in previous homicide studies (Land et al., 1990; Lee et al., 2003; Maume & Lee, 2003; Messner & Golden, 1992; Rosenfeld et al., 2001).

We used four variables to create a measure for the level of economic deprivation in a city, including percentage of lone-parent households, percentage of households reliant on Social Security, percentage of households with one half of national mean income, and median disposable annual household income.¹² To create a deprivation index and retain as many cases as possible for our analysis, we created *z* scores for each of these variables and then averaged the *z* scores for those variables available for each city.¹³ By allowing our measure to rely on different numbers of variables available for different cities, we were able to retain as many cities as possible for the analyses

(i.e., $N = 117$).¹⁴ The level of population heterogeneity in a city is measured by the percentage of residents who were born in non-EU countries. Unfortunately, this measure is unavailable for 19 of the 117 cities (18 of the 19 representing cities in the United Kingdom). Therefore, we estimate our model with and without this measure. With the exception of the percentage lone-parent households variable that is included in the deprivation index, the population heterogeneity measure is our unique indicator of social disorganization for these cities.¹⁵ The Urban Audit data set does not provide measures for marital status at the city-level that would allow us to test for the socially disorganizing effect of divorce. To some extent, the lone-parent households may represent this concept.

A city's level of unemployment is measured by the percentage of men who are unemployed relative to those men who are considered economically active (in the civilian labor force). Finally, the proportion of the youthful population in a city is measured by the percentage of residents who are between age 15 and 24 years.

A dichotomous measure representing the two regions represented in this data set, Eastern Europe (coded 1) and Western Europe (coded 0), is included to test whether a country's level of economic development is related to their cities' homicide rates (see Appendix 1 with Eastern European countries indicated).

¹²Unfortunately, the Urban Audit data set does not provide the detailed income information to allow us to compute a Gini index. Therefore, we have no measure of income inequality in our model.

¹³The factor scores generated from the principal components analysis (using pairwise deletion of missing data) are percentage lone-parent households (0.693), percentage households with less than one-half the national average income (0.622), percentage households reliant on Social Security (0.769), and median disposable household income (-0.686). We multiplied median household disposable income by -1 to make it a theoretically consistent indicator with the other "deprivation" indicators.

¹⁴Therefore, some cities' measure of deprivation is based on fewer than four variables. Sixty-seven (55%) cases included data for all 4 variables, 12 (10%) for 3 of the variables, 7 (5%) for 2 variables, and 36 (30%) for 1 variable (typically the percentage lone-parent households – mostly made up of the UK cities – but also median disposable income – mostly Spain) in the index. Our decision was based on our attempts to maintain more than 100 cases to enable us to invoke the central limit theorem.

¹⁵Many EU countries do not systematically collect information regarding the racial composition of their population (Tonry, 1997). Some will record information regarding country of birth and also information for second-generation immigrants. Therefore, the percentage of the population who are non-EU nationals was the best indicator of population heterogeneity available from this data set.

Table 8.1 Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics for variables in the analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	Mean	SD
Homicide rate (logged)	–	0.38*	0.09	0.06	0.14	0.33*	0.36*	0.36	1.04
Deprivation index		–	0.14	–0.28	0.30*	–0.00	0.52*	0.17	0.82
Unemployed males			–	–0.36*	0.50*	–0.04	0.17	10.16	4.55
Percent non-EU-nationals ^a				–	–0.60*	0.34*	–0.16	5.85	4.72
Age composition (percent 15–24 year olds)					–	–0.29*	0.24*	14.17	2.62
Population structure index						–	–0.06	13.11	1.35
Eastern Europe indicator							–	0.11	0.32

Note: * $p < 0.05$, two-tailed test; $N = 117$

^a $n = 98$

The explanatory variables included in our analysis include most of the classic structural covariates in investigations of homicide rates across U.S. states, cities, and metropolitan areas (Land et al., 1990; Lee et al., 2003; Maume & Lee, 2003; Messner & Golden, 1992; Rosenfeld et al., 2001) and provide sufficient indicators for our examination of how these structural covariates explain the variation in homicide rates across EU cities.

Table 8.1 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables used in our analyses. The descriptive statistics indicate that the mean homicide rate for the cities is 2.1 homicides per 100,000 residents, with a standard deviation of 2.13 indicating substantial variation in homicide rates across our sample of European cities. We use the logged homicide rate in our models, and the mean for this is 0.36.

On average, 10% of the economically active males in these cities are unemployed, and almost 6% of these cities' residents are non-EU nationals. Fourteen percent of the population is between age 15 and 24 years in an average city. Thirteen (11%) of the 117 cities are located in Eastern European countries.

Appendix 2 provides the descriptive information for the variables that made up the deprivation and population structure indexes included in these models. We see that the cities in our sample have an average population size of approximately 443,000 and that 7% of the households are headed by a lone parent – a percentage relatively smaller than what characterizes most U.S. cities. Among the economic indicators representing these cities, we find that the median disposable household income is 14,675 €, equivalent to approximately US \$12,475 in 2001.¹⁶ The other economic indicators reveal that almost one fourth

of the households in our sample of cities have incomes that are less than one-half the national average and just over 15% of households are reliant on Social Security. Overall for our variables included in this analysis, the standard deviations show that there is substantial variation in socioeconomic characteristics across the cities.

Results

Description

We start with a description of homicide rates in the 117 European cities in 16 nations available in the Urban Audit data set. More than one fourth (27%) of these European cities have homicide rates less than 1 per 100,000 and more than one third (33%) have rates between 1 and 2 homicides per 100,000 population. The remaining cities have homicide rates that range between 2 and 3 in about one fifth (21%) of the cases and more than 3 homicides per 100,000 population in 12% – with 4% of our cities' homicide rates more than 10 per 100,000. The rates for Eastern European cities are substantially higher (5.4 per 100,000) than for Western European cities (1.7 per 100,000). In any case, the majority of the European homicide rates are low relative to U.S. homicide rates.

¹⁶Currency conversion rates according to the European Central Bank – <http://www.ecb.int/stats/exchange/eurofxref/html/>—which shows the 2001 euro valued approximately 0.85 of the dollar (1 € = 85 cents). This EU “disposable” income is what they have after their medical insurance and other similar types of living expenses are covered by the government. See also Eurostat (2005) for detailed discussion of data collection.

Table 8.2 OLS regression models of European city homicide rates (ln), $N=98$ or $N=117$

	Panel A					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	$(N=98)$		$(N=117)$		$(N=98)$	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Deprivation index	0.421*	0.119	0.434*	0.109	0.453*	0.121
Unemployed males	-0.002	0.023	-0.001	0.020	0.004	0.023
Percent young	0.062	0.044	0.056	0.039	0.091*	0.048
Population structure	0.335*	0.075	0.289*	0.066	0.312*	0.076
Percent non-EU-nationals					0.038	0.027
Intercept	-5.013*	1.286	-4.297*	1.120	-5.404*	1.309
Adj <i>R</i> squared	0.252		0.245		0.260	

	Panel B: Controlling for Eastern Europe					
	Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	$(N=98)$		$(N=117)$		$(N=98)$	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Deprivation index	0.234*	0.141	0.281*	0.122	0.272*	0.144
Unemployed males	-0.004	0.022	0.005	0.020	0.000	0.023
Percent young	0.051	0.043	0.052	0.038	0.075	0.048
Population structure	0.331*	0.073	0.297*	0.064	0.313*	0.075
Percent Non-EU-nationals					0.031	0.026
Eastern Europe indicator	0.844*	0.357	0.793*	0.308	0.795*	0.358
Intercept	0.399*	-4.863	-4.359*	1.093	-5.193*	1.285
Adj <i>R</i> squared	0.287		0.281		0.290	

Note: * $p < 0.05$, one-tailed test

Bivariate Correlations

The wide variation in homicide rates across these cities raises the question of whether criminological theories and associated homicide relationships established in earlier homicide studies are supported when using data based on a sample of European cities. Table 8.1 provides bivariate correlations for the variables used in our analyses. These correlations give a preliminary insight into the extent to which our structural covariates explain variation in these European homicide rates. The homicide literature described earlier emphasizes that cities characterized by high levels of economic deprivation, unemployment, population heterogeneity, young residents, population size and density, as well as located in societies at lower levels of development, are likely to have relatively high rates of homicide offending. The correlations show support for some of the hypotheses. In particular, deprivation and population structure measures are significantly associated with homicide rates. To investigate the unique

contribution of each of the covariates more closely, we turn to the multivariate analyses.

Multivariate Analyses

In our study, we attempt to control for the likely structural differences that exist across these European cities and the level of development of these countries. Therefore, we also estimate a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) models to test our hypotheses. Because the logged homicide rate is approximately normally distributed, we estimate linear models in which the logged homicide rate in each city is defined to be dependent on the explanatory variables. The results of the multivariate analyses assessing the impact of the explanatory variables on homicide rates in European cities are presented in Table 8.2.

To show the robustness of our findings, we estimated the models several ways. Models 1 through 3 (Panel A) present the results that assess the impact of these variables on homicide

rates in European cities. We ran the models for all 117 cities as well as for a subset of 98 cities that exclude the 19 cities for which we have no information on our measure of population heterogeneity. Initially, the models are estimated with the population heterogeneity measure excluded: Model 1 includes the subset of 98 cities (for which we have information on all variables) and Model 2 includes our sample of 117 cities (for which we do not include the measure for population heterogeneity – percentage non-EU nationals). These two models are presented as a base of comparison. Finally, Model 3 includes population heterogeneity and is restricted to the subset of 98 cities for which we have information on all variables. Although the results vary somewhat between these models, we highlight the consistency in the overall findings across the models.

Consistent with our hypotheses, population structure exhibits a significant positive relationship with the homicide rate. Theoretically, homicide can thus be regarded as one of the resulting social pathologies stemming from urban anonymity and weak social control (Wirth, 1938).

Another finding consistent with our hypotheses is with respect to levels of economic deprivation in cities. The regression coefficients representing the effects of deprivation are significant and positively correlated with the homicide rates. In addition to its significance, this index explains the greatest amount of variance in homicide rates among the covariates in the model and substantiates the established importance of economic deprivation in cross-national homicide research (Pridemore, 2008). Finally, in Model 3 the parameter for the effect of percentage young approaches statistical significance. Because this is the only support for percent young found in these analyses, we are reluctant to interpret this finding as a sufficient corroboration of Hypothesis 5.

Eastern vs. Western European Countries

Our second research question addresses the issue of the extent these structural covariates also explain the differences in homicide rates between Eastern and Western European cities.

To address that question, we conducted additional analyses: Model 4 through 6 (Panel B). These models replicate models 1 through 3, but in addition include the dichotomous measure for European region.

The results support our hypothesis on the differences between Eastern vs. Western European countries. The coefficient for the Eastern Europe indicator is positive and statistically significant as predicted. Therefore, all else equal, the Eastern European cities in our sample have higher rates than the Western European cities.

Summary and Conclusion

With this chapter, we aimed to provide insight into the extent to which homicide rates vary across our sample of Eastern and Western European cities and the extent to which the variation is related to differences in the social and economic forces characterizing those cities. The results show that there is substantial variation in homicide rates in our sample of European cities, across Eastern and Western European countries and across cities within these countries. The results also show that some of the classic covariates identified in earlier studies are important and are robust predictors of homicide in this analysis. Consistent with our hypothesis, population structure exhibits a significant relationship with the homicide rate: the greater the population size and density, the higher the homicide rate in that city. Also in line with our predictions, we find that the higher the level of deprivation in a city, the higher the homicide rate. In addition, the country's level of development has an impact on the city-level homicide rate. Our other three hypotheses, however, were not corroborated by our results (see Pridemore & Trent, 2010, for explanations regarding the significant findings for some covariates and nonsignificant findings for others in their exhaustive review of cross-national homicide research).

When we consider the relative consistency with which our social and economic indicators have found support in previous studies of homicide, we are confident that our findings are substantiat-

ing social facts in Europe that exist regardless of national borders. Our findings substantiate that the social and economic forces associated with large urban settings and with economic hardship (along with weak parental supervision) are structural characteristics that are conducive to homicide offending in these EU cities as established in studies of U.S. homicides. European policy makers and city planners can refer to and rely on these findings as they work to reduce crime and other social problems in their communities.

Homicide researchers and policy makers should also find our nonsignificant findings of interest – for example, the absence of a significant influence of non-EU nationals. The percentage of non-EU nationals variable was employed to measure our concept of *population heterogeneity* (as related to social disorganization) and is the best measure the data set provides. The percentage of the non-EU nationals only approaches statistical significance in one model that included the Eastern European country indicator variable. Yet this measure is likely to include such populations as skilled immigrants from Asia or the Americas as well as unskilled immigrants from Morocco or Algeria, for example. Skilled migrants would not characterize the disorganizing influence of the migration flows described by Shaw and McKay (1942) in their work, nor of the economically alienated U.S. Black population.¹⁷ Therefore, our general measure of non-EU nationals may blur what could be important social and/or economic forces relative to the concept of *population heterogeneity* (see Tonry, 1997, for issues related to ethnicity and crime in Europe). The absence of support for this hypothesis does not indicate that population heterogeneity is an unimportant factor in European cities relative to homicide. Researchers and policy makers should attempt to identify and compile more refined measures of this concept in future cross-national, city-level studies.

¹⁷ Without more substantive studies of the impact of nationality, race, and ethnicity on homicide offending in European countries, and without systematically collected measures available to best capture the differential social and economic backgrounds they entail, homicide studies of European cities will not be able to assess the relationship between population heterogeneity and homicide rates.

Similarly, the lack of support for the hypothesis on the relationship between unemployment (as an indicator of economic strain) and homicide rates should also be of relevance to researchers and policy makers. It is important to note that many European countries provide unemployment and other social benefits that cushion the economic hardship for its citizens in financially depressed periods. As Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) noted, European countries' political institutions are characterized by Esping-Anderson's (1990) concept of *decommodification* – the efforts by governments to reduce the hardships of economic downturns on society's members by providing financial (welfare) support (Maume & Lee, 2003; Savolainen, 2000). Welfare support in these countries is posited to reduce strain among unemployed populations and thereby reduce the adverse effect economic strain could have on homicide offending (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997).¹⁸ This is a relatively unexplored relationship, particularly across different political contexts, that is worthy of further examination.

How do these findings inform us about the extent to which classic criminological theories are relevant to our understanding of homicide offending in European cities? Notwithstanding the unique backgrounds of these European cities (and countries), criminological theories have identified structural forces that influence violent behavior across geographic areas – forces that have likewise been identified fairly consistently across U.S. macro-level homicide studies. To begin, the social pathologies associated with urban settings (Wirth, 1938) are demonstrated and further documented in this study of European cities. The detrimental effects of urban anonymity and ensuing weak social controls among its residents are well established in the criminological literature (Land et al., 1990; Lee et al., 2003; Messner & Golden, 1992; Rosenfeld et al., 2001) and are further supported in our findings and in most recent homicide research.

Social disorganization and (economic) strain theories receive support in the current study as

¹⁸ Because our measure of welfare support was a component of the deprivation index, we were not able to distinguish its unique effects on homicide.

they have in the vast body of homicide literature. Although our measure of economic deprivation does not allow us to assess the unique impact of parental supervision (lone-parent households) or impoverishment (households with income less than one-half the mean national income), economic deprivation emerges in the current study as a classic covariate of homicide offending. However, in spite of the well-established age-crime relationship, the driving force between age and homicide offending is elusive in cross-sectional studies. Researchers have yet to discover what appear to be the dynamics of youthful population composition and violent offending.

Finally, some remarks about data limitations are warranted. The data set used in this article is unique because it is the first to include homicide rates and structural covariates at the subnational level across several European countries. Admittedly, however, the data have several limitations. First, the sampling procedure is unclear except for Eurostat's decision to include medium and large cities. Yet comparisons between the total (285) and subsample (117) reveal hardly any substantially different findings. So, the robust nature of our findings gives us reason to have confidence in the generalizability to European cities not included in our analyses. Second, but related, the data set does not include other industrialized countries outside the EU that would be interesting to include in a cross-national city comparison. We might expect that advanced industrialized countries have lower homicide rates, developing countries would have higher homicide rates, and levels of economic inequality may have more pronounced effects on homicide rates (Pratt & Godsey, 2003). Third, the source of the homicide data is unclear – we do not know the extent to which these data are derived from police records vs. mortality statistics, which would be a more reliable source for comparisons across countries. Nevertheless, comparability with other sources of homicide offending suggests these data are worth exploring.

We conclude by arguing that it is important to continue down this road by replicating these aggregate-level homicide studies and expanding the sample of EU cities to include other cities within these European countries and within other non-European

countries. Researchers are often dependent on major statistical organizations such as Eurostat for these types of data collection efforts. Nevertheless, with increasing globalization, pressure from political leaders, and concerted efforts by social scientists and policy makers, these data will be forthcoming – if not in the near future, certainly in time.

Appendix 1

The 16 Countries Included in the Analysis (N of Cities = 117)

Austria (1): Linz; *Belgium* (1): Bruxelles; *Czech Republic*^a (3): Ostrava, Praha, Usti nad La; *Denmark* (4): Aalborg, Aarhus, København, Odense; *Estonia*^a (1): Tallinn; *Finland* (1): Helsinki; *France* (23): Amiens, Besançon, Bordeaux, Caen, Clermont-Fe, Dijon, Grenoble, Le Havre, Lille, Limoges, Lyon, Marseille, Metz, Montpellier, Nancy, Nantes, Orléans, Reims, Rennes, Rouen, Saint-Etien, Strasbourg, Toulouse; *Germany* (33): Augsburg, Berlin, Bielefeld, Bochum, Bonn, Bremen, Darmstadt, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Erfurt, Essen, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Göttingen, Halle an der Saale, Hamburg, Hannover, Karlsruhe, Köln, Leipzig, Magdeburg, Mainz, Mönchenglad, Mülheim, Moers, München, Nürnberg, Regensburg, Schwerin, Trier, Weimar, Wiesbaden, Wuppertal; *Hungary*^a (4): Budapest, Miskolc, Nyiregyhaza, Pecs; *Lithuania*^a (2): Kaunas, Vilnius; *Luxembourg* (1): Luxembourg; *Latvia*^a (1): Riga; *The Netherlands* (5): Arnhem, Eindhoven, Heerlen, Rotterdam, Gravenhage; *Slovakia*^a (3): Banska, Byst, Nitra; *Spain* (17): Badajoz, Barcelona, Las Palmas, Logroño, Madrid, Málaga, Murcia, Oviedo, Palma di Majorca, Pamplona/Ir, Santiago de Compostela, Sevilla, Toledo, Valencia, Valladolid, Vitoria/Gas, Zaragoza; *United Kingdom* (18): Aberdeen, Belfast, Birmingham, Bradford, Cardiff, Derry, Edinburgh, Exeter, Gravesham, Leeds, Leicester, Lincoln, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield, Stevenage, Worcester.

^aEastern European countries.

Appendix 2

Bivariate Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Indexes, N = 117 Unless Otherwise Indicated

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	Mean	SD
Homicide rate (logged)	–	0.34*	0.16	0.32*	–0.35*	0.31*	0.26*	0.36*	0.36	1.04
% Lone-parent households ^a		–	0.12	0.39*	–0.45*	0.10	0.06	0.50*	6.90	2.90
% Households w/ half national mean income ^b			–	0.72*	0.08	–0.02	0.27	–0.08	20.58	17.02
% of Households reliant on Social Security ^b				–	–0.61*	–0.12	–0.07	0.55*	15.39	12.18
Median disposable household income ^c					–	–0.12	0.22	–0.68*	14,676	5,823
Population size (logged)						–	0.47	–0.02	12.63	0.82
Population per square kilometer (logged)							–	–0.08	0.48	0.74
Eastern Europe indicator								–	0.11	0.32
Population size (thousandths)									442.9	492.0
Population per square kilometer									2.09	1.83

Note: * $p < 0.05$, two-tailed test

^a $n = 99$

^b $n = 74$

^c $n = 87$

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The Effects of Political, Economic, and Social Changes on Homicide in Eastern Europe

9

Janet P. Stamatel

Introduction

The fall of communism in Eastern Europe after 1989 significantly altered the geopolitical landscape by replacing dualist divisions of spheres of influences with more complicated and varied political configurations. The formation of new states, the redefinition of political alliances, and the emergence of new political systems that do not fit neatly into the dichotomy of authoritarian vs. democratic governance raise the question of whether the term “Eastern Europe” is even analytically relevant any more. After all, in the more than 20 years since the end of the Cold War, many Central-East European states have joined the European Union, while several of the former republics of the former Soviet Union have a geographic and political identity more closely associated with Central Asia than Europe, and other former republics have created their own unique postcommunist identities.

While the geographic label may be outdated, the diversity of postcommunist experiences across the former Soviet bloc is precisely what makes this region important for the development of social science theory and research. Communist Eastern Europe was academically interesting because of the stark contrast of the political, economic,

and ideological systems to Western nations. Now postcommunist Eastern Europe is a compelling area of study because of the variety of political, economic, and ideological systems that have arisen out of this shared history (King, 2010).

For criminologists, the postcommunist experiences offer opportunities to expand the scope of our inquiries beyond the more economically advanced and politically stable West (see Stamatel, 2006). Not only do we now have access to crime data from more countries to test the generalizability of existing criminological theories, but the different developmental trajectories of the postcommunist countries challenge criminologists to rethink our explanatory frameworks to account for these varied experiences. Additionally, the profound political, economic, and social changes associated with post-communism provide a historically unique opportunity to reevaluate and expand our theories about the effects of such large-scale changes on crime rates.

The aim of this chapter is to review the existing literature on the effects of the postcommunist transformations on homicide rates across the former Soviet bloc in order to demonstrate the value of research in this area not only for area study specialists and comparativists, but more broadly for the field of criminology. The first part of this chapter summarizes what we know about homicide patterns and trends in the communist and postcommunist periods. The second section reviews the research explaining homicide variation in the postcommunist era. Finally, the chapter

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examines some of the areas of inquiry that have so far been largely ignored by criminologists studying this region but that offer promising contributions to homicide research.

Homicide Patterns and Trends in Eastern Europe During the Communist Period

Before we can examine the effects of the post-communist political, economic, and social changes on homicide in Eastern Europe, we first need to establish a baseline for comparison. The difficulty of this task lies in the fact that criminological research in Eastern Europe during the communist period was severely limited by the communist governments because crime and other social problems not only challenged the ideological utopia of the communist system, but also raised politically contentious questions about state-sponsored violence against noncompliant citizens. "Simply put, capitalism was thus understood to cause crime. The socialist system, on the other hand, as one of a social equality, was believed to abolish all antagonisms" (Bienkowska, 1991: 44).

Although some Eastern European social scientists wrote about this subject while under communist rule, few such publications were translated and circulated beyond their home countries. The few Western criminologists who examined this issue during the Cold War painted contradictory portraits of the state of criminal activity in this region. Some (e.g., Connor, 1969; Łoś, 1988; van den Berg, 1985) demonstrated the persistence of crime in spite of ideological promises that it would "wither away" as mature socialism replaced the "remnants of capitalism." In contrast, others argued that some Eastern European countries experienced less crime than their Western counterparts (e.g., Adler, 1983; Shelley, 1981, 1991). These seemingly contradictory perspectives stemmed from the selection of different communist countries for analysis, emphases on different crime types, and varying data sources and methods.

Since the end of the Cold War, more crime data from Eastern Europe have become available

to researchers for both the communist and post-communist periods. In particular, researchers have taken advantage of public health and police data on homicides to create a more accurate statistical portrait of violent crime before and after 1989. One of the early examinations of crime during the late communist period provided a rare statistical portrait of 16 crimes, including intentional homicide (Butler, 1992). This analysis showed that homicide rates in the Soviet Union in the 1980s fluctuated greatly. For example, "the total number of homicides in 1989 was virtually identical to the total for 1980. In 1987 the figure was roughly one-third the figures recorded for 1980 and 1989" (Butler, p. 150). This descriptive analysis did not attempt to explain why such fluctuations existed.

In another historical comparison, Stickley and Makinen (2005) used public health mortality statistics for "European Russia" from 1910 and 1989 to compare the geographic distribution of homicides at the end of the tsarist period with the end of the communist period. They found that average homicide rates increased slightly in this region from 7.6 per 100,000 in 1910 to 8.2 per 100,000 in 1989. More interestingly, the geographic distribution of homicide rates shifted across the region, increasing in the center and remaining high in the north and east due to "a complex interaction of socio-structural and cultural factors" (Stickley & Makinen, p. 665; see also Stickley & Pridemore, 2007).

These data do not support the ideological rhetoric that violent crime rates were significantly lower in communist Russia than the democratic West. Pridemore (2001) confirmed this observation by comparing homicide data from both police records and public health mortality data between Russia and the United States since the mid-1970s. This study showed that homicide rates in Russia were generally higher than those in the United States. Additionally, homicide rates in Russia rose dramatically with the dismantling of communism in the late 1980s and 1990s, far surpassing United States homicide rates, which began declining at this time (Pridemore).

Similarly, an historical analysis of homicide trends in Estonia also showed relatively high

homicide rates. Lehti's (2001b) presentation of crime statistics from precommunist Estonia showed homicide rates ranging from 5 per 100,000 to almost 9 per 100,000 between 1903 and 1934. While they remained under 10 per 100,000 by 1989, they also increased dramatically to over 25 per 100,000 by the mid-1990s (Lehti, 2001a).

In contrast, other communist countries did not experience homicide rates as high as these parts of the former Soviet Union. For example, the recorded intentional homicide rate in the Ukraine was 3.35 in 1972 and 5.01 in 1989 (Foglesong & Solomon, 2001). Additionally, both LaFree and Drass (2002) and Stamatel (2008) analyzed homicide victimization data from the World Health Organization for four communist countries (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland) and found that the homicide rates per 100,000 people from 1960 to 1989 ranged from 1.18 in Czechoslovakia to 2.51 in Bulgaria. While these rates were somewhat higher than the average homicide rate in Western Europe at the same time (1.04 per 100,000), they were still much lower than the rates in Russia and Estonia (Stamatel, 2008: 124).

The World Health Organization (WHO) provides homicide victimization data for several Eastern European countries. Although reporting for these countries was often inconsistent during the communist period, many countries started sharing mortality data with WHO in the 1980s. Table 9.1 shows the WHO homicide rates for two time points in the late communist period for which data were available for a large number of Eastern European countries. These data illustrate the wide diversity of experiences with homicide. For example, Russia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldova, and Estonia fall on the high end of the range, while Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan at the low end of the range.

These data illustrate that experiences with violent crime during communism were by no means uniform. Given the limited amount of homicide research on this region and fairly recent access to aggregate homicide data for a large number of these countries, historical criminologists have a unique opportunity to systematically examine the diversity of homicide experiences during the communist period.

Homicide Patterns and Trends in Eastern Europe During the Postcommunist Period

Despite the initial euphoria over the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, media reports in the early 1990s were lamenting rising crime rates across postcommunist countries. In 1990 alone, crime rates in Czechoslovakia were described as "alarming" ("Alarming" Rise in Crime This Year, 1990); government officials in Bulgaria called special meetings to address "gross law-breaking" (Council of Ministers Meeting on Crime Rate, 1990); Poland reported a "rising wave of crime" (Borowiec, 1990); and Slovakia noted a "substantial" increase in crime (Rising Crime in Slovakia, 1991). Just a few years later in 1994 post-unification Germany was described as experiencing a "personal-safety craze" (Burke, 1994).

Researchers confirmed these media reports regarding rising crime rates in postcommunist countries after the fall of communism, particularly with respect to homicide. For example, Pridemore showed that homicide rates in Russia more than doubled between 1991 and 1994 and peaked in 1994 at 32.6 per 100,000 (2003: 47). Similarly, Saar showed that intentional homicide rates, including attempts, in Estonia surged upwards at the beginning of the 1990s, reaching 15 per 100,000 in 1992 and 21 in 1993, peaking at 24.2 in 1994 (2004: 509). Poland showed a similar rise in homicides during the early postcommunist years, although the levels of homicide were much lower than in Russia or Estonia. Using police data, Krajewski (2004) showed that the homicide rate in Poland was 1.5 in 1989 but rose steadily to 3.4 in 2001, before dropping slightly to 3.1 in 2002. This translates into a 163% increase between 1989 and 2002 (Krajewski, pp. 385–386). Similarly, the intentional homicide rates in the Ukraine increased almost threefold between 1988 and 1998 (Foglesong & Solomon, 2001), while the homicide victimization rate for East German men more than doubled between 1989 and 1991 (Clark & Wildner, 2000).

Table 9.1 Homicide victimization rates during late communism

Country	1981	1989
Albania		2.17
Armenia	1.9	2.9
Azerbaijan	3.26	2.21
Belarus	4.85	6.8
Bulgaria	3.4	2.48
Czechoslovakia	1.1	1.18
Estonia	8.51	7.84
Georgia	3.11	4.22
Hungary	2.54	2.91
Kazakhstan	9.88	10.12
Kyrgyzstan	7.49	7.17
Latvia	7.06	8.76
Lithuania	6.7	5.75
Poland		2.06
Republic of Moldova	9.39	8.44
Romania		3.87
Russian Federation	12.89	12.58
Slovenia		2.35
Tajikistan	2.51	2.29
Turkmenistan	6.68	6.4
Ukraine	6.24	7.2
Uzbekistan	5.51	5.59
Yugoslavia	2.26	1.72

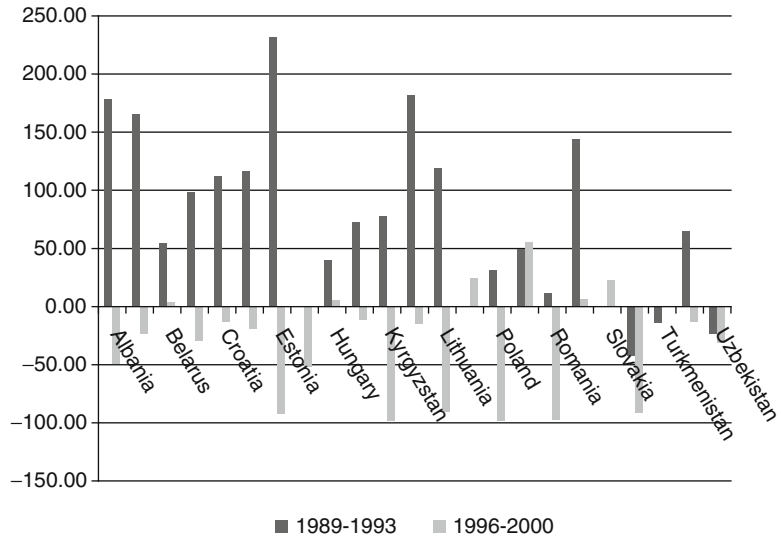
Source: World Health Organization Statistical Information System

Cross-national comparisons support the patterns shown in these case studies. LaFree and Drass showed that four postcommunist countries (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland) “experienced a period of three successive years of 10% or greater homicide increases” following the fall of communism and all of these countries except Hungary qualified as experiencing a “crime boom” (2002: 784). Ceccato (2008) compared homicide rates for the Baltics with select Central and East European and West European countries from 1993 to 2000. The rates in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were significantly higher than the comparison countries. Although Estonia and Lithuania experienced a rise in homicide rates between 1993 and 1994, all three countries saw declining rates for the rest of the decade. This pattern is similar to that found by Stamatel (2008) in her analysis of ten Central-East European countries from 1985 to 2003. While all of these countries experienced rapidly increasing homicide rates until the mid-1990s, the trends for most of

these countries then started to decline in the latter half of the 1990s.

This pattern is supported by data from the World Health Organization. Figure 9.1 shows the percentage change in homicide rates for 19 postcommunist countries from 1989 to 1993 and then from 1996 to 2000. Most of these countries experienced significant increases in homicide rates in the early postcommunist period, although the magnitude of change ranged from a low of 11% in Romania to a high of 232% in Estonia. Interestingly, Slovakia and Uzbekistan did not follow this general pattern and instead had decreasing homicide rates during this period. In contrast, in the second half of the 1990s most of these countries experienced declining homicide rates, although there were also some exceptions to this pattern. Therefore, while the postcommunist transformations were associated with rising homicide rates in most Eastern European countries, the rapid increases generally did not last throughout the decade.

Fig. 9.1



Explaining Homicide Patterns and Trends in Eastern Europe

Aside from using recently available police and public health data from Eastern Europe to document changing homicide rates after the fall of communism, these data have also been linked to other social science indicators to develop empirical tests to explain these changes and to advance criminological theories. The research in this area has fallen into three overlapping streams. First, homicide research on Eastern Europe has sought to test the applicability and generalizability of traditional predictors of aggregate homicide rates and existing theories of macrolevel homicide variation. Second, homicide research in this area has elaborated upon the specific effects of the historically unique political and economic changes brought about by the fall of communism. Third, homicide research has bridged a criminological approach to studying this topic with a public health perspective, focusing especially on the relationship between alcohol and violence in this region. Most of the research in each of these three streams focuses primarily on Russia, which is the geographically, politically, and culturally dominant postcommunist country. However, the few other case studies and cross-national studies in each of these research streams have shown that

the Russian case is not representative of the postcommunist experience. Much more research is needed in each of these areas in order to better specify shared explanations for homicide in this region and to explain the diversity of the postcommunist transformations and their social consequences.

Applying Existing Explanations to the Postcommunist Experience

Comparative and international criminologists often assert that one of the primary contributions of this area of inquiry to the broader field of criminology is the ability to test the generalizability of crime theories and known correlates of crime to settings other than where they originated, which is typically the United States (see Howard et al., 2000; LaFree, 2007; Stamatel, 2009b). The fall of communism in Eastern Europe provided a new opportunity to test these theories in geographically, politically, culturally, and economically different settings than previous studies. The results to date show that some predictors and explanations are applicable to these new settings, but many others are not, thereby requiring comparative criminologists to consider the socio-historical context of nations more carefully in their analyses.

Much of the work in this area has been led by Pridemore and colleagues, who have conducted a series of studies to explain macrolevel homicide variation across Russia's administrative units. These studies have tested the viability of known structural correlates of homicide in this unique setting, as well as the applicability of several popular theories of macrolevel violence. Traditional structural predictors derived primarily from American research include level of economic development, resource deprivation, income inequality, mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, family instability, urbanization, and the proportion of young males in a population. These predictors have produced mixed results in cross-national tests (see LaFree, 1999; Neapolitan, 1997; Nivette, *in press*); Pridemore & Trent, 2010), and Russia is no exception. For example, resource deprivation and family instability were significant predictors of regional homicide variation in Russia, but income inequality, mobility, ethnic diversity, and urbanization were not (Pridemore, 2005; see also Pridemore & Shkolnikov, 2004). Additionally, homicide offenders are generally much older than their Western counterparts, so the percentage of young males is not representative of motivated offenders or potential victims in the Russian context (Chervyakov, Shkolnikov, Pridemore, & McKee, 2002; Pridemore, 2003). The authors of these studies conclude that these findings support economic deprivation and social cohesion theories, but also encourage further examination of country-specific factors that would account for the differences in the structural covariates of homicide between Russia and the United States.

Although there have not been many tests of the structural predictors of homicide in other Eastern European countries, Stamatel (2009a) analyzed homicide rates across a sample of nine Central-East European countries and found that economic deprivation was also a significant predictor in this sample, and the proportion of young males was a significant *negative* predictor, contrary to findings in Western nations. Contrary to the Russian case, ethnic heterogeneity was positively related to homicide in this sample.

Interestingly, income inequality was not a significant predictor in this sample of Eastern

European countries nor was it in the intranational analyses of homicide variation in Russia. This finding is important because it is contrary to much of the cross-national homicide research based on samples with few or no Eastern European countries (see LaFree, 1999; Neapolitan, 1997; Pridemore & Trent, 2010). While Karstedt (2003) found income inequality to be important for understanding violence in a smaller sample of Central-East European countries, she also argued for the need to interpret inequality within the context of the socialist legacy and the postcommunist transformations. This inconsistent finding has spurred an interesting debate in cross-national criminology regarding the operationalization of resource deprivation and the theoretical relevance of this construct for understanding homicide variation (Paré, 2006; Paré & Felson, *under review*); Pridemore, 2008, 2011; Messner et al., 2010). Given the historical salience of inequality in both political ideology and material reality of communist Eastern Europe and the new inequalities introduced by free market economies, this region of the world provides an especially interesting sample of countries to further research in this area.

Since there have not been many empirical tests of the structural predictors of homicide across Eastern European nations, these results will be sensitive to measurement differences and sample composition. Much more work needs to be done more generally in the area of social structure and homicide with respect to both knowledge accumulation and replication (Pridemore & Trent, 2010), and this is especially true for Eastern European countries where the body of research is only just beginning to grow. Nonetheless, these initial studies provide support for theories of economic deprivation but challenge the strength of two popular predictors of macrolevel homicide variation – income inequality and the percentage of young males in a population.

Beyond these structural correlates, Pridemore and colleagues have also performed rigorous tests of two macrolevel theories of homicide variation on Russia – social support and institutional anomie theory (IAT). First, Kim and Pridemore (2005a) examined whether the amount of social support provided by local governments would either

lower homicide rates or moderate the criminogenic effects of negative socioeconomic change on homicide rates. Contrary to previous cross-national research (Pratt & Godsey, 2002, 2003), Kim and Pridemore did not find empirical support for this theory in Russia. Instead, negative socioeconomic change, family instability, alcohol consumption, and political participation (polity) were the strongest predictors of macrolevel homicide variation in Russia.

Next, Kim and Pridemore (2005b) tested whether the positive effect of negative socioeconomic change on homicide was conditioned by other social institutions as predicted by IAT. This perspective posits that violent crime will be higher in places that have anomic cultural values coupled with an institutional imbalance whereby the economy dominates other social institutions, such as family, education, and polity (Messner & Rosenfeld, 2007). Similar to the previous study, Kim and Pridemore (2005b) found that both poverty and negative socioeconomic change were positively related to regional homicide variation in Russia. Additionally, family and polity were negatively related to homicide, although education was not. However, the noneconomic social institutions did not condition the effect of negative socioeconomic change on homicide, as predicted. The authors explained that this finding could be due to the swiftness and suddenness of the social changes in Russia that simultaneously disrupted all social institutions. In other words, the authors argued that explanatory frameworks of homicide variation in Russia need to account for socio-historical context and, more specifically, need to address the disruptive nature of the unprecedented social changes associated with the fall of communism.

A Closer Examination of the Effects of Large-Scale Social Change on Homicide Rates

The second significant research stream on homicide variation in Eastern Europe has specifically addressed the issue raised by the previously discussed body of literature and examined the effects of social change on violent crime in this region. While other comparative criminologists

have also looked at how social change affects crime, researchers studying Eastern Europe have emphasized the effects of the historically unique social changes associated with the dismantling of communism and the transformation to new political, economic, and ideological configurations.

Once again, much of this research has been conducted on Russia. For example, Pridemore and Kim (2006) argued that the swift political changes that occurred in Russia after the fall of communism constituted what Durkheim (1897 [1951]) referred to as a threat to the collective sentiment, which contributed to rising violent crime rates. Using data from 78 Russian regions, their empirical analysis showed that “regions that experienced the greatest amount of political change during the 1990s were regions where homicide rates increased the most, even after controlling for the effects of rapid socioeconomic change” (Pridemore & Kim, 2006: 93). Although political change in this context refers to democratization, the authors cautiously conclude that their study does not show that democracy per se leads to rising crime rates, but rather that “*rapid change ... appears to be the operative mechanism*” (Pridemore & Kim, p. 96).

The same authors also examined another of Durkheim’s propositions about the effects of social change on homicide rates. They applied Durkheim’s (1897 [1951]) argument “that rapid social change results in the related problems of decreasing integration and normative confusion, leaving society unable to regulate individual desires at the same time that new freedoms were abounding” to postcommunist Russia (Pridemore & Kim, 2007: 230). They showed that changes in levels of homicide across Russian regions between 1991 and 2000 were positively related to negative socioeconomic change even when controlling for other structural covariates. More specifically, they found that higher levels of unemployment contributed to greater increases in homicide rates, while more privatization of property led to smaller increases in homicide. This latter finding is especially interesting because Stuckler and King (2007) found that rapid privatization increased male death rates in general (not just those due to violence) in a larger sample of 25 Eastern European countries from

1991 to 2002, although they argued that this was due to rising work-related stress and weakening social safety nets, which may not be key operating mechanisms for homicide deaths relative to other causes of mortality (see also Grigoriev et al., 2010). Pridemore and Kim (2007) interpreted their findings as support for Durkheim's social deregulation hypothesis. In particular, they argued that "Russia's instantaneous switch from tight top-down control over aspirations to deregulated desires would be expected to create this type of rootlessness, allowing unanchored individuals to drift," thereby increasing homicide rates (Pridemore & Kim, 2007: 240).

In a different empirical test of the same hypothesis, Pridemore, Chamlin, and Cochran (2007) used an interrupted time series analysis on Russian homicide data from 1956 to 2002 to assess the extent to which the collapse of communism affected the long-term homicide trend. The results showed that the dissolution of the Soviet Union created a statistically significant increase in homicide and two other forms of deviance. The authors interpreted this finding as support for Durkheim's social deregulation hypothesis, arguing that the rapid social changes associated with the fall of communism brought about new unregulated freedoms where "the boundaries between right and wrong are blurred" (Pridemore et al., 2007: 284).

While this research on Russia has established the severe costs of the postcommunist transition on homicide rates due to the extremely disruptive nature of the social changes, Stamatel (2009b) examined whether there was something specific about the nature of the social changes, namely democratization and marketization, that would lead to higher homicide rates in some postcommunist countries relative to others. Using a pooled-time series analysis of homicide data from nine Central-East European countries, she found that more progressive economic reforms toward free market economies and more extensive political reforms toward democratization were associated with *lower* homicide rates. The negative relationship between democracy and crime is consistent with some of the Russian

research (Kim & Pridemore, 2005a), as well as the multinational, longitudinal analyses of LaFree and Tseloni (2006) that found that transitioning countries had higher homicide rates than countries that had consolidated their democracies.

Not only have the postcommunist transformations affected the volume and distribution of homicides in Eastern European countries, but it has also changed the nature of this crime. Comparisons of homicide cases from the Udmurt Republic of Russia before and after the collapse of the communist system have illustrated these changes. For example, Chervyakov et al. (2002) noticed a larger proportion of homicides in 1998 involving aggravating circumstances, hired killers, younger perpetrators, and urban settings compared to those occurring between 1989 and 1991.

Analyzing the same data, Pridemore (2006, 2007) showed that while there were no statistically significant differences in victim characteristics between the two time periods, the proportions of female offenders, offenders drinking alcohol at the time of the incident, and offenders with a prior felony conviction, all decreased in the postcommunist period. Additionally, there was an increase in the postcommunist period in incidents precipitated by victims, involving a blunt object or bodily force, profit-motivated, and those with multiple offenders. Pridemore (2006) explains these changes in terms of a "criminological transition," whereby large-scale systemic changes affect social structure and culture in such a way as to change the nature of violence.

In sum, the research to date explaining within- and between-country variations in levels and changes in homicide rates provide support for Durkheimian anomie theories, but also elaborate on the effects of the specific types of social changes associated with post-communism. However, the research to date has been limited to a fairly small number of postcommunist countries. Additionally, measures of the postcommunist transformations have not been refined enough to specify the mechanisms through which these large-scale changes either contribute to or inhibit homicide.

Incorporating a Public Health Approach to Understanding Postcommunist Homicide Rates

The aforementioned literature examining the effects of the postcommunist political and economic changes on homicide rates clearly illustrates the need to incorporate the socio-historical context of nations into cross-national crime comparisons (Stamatel, 2006). Another way in which this unique context is utilized in homicide research is through the linkage of homicide to other public health issues in the region. Specifically, a growing body of literature has examined the relationship between homicide variation and alcohol consumption in Eastern Europe.

Pridemore and Kim (2006) showed that Russian rates of alcohol consumption have historically been significantly higher than in the European Union or the United States. Alcohol consumption in Russia is characterized by binge drinking and consists primarily of vodka (although beer consumption especially has increased proportionally in the postcommunist era). As such, “the deadly combination of (1) heavy episodic drinking, (2) a preference for distilled spirits, and (3) frequent consumption of alcohol substitutes and illegally produced alcohol (the quality of which is unregulated) results in a very high level of mortality from alcohol poisoning in the country” (Pridemore & Kim, 2006: 239; Stickley & Pridemore, 2010). Although there have been government initiatives to reduce alcohol consumption, the problem has generally been increasing since the 1960s and spiked dramatically after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Pridemore (2002) and Pridemore and Chamlin (2006) have shown how the geographic patterns and temporal trends of alcohol consumption correspond to homicide patterns. A cross-sectional analysis of 78 Russian regions confirmed that areas with higher rates of alcohol consumption had higher rates of homicide, controlling for other structural and geographic factors (Pridemore, 2002). Additionally, time series analyses showed a positive and contemporaneous relationship between alcohol consumption and homicide.

Both alcohol consumption and homicide rates increased in the postcommunist period due to the significant stress of the radical social changes on individuals. In particular, Pridemore (2002) argued that the stress created by the general social disruption of the fall of communism, the bleak outlook toward the future, and the powerlessness felt by individuals to control their lives contributed to a widespread public health crisis.

Bye (2008) found a similar result across six Eastern European countries. Time series analyses of data from Belarus, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Russia for over 40 years also showed a positive relationship between alcohol consumption and homicide rates for three of the countries analyzed individually (Belarus, Czechoslovakia, and Russia) and for the pooled sample. Additionally, the effect of alcohol use on homicide was stronger in countries that had more hazardous drinking patterns than others. This temporal correlation between alcohol consumption and aggregate homicide trends was also found in an analysis of data from Belarus from 1970 to 2005 (Razvodovsky, 2008).

Similar to the research on the effects of the postcommunist transformations on homicide in Eastern Europe, researchers studying homicide from a public health perspective have also examined the changing nature of homicides in addition to the changing volume. Pridemore and Eckhardt (2008) found that the characteristics of homicide cases differed for incidents involving alcohol vs. those without. More specifically, they found that alcohol-related homicides were more likely to stem from acute arguments, less likely to be premeditated, and less likely to involve strangers than homicides that did not involve alcohol. In other words, alcohol-related homicides were often more expressive than utilitarian compared to non-alcohol-related homicides.

Although the research in this stream has been less extensive than the previous ones, the studies to date clearly show the value added to homicide research through this public health perspective. In particular, this research stream demonstrates how consideration of a historically and culturally rooted social problem like hazardous drinking

patterns has been affected by the postcommunist transformations and, in turn, has influenced homicide rates. This research nicely demonstrates both the direct and indirect effects of the postcommunist social changes on homicide in this region.

Unanswered Questions

Despite the growth of research on homicide patterns and trends across Eastern Europe over the last decade, there still remain a number of unanswered questions about the causes and consequences of violence in this region. This section highlights three areas that deserve further research attention. First, homicide research in this region has been conducted primarily in Russia and secondarily in Central-East European countries, leaving many postcommunist countries largely unexamined. Second, much of the homicide research in this area is at the aggregate level (nation or region), raising many questions about the similarities and differences in incident- and individual-level characteristics of homicides. Finally, homicide in this region is rarely studied by criminologists in the context of other manifestations of violence, particularly collective and state-sponsored violence, which could shed light on the contextual environment and precipitating causes of interpersonal violence.

Geographic and Historical Variation

The fall of communism led to a redefinition of national borders and regional affiliations. As of 2010, there were 28 postcommunist countries in what was once called “Eastern Europe.” Some of these countries have since become part of the European Union, while others have been redefined as part of Central Asia. Despite the new geographic and political distinctions, the shared history of the postcommunist countries offers a unique opportunity for criminologists to study the effects of large-scale social changes on violent crime. To date, homicide data from only a small proportion of these countries have been

systematically analyzed and published in international (English-language) outlets.

Much more basic research on the geographic patterns, temporal trends, demographic characteristics, and structural and cultural correlates of homicide across all of the postcommunist countries is needed to establish a foundation for rich theoretical development and sophisticated empirical tests of cross-national explanatory frameworks. Aggregate homicide data are now available from a large number of these countries from the World Health Organization, the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics, and the United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems. Other social science indicators typically used as independent variables in cross-national analyses are also becoming increasingly available for these countries. As Figs. 9.1 and 9.2 illustrate, there is a considerable amount of variation in both the levels of homicide and the changes in homicide rates over time that deserve further attention.

Homicide Victims, Offenders, and Incidents

The analyses of homicide cases in Russia discussed previously provided unique insights about the victims, offenders, and circumstances of homicide after the fall of communism. However, the Russian case is not necessarily representative of the postcommunist experience and this work raises many important research questions for the rest of the region. Has the nature of homicide changed as well as the volume? Who is largely responsible for the documented rise in homicide rates in postcommunist countries after 1989? Who has suffered most from this rise? For example, other East European specialists have documented how certain population groups are bearing a disproportionate burden of the negative social consequences of the postcommunist transformations (Kochanowicz, 1997; Milanovic, 1998; Mikhalev, 2003; Standing, 1997). Criminologists could contribute to this discussion by examining if these groups are also especially vulnerable to homicide.



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Homicide Statistics, Public Health Sources, Latest Available Year (2003-2008)

Fig. 9.2 Homicide victimization rates circa 2008

For example, many social scientists writing about the East European transformations have raised concerns about the extremely negative effects the social changes have had on the elderly population who have experienced a loss of state pensions and subsidized housing, rising medical costs, and increased stress due to the psychological adjustment to the radical social changes (Horvat & Evans, 2010; Round, 2006). Little is known about how this demographic group has

been affected by rising violence due to the transformation. The broader postcommunist mortality crisis has disproportionately affected young and middle-aged men as opposed to the elderly (Shkolnikov & McKee, 2001), but in many countries older citizens are more often victims of homicide than those aged 15–24 years old (Stamatel, 2008). Additionally, fear of crime is quite prevalent in many East European countries (Clark & Wildner, 2000; Genov, 1998; Shlapentokh, 2001) and some

have argued that the psychological effects of rising crime rates have specifically threatened the elderly population's feelings of security (Petrov, 2007). For countries that have historically honored and protected their elderly citizens, the postcommunist transformations have redefined priorities for social protections potentially leaving this group vulnerable to the social ills created by these changes.

Additionally, the postcommunist transformations have significantly reshaped women's roles in these countries. The progressive policies of gender equality during the communist era were replaced by a return to traditional gender roles in many countries and/or a bottom-up redefinition of gender (Einhorn, 1993; Gal & Kligman, 2000; Johnson & Brunell, 2006). The structural, political, and economic changes of the postcommunist transformations have "had a negative impact on women's vulnerability to different forms of violence, especially to domestic violence, sex trafficking, and sexual harassment in the workplace" (Nikolic-Ristanovic, 2004: 2).

Russian scholars have documented the high rate of spousal homicide and female homicide victimization, as well as examined risk factors for intimate partner violence (Eckhardt & Pridemore, 2009; Gondolf & Shestakov, 1997a, 1997b; Johnson, 2001; Stickley et al., 2008). Additionally, the International Violence against Women Survey was conducted in the postcommunist countries of the Czech Republic and Poland. Similar to the overall patterns of homicides discussed in the research earlier, the violence against women data from this survey show considerable differences in experiences between women in these two postcommunist countries. In measures of both adult lifetime rates and 1-year rates of physical, sexual, or any type of violence against women by men, the rates for the Czech Republic were much higher than those in Poland, as were prevalence rates for most measures of intimate partner violence (Johnson, et al., 2007). The experiences of these three countries alone cannot be generalized to the region and much more comparative work on this subject is needed.

Finally, criminologists interested in understanding homicide and other violence in Eastern

Europe cannot ignore the Roma. The socially and economically marginalized Gypsy population is often portrayed as perpetrators of criminal activity. For example in 1992, one-third of all criminals who had been apprehended in Bulgaria were Roma, and in some towns in the Czech Republic, the Roma were believed to be responsible for three-fourths of all crimes (Barany, 2001: 89). Given that the economic changes of postcommunism have exacerbated unemployment and decreased educational opportunities among this population, there is concern that even further marginalization could contribute to even more criminal activity (Barany). Conversely, this group is also subject to violent victimizations due to their marginalized status. Widespread assaults and killings of Roma have been reported in the Czech Republic, Kosovo, Bulgaria, and Romania as the Roma are often targeted as scapegoats for a variety of social ills and are especially harassed by skinheads (Crowe, 2008; Halasz, 2009).

In each of these areas, examining populations that might be especially vulnerable to violence in postcommunist countries, the information to date is fairly limited both in terms of the number of countries considered in the research and the extent to which systematic research has been conducted on these topics. Most notably, very little cross-national research has examined victim characteristics across a large number of postcommunist countries so that it is difficult to identify the specific ways in which the postcommunist experience might be affecting different groups of people with respect to risk of violent victimization.

Other Manifestations of Violence

The fall of Soviet-style communism was initially hailed as a model for nonviolent means of achieving social change, as the regime collapse in many Eastern European countries was, at least initially, largely peaceful in nature. However, the nonviolent label was premature as violence later erupted in some areas of this region, most noticeably with the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the ongoing

violent conflict in Chechnya. Additionally, the homicide research presented in this chapter has shown that even when the *public* face of the transformations was nonviolent, *private* manifestations of violence nonetheless increased.

Cross-national homicide research has largely ignored the relationships between collective and interpersonal violence. However, Tilly argued that these two types of violence are two ends of the same continuum. “Don’t all sorts of violence express general human propensities to inflict damage on others, propensities that simply activate more people simultaneously in collective violence?” (Tilly, 2003: 4). He then advocated that researchers examine the different “social ties, networks, and processes [that] affect change and variation in violent incidents” (Tilly: p. 4).

Given the preponderance of literature in political science addressing ethnic conflict and state-sponsored violence in this region (e.g., Armstrong, 2004; Gallagher, 1998; Gledhill, 2005; King, 2010; Korbonski, 2000; Lazarevic & de Tessieres, 2008), it is somewhat surprising that criminologists have not made any direct linkages between interpersonal violence and these other prevalent forms of violence. King summarized the salience of this topic for Eastern European experts when he wrote that “the upsurge in nationalist animosity, the sentiments of blood and belonging, and the horrors of genocide and ethnic cleansing seemed to define politics and social life after the end of superpower competition” (2010: 4). The social processes of identity formation, group affiliations, and political inclusion would appear to be just as relevant for understanding interpersonal violence as collective violence.

Aside from the notable work of Kutnjak and Hagan (2011) documenting the legal aftermath of the war crimes and genocide that occurred in the former Yugoslavia after the fall of communism, the complexities of ethnic violence have largely been ignored by criminologists studying this region. This is due in part to the limitations of quantitative analyses using aggregate data that do not provide the necessary details of homicide incidents to adequately address the issue of

ethnic conflict. However, this topic is ripe for criminological analysis as it is not only central to understanding violence in this region, but it also has serious implications for the future of political stability of these countries, as the 2010 outburst of ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan had recently demonstrated (Schwartz, 2010). The postcommunist transformations in Eastern Europe over “the last 15 years, in short, have posed difficult questions about the relationship between ethnicity on the one hand and democracy, stability, and prosperity on the other” (Kenney, 2006: 45). As central as ethnic conflict and collective violence are to the history and future stability of Eastern Europe, it deserves the attention of criminologists as well as other social scientists.

Conclusions

The literature presented in this chapter illustrates several ways in which homicide research on postcommunist countries has contributed to the broader field of criminology. First, the homicide fluctuations between the communist and postcommunist periods provide a unique opportunity to study the effects of large-scale social changes on interpersonal violence. Second, research on the causes and correlates of homicide within and between postcommunist countries provides support for some existing criminological theories, but challenges other explanatory frameworks that were developed to explain homicide in Western countries. Third, the diversity of social, political, and economic experiences of the postcommunist transformations encourages criminologists to consider socio-historical context more carefully with respect to delineating causes and correlates of homicide variation. Finally, the research on homicide in postcommunist countries has shown how valuable interdisciplinary connections can be for studying this topic. In sum, post-communism offers a unique historical experiment in large-scale social change that provides opportunities to expand the geographic, theoretical, and disciplinary boundaries of criminology.

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Family Violence in Europe, Child Homicide and Intimate Partner Violence

10

Colin Pritchard

Introduction

Compared to 40 or more years ago, women enjoy far greater equality as social attitudes in Western Europe have changed considerably. Therefore, it is something of a shock to find that in many European countries one of the worst aspects of sexism, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) persists and at its extremes leads to the violent death of women (Karch, Dahlberg, & Patel, 2010; Leith, 2009). Examples of the extremes of IPV are found in studies showing IPV increases during pregnancy and is associated with both homicide and suicide of women, reflecting findings from the child protection field of a frequent overlap between IPV and neglect and abuse of children (Cheng & Horon, 2010; Daigneault, Hebert, & McDuff, 2009; Krulewicz, 2009). Many of these studies link IPV and child abuse and its extremes to families living in relative poverty and socio-economic disadvantage although IPV is found among all social classes and ethnic groups, relative poverty is assumed to be a major contributing factor (Bowen, Heron, Waylen, & ALSPAC Study Team, 2005; Moore, 2005).

The complexities of IPV as part of “family violence” merits its own chapter but here the focus is primarily upon child neglect and abuse,

and at its extremes the violent deaths of children (0–14). While it is appreciated that in a minority of homicides of both children and women in Europe, their assailants will be extra-familial, but the majority of child and female homicides assailants are committed by someone in a close relationship to the victim (Collins, 2008; Falkov, 1996; Pritchard, 2004).

It is hoped that by focusing upon “who kill children” in a re-analysis of international, national and regional clinical data, the results may be relevant to understand the risk factors in both child protection and IPV situations.

We begin by examining how actual and possible Child-Abuse-Related-Death (CARD) and women’s homicide rates have changed over the past 30 years in Western Europe, to answer the media’s implied question of why did not the child protection services prevent the recent high profile death? But crucially, we seek to understand who kill children and whether there are parallels in IPV, from an examination of national female homicide rates.

Since 1962, when Kempe first highlighted the problem of child neglect and abuse, media response to high profile tragic cases has led to the castigation of the Child Protection services in virtually every Western country (Cheit, Shavit, & Reiss-Davis, 2010; Kempe & Kempe, 1978; Lockyer & Attwood, 2009). The result being that the perception of the effectiveness of the child protection service has become equated primarily with the avoidance of such tragedies.

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Taking this position as a starting point, we analyse the violent deaths of children (0–14), defined here as actual or possible CARD in 14 longer established European Union Countries (EUC); Belgium and Denmark had to be excluded as their latest data was much earlier than the other countries.

Examining CARD over the period enables us to explore how well has the various national systems done in the last 30 years (1974–2006) in reducing possible and actual CARD. This reflects a position stated by UNICEF (2001) that child mortality is an “indicator of how a nation meets the needs of its children”. However, we have to alert the reader that our earlier position on the association of CARD type deaths as a surrogate indicator of the effectiveness of child protection is now much more “open” (Pritchard & Butler, 2003). This new analysis raises questions about the nature of people who actually kill children and challenges the notion that neglect and abuse are along a continuum, which at the extreme leads to the death of a child in confirmed CARD and possible CARD, i.e. those which, theoretically, may be “hidden” or under-reported CARD.

Influence of Relative Poverty

One factor that needs to be considered is relative poverty, which negatively impacts upon child and adult morbidity and mortality, a theme found in every Western country (e.g. Badaloni, Cesaroni, Forastiere, & Perucci, 2009; Freemantle et al., 2009; kitsantas, 2008; Moore, 2005; Mulvaney et al., 2009; Parslow et al., 2009; Wang, Guttman, To, & Dick, 2009). There is a debate about definitions of “poverty” (Laderichi, Saith, & Stewart, 2003) but most writers agree that the difference between absolute and relative poverty is artificial when the negative socio-economic gradients in health are persistently demonstrated (Agran, Anderson, Winn, Trent, & Thayer, 2003; Feinstein, Hearn, Renton, & Abrahams, 2007; Freemantle et al., 2009; Mackenbach et al., 2003; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

One measure of relative poverty is the proportional gap between the top and bottom 20% of incomes that has been found to be associated with a range of psychosocial outcomes (Barak, Flavin,

& Leighton, 2006; Feinstein et al., 2007; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009; Williams & Pritchard, 2008). Moreover, “income inequality” provides a nation-specific ratio of how much people are richer than others (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

Consequently, it would be expected that CARD might be linked to poverty, assuming that there is a continuum of neglect into abuse, and possibly linked to the extremes of IPV, i.e. female homicides. To examine this assumption, income inequality will be correlated with not only CARD and female homicides, the possible extremes of IPV, but also “All-Causes-of-Death” (ACD) of children (0–14).

We begin by accepting the UNICEF dictum that “child mortality is an indicator of how well a nation meets the needs of its children” (2001) in examining “ordinary” i.e. ACD and then explore actual and possible CARD and female homicides.

The focus however remains on who kills children to ask the question whether the similar patterns might be found in IPV.

Methodology

The methodology will be briefly discussed as details on the macro comparative national studies are described elsewhere (Pritchard & Sayers, 2007; Pritchard & Sharples, 2008; Pritchard & Williams, 2010, 2011) as is the micro British regional study (Pritchard, 2004; Pritchard & King, 2005).

Mortality Categories: An epidemiological approach reflects the Durkheim tradition that changes in mortality reflect changes in society. Following the assumption that there is a continuum from neglect into extreme abuse, we move along a scale of confirmed CARD, i.e. by definition, abuse-related homicides, to possible CARD, where other mortalities (see further) that may be a source of under-reported CARD (Creighton, 1993) ending with total, “ordinary” deaths of children (0–14) (ACD) (WHO, 2008). The focus will be upon the most vulnerable age (<1 year) exploring 3-year averages for the baseline years 1974–1976 with index years 2004–2006 (WHO, 2008).

Potential CARD are deaths that some argue are possible hidden CARD (Creighton, 1993).

There are Ill-Defined-Signs and Symptoms (IDSS), which include “Sudden-Infant-Death-Syndrome” (SIDS), which some assert might be associated with abuse (Newlands & Emery, 1991); Accidents and Adverse Events (AAE) and finally Undetermined Deaths (UnD), which contain a degree of violence. UnD are so categorised because it was “not possible for the medical or legal authorities to determine whether it was accident, self-harm or assault” (ICD) (WHO, 1992, p. 1095). It includes “poisoning (ranging from drugs to vapours and gases), hanging, suffocation, drowning and submersion”; but in each case, “intent could not be determined” (WHO, 1992, p. 1095). Thus, baby (<1 year) or infant (1–4 year) UnD might be thought suspicious, whereas in an older child (5–14), it may have been self-inflicted (Hansen & Pritchard, 2005; Stanistreet, Taylor, Jeffrey, & Gabby, 2001).

As the UnD method of lethality is similar to homicides a third of 0–4 year old UnD will be combined with confirmed homicides to give a maximum estimate of CARD rates per million (pm) of population. The ethical dilemmas of considering such deaths as possible CARD are recognised, but it avoids any serious under-reporting of abuse-related deaths.

Extremes of IPV Female Homicides: 3-year average WHO homicide data for women are extrapolated for all female homicides 1974–1976 to the latest years available.

Relative Poverty and Child Neglect and Abuse: Relative poverty is defined as income inequality, the difference between top and bottom 20% of incomes (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). This becomes the context to analyse the mortality data using a Spearman Rank Order correlation to test any association between relative poverty and mortality categories.

Results

One presentational problem in comparing between the EU countries is the range of child (0–14) populations, for example England & Wales, France and Germany have 9.52, 11.2 and 11.7 million children, respectively, while smaller

countries such as Ireland have 0.86 million, Norway 0.9 million and Finland 0.91 million, hence rates are reported per million (pm) of population. Actual populations are given in the first column of Table 10.1.

Child Homicides (0–14) Plus 33% of Undetermined Deaths (0–4)

Current Baby confirmed homicides and UnD rates were led by Switzerland at 37 pm, England & Wales 29 pm and Germany 25 pm, but none were recorded in Austria, Greece, Norway and Spain and only two countries had rates above 10 pm. At All Children’s UnD rates only Switzerland 18 pm, Portugal 15 pm and England & Wales 14 pm had rates above 10 pm. Rather than swamp the reader with a plethora of separate data, Table 10.1 shows confirmed child (0–14) homicides plus a third of UnD of Baby and Infants (0–4) to account for any theoretically possible “hidden” CARD; in the final column of Table 10.1 matching all female homicides rates, including within and extra-family deaths.

Child Homicides and 33% Baby and Infant (0–4) UnD (Table 10.1)

Germany and Austria’s rate of 38 pm were the highest, the lowest being Ireland 2 pm and Spain 4 pm and it is noteworthy that ten countries’ rates were less than 20 pm which highlights the relative rarity of these extremes.

If we accepted that a third of UnD along with confirmed homicides were CARD then in the three biggest countries, France, England & Wales and Germany, there were only 42, 48 and 58 CARD type mortalities, respectively, equivalent to 0.0004, 0.0005 and 0.0005% of all children’s deaths.

Female Homicides: Extreme Consequence of IPV?

The final column of Table 10.1 gives the changes of adult female homicide rates over the period.

Table 10.1 Combined child homicide and 33% of Undetermined Baby and Infant in rates per million; rates of change 1974–1976 vs. latest year (ranked by current baby rates) and current female homicide

Country, years and rank order, 1974–1976 vs. 2004–2006	Baby	Baby and infant	All female homicides
Germany: 1980–1982 vs. 2004–2006	+62–38+	35–22	10–5
% Change	–39%	–37%	–50%
Austria	+65–38+	36–22	13–8
% Change	–42	–39	–38
Switzerland: 2003–2005	+28–35+	20–24	7–8
% Change	+25	+20	+14
The Netherlands	+24–31+	14–19	5–6
% Change	+29	+36	+20
Norway: 2003–2005	18–24	9–14	5–7
% Change	+33	+56	+40
France	23–19	16–12	7–6
% Change	–17	–25	–14
Finland	61–15	33–10	10–11
% Change	–75	–70	+10
England & Wales	62–15	38–10	8–2
% Change	–76	–74	–75
Portugal: 2001–2003	7–14	5–10	5–8
% Change	+100	+100	+60
Sweden: 2003–2005	12–9	10–6	9–7
% Change	–25	–40	–23
Italy: 2001–2003	–7–7	5–5	4–5
% Change	0	0	+20
Greece	–3–6–	2–4	2–3
% Change	+100	+100	+50
Spain: 2003–2005	–6–4–	5–3	3–7
% Change	–50	–40	+133
Ireland: 2004–2006	+40–2–	22–2	4–3
% Change	–95	–91	–25
<i>European Union Countries (EUC) average</i>	30–18	18–12	7–6

Baby homicide 1974–1976 average=30; 1 s.d.=22.7

Baby homicide 2004–2006 average=18; 1 s.d.=12

Initially Austria had the highest rate of female homicides at 13 pm followed by Finland and Germany at 10 pm, the lowest being Greece and Spain 2 pm and 3 pm, respectively. By the later period, Finland was the highest at 11 pm, 8 pm in Austria with the lowest in England & Wales at 2 pm and Greece 3 pm and comparing the rates over time there was a trend of a positive correlation ($r=+0.3907$ $p<0.1$).

Baby homicide rates were always higher than all female rates, except in Spain and Ireland, but the differences are very slight. It was notable that baby and female homicides rates rose up and

down in harmony over the period except for Finland, Italy and Spain.

There was a strong positive correlation ($r=+0.8341$ $p<0.001$) for the 1970s baby and female homicide, suggesting that there was a practical overlap between the two violent mortalities. This correlation falls however in the 2000s ($r=+0.3970$ $p<0.1$) which may reflect that while CARD became a major policy issue in the early 1970s attracting major efforts to reduce the toll (Kempe & Kempe, 1978), the problems of IPV as yet has not attracted comparable policy commitment to reduce the extremes.

Possible IPV Deaths and Total Female Deaths

The possible overlap is quite fascinating in terms of numbers of incidents, assuming that the majority of female homicides would have a strong link to IPV, bearing in mind that only England & Wales, France and Germany had combined child homicide and UnD deaths exceeding 40. Based upon the latest WHO (2008) data, the numbers of female homicides (15–74) were 20 in Austria, out of 75,600 total deaths; 34 in England & Wales out of 256,000 deaths; France 139 out of 257,000; Germany 169 out of 442,000 and Finland who had the highest rate of female homicides 23 out of 24,000 total deaths. However, considering the overlap between child abuse and IPV (Bowen et al., 2005; Karch et al., 2010; Krulewicz, 2009), if we assumed that two thirds of all female homicides were related to IPV, and added the third of UnD to confirmed children's homicides, then a most intriguing pattern emerges.

In Austria for 14 adult homicides there were 13 CARD; England & Wales 21 adults to 48 CARD; Finland 16 adults to 7 CARD; France 134 adults and 42 CARD; Germany 123 adults and 58 CARD; Greece 19 adults and 2 CARD; Ireland 4 adults and 3 CARD; Italy 92 adults to 20 CARD; The Netherlands 19 adults but 24 CARD; Norway 9 adults to 3 CARD; Portugal 24 adults to 16 CARD; Spain 85 adults to 18 CARD; Sweden 14 adults to 11 CARD and finally Switzerland 10 adults to 29 CARD. Thus in Austria, England & Wales, Finland, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland, it would seem a fairly equal vulnerability between child abuse and IPV extremes, again giving further support to the possible association of IPV and violence against children (Casanueva, Martin, & Runyan, 2009; Daigneault et al., 2009; Karch et al., 2010; Leith, 2009; McKinney, Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikler, & Nelson, 2009; Pritchard, 2004). Perhaps it is time for the authorities to give equal concern to vulnerable women as relatively they have shown to vulnerable children.

Other "Possible" Child-Abuse-Related-Deaths

Ill-Defined Signs and Symptoms

Until the 75+ age band in every country, Baby IDSS rates are the highest and currently the highest were in France, then Germany at 553 pm although, the French rates were a 75% reduction while the German rates were a 20% rise (detailed tables can be found in Pritchard & Williams, 2011). Conversely, The Netherlands, Italy and Greece rates were below 200 pm. Over the period, there had been other notable reductions, in Portugal 89%, The Netherlands 80%, Norway 68%, Finland 66%, Greece 63%, England & Wales 60% and Spain 51%. However, unlike the majority of other countries, Ireland's rates rose from 29 pm to 437 pm, which may be because Ireland changed its method of reporting IDSS, a point to which we will return.

It might be argued that if, and this is reiterated, if the IDSS category contained possible "hidden" CARD, then as most countries rates having fallen suggests it is less likely that these deaths are related to CARD, not least because of the higher awareness of potential neglect and abuse across the disciplines.

Accidents and Adverse Events

Every country had major falls in AAE over the period, the highest Current Baby rates were Portugal at 198 pm and France 91 pm, but these represented falls of -43 and -91%, respectively, down to the lows in Ireland 22 pm, Sweden 36 pm and Greece 49 pm.

In most countries AAE were at a higher rate than IDSS and this was reflected in the AAE numbers, which were broadly the biggest of the possible CARD.

Five countries had more than 200 AAE, France 429, Germany 391, Italy 267, Spain 265 and England & Wales 262. The only countries with less than 50 AAE were Ireland (25), Norway (26), Sweden (29), Denmark (37) and Finland (48).

Table 10.2 All Cause Deaths of Babies (<1), Infants (1–4), Children (5–14) and All Children (0–14) percentage of change 1974–1976 vs. 2004–2006 ranked by latest baby (<1 year) rates per million and child (0–14) population in millions

Country and years, population, % change 1974–1976 vs. 2004–2006	Babies (<1)	All Children (0–14)
Portugal: 2001–2003 Pop. 1.65m % change	31,412–5,206 –83% + s.d.	11,215–1,945 –83% + s.d.
England & Wales Pop. 9.52m % change	15,444–5,046 –67% + s.d.	5,480–1,795 –67% + s.d.
The Netherlands Pop. 2.97m % change	10,886–4,575 –58%	3,962–1,638 –59%
Italy: vs. 2001–2003 Pop. 8.2m % change	20,648–4,318 –79%	7,198–1,773 –75% + s.d.
Switzerland: 2003–2005 Pop. 1.3m % change	11,315–4,248 –62%	4,085–1,525 –63%
Ireland Pop. 0.86m % change	16,888–4,183 –75%	5,986–1,494 –75%
Austria Pop. 1.3m % change	20,658–4,086 –80%	7,272–1,466 –80%
Germany: 1980 vs. 2004–2006 Pop. 11.7m % change	19,746–3,928 –80%	6,955–1,634 –80%
Greece Pop. 1.6m % change	23,382–3,847 –83%	8,154–1,392 –83%
France: 2003–2005 Pop. 11.2m % change	12,442–3,817 –69%	4,486–1,381 –69%
Spain: 2003–2005 Pop. 6.3m % change	16,611–3,719 –78%	5,921–1,363 –77%
Norway: 2003–2005 Pop. 0.91m % change	10,642–3,273 –69%	3,880–1,200 –61% – s.d.
Finland Pop. 0.9m % change	10,199–3,255 –68%	3,708–1,181 –69% – s.d.
Sweden: 2003–2005 Pop. 1.57m % change	8,770–2,900 –67%	3,156–1,075 –66% – s.d.
<i>Average</i>	–3,811	–1,501

Earlier average baby 16,360 pm, 1 s.d. = 6,185. Current child average 4,029 1 s.d. = 627 pm
Current baby average 3,811 pm, 1 s.d. = 647; Current child average 1,501 1 s.d. = 236 pm
+ or – 1 s.d. in *bold*

Total “All-Causes-of-Deaths” Baby and Children 1974–1976 vs. 2004–2006

Table 10.2 presents the total ACD rates showing that in every country there were major falls, ranging from 83% in Austria and Portugal, down to falls of 58% in The Netherlands.

The highest Baby total deaths were in Portugal at 5,206 pm, England & Wales 5,046 pm and The Netherlands 4,575 pm, down to lows in Sweden 2,900 pm, Finland 3,255 pm and Norway 3,273 pm,

In respect to total ACD of children (0–14), again Portugal and England & Wales are highest, 1,945 and 1,795 pm, respectively but Italy were combined third highest at 1,773 pm, the lowest

countries were Sweden, Finland and Norway, 1,075, 1,181 and 1,200 pm, respectively.

The range in the numbers of deaths spanned England & Wales 4,528 down to Italy 3,165 among the biggest countries, with Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland Norway and Switzerland having fewer than 600 child deaths per annum.

How Successful Was EUC Child Protection in Reducing Possible or Actual CARD?

If we were to accept the argument stated by Newlands & Emery (1991) that between 10 and

50% on UnD are CARD and then add 33% of Baby and Infant (0–4) UnD to confirmed homicides as the best estimate of changes in CARD over the period, it could be argued that with combine falls of >20% in Ireland to –91%, England & Wales –74%, Finland –70%, Spain and Sweden –40%, Austria –39% and Germany –37%, then these countries' Child Protection services have contributed to the reduction of violent deaths.

Conversely, albeit it recognising that percentage changes on many low baselines easily distort the general picture, there were relatively real increases >20% in Portugal 100%, Norway 50%, The Netherlands 36%, Switzerland 20%.

Possible CARD

Whether there are CARD among AAE or IDSS mortality categories must always be debatable, every EUC had substantial falls (>30%) in Baby IDSS in France 75%, England & Wales 60%, Greece, 63%, Italy, 39% Norway 68%, Portugal 89% and Spain 51%. Whereas, there was a remarkable rise in Ireland from 29 to 437 pm by 2004–2006 and they had previously been the lowest of the EUC, but now the fourth highest and in view of their major falls in the combined homicide and UnD suggests this may be because of possible changes in categorising such deaths, with the inadvertent result of having a seemingly major fall in CARD type deaths.

Increased rates of IDSS would be thought to be less likely in the early 2000s than in the 1970s, yet Germany are now joint highest at 553 pm with an increase of 20% and Finland rising to 263 pm with an increase of 66%, again is this possibly due to changes in mortality reporting – we do not know.

In summary therefore, as seven of the EUC confirmed deaths have been markedly reduced, little change in France, Italy and Sweden, and even those with large percentage rises, CARD are still relatively rare, so there are cautious grounds for celebration of these countries child protection services contributing to a fall in CARD.

Income Inequality: Relative Poverty and the Deaths of Children

Reverting to the issue of to what extent are CARD linked to poverty, income inequalities, i.e. relative poverty are juxtaposed against the different types of mortality to test whether there is a real continuum between neglect and abuse deaths, as it would be expected to find some statistical correlation with a measure of relative poverty from “ordinary” total ACD along the violence scale to confirmed CARD.

Correlating Mortalities and Relative Poverty

Table 10.3 shows differential levels of income inequalities, which is led by Portugal, whose income inequality was that their top 20% of incomes were more than 8.0 times that of people on the bottom 20% of incomes, followed by England & Wales at 7.2 times and Italy 6.7 times, while Sweden, Norway and Finland have gaps of less than 4 times.

Portugal and England & Wales income inequalities are 1 s.d. above the mean, while Sweden, Norway and Finland are 1 s.d. below the EUC difference between top and bottom 20% of income inequality.

It is striking that the two countries with the widest income inequality occupied the two highest rates of Baby and Children ACD, while the three countries with the narrowest income inequalities have the lowest.

At one level, this should not be surprising in view of all the clinical study evidence of socio-economic disadvantaged being linked to per health etc. (Agran et al., 2003; Conroy, Sandel, & Zuckerman, 2010; Laaksonen, Rahkonen, Martikainen, & Lahelma, 2005; Mackenbach et al., 2003; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

Table 10.3 in columns three to six shows the rank order of baby and female homicides, total baby and children (0–14) deaths and a series of Spearman Rank Order correlations (r) are calculated, whose results might be considered surprising.

Table 10.3 Income inequality and current All-Causes-of-Death (ACD) (0–14)

Country and rank	Income inequality-gaps	Current baby homicide	Current female homicide	Highest baby ACD	Highest child ACD
Portugal	8.0+	9	3	1	1
England & Wales	7.2+	8	14	2	2
Italy	6.7	11	10=	4	3
Greece	6.2	12	12=	9	9
Ireland	6.1	14	12=	6	7
Switzerland	5.7	3	3	5	6
France	5.6	6	8=	10	10
Spain	5.6	13	6	1'	11
The Netherlands	5.3	4	8=	3	4
Germany	5.2	1=	10=	8	5
Austria	4.8	1=	3	7	8
Sweden	4.0	10	6	14	14
Norway	3.9–	5	6	12	12
Finland	3.7–	7	1	13	13

Average income inequality = 5.48, 1 s.d. = 1.24 *bold* +/- 1 s.d.

Spearman Rank Order correlations:

Earlier baby and female homicide $r = +0.7813$ $p < 0.001$

Current baby and female homicide $r = +0.3791$ $p < 0.1$ trend

Current combined baby and female homicide $r = +0.4077$ $p < 0.1$ trend

Income inequality and baby homicide $r = -0.4253$ $p < 0.1$ trend

Income inequality and current baby combined $r = -0.3264$ n.sig

Income inequality and adult female ACD $r = +0.1329$ n.sig

Income inequality and female homicide $r = -0.4934$ $p < 0.05$

Income inequality and baby ACD $r = +0.6747$ $p < 0.01$

Income inequality and child ACD (0–14) $r = +0.7538$ $p < 0.001$

Total ACD Baby and Child (0–14) deaths are significantly and positively correlated, $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.001$, respectively, indicating that children's mortality and relative poverty are statically linked, although it is recognised that positive correlation does not necessarily mean causation.

However, when correlating relative poverty with homicides plus a third of the UnD, against "expectations" there was no significant correlation, indeed there was a statistical trend of a negative correlation ($r = -0.3956$ $p < 0.1$), with a significant negative correlation for female homicide and income inequality ($r = -0.4934$, $p < 0.05$), indicating, counter-intuitively, that there was an inverse relationship between violent deaths of women and to a lesser extent children and relative poverty.

Moreover, there were no significant correlations found between Baby IDSS and AAE deaths ($r = +0.1545$ and $r = +0.1929$ respectively). Yet in

clinical studies of child and adult female homicides, morbidity and mortality from accidents of children show that such victims disproportionately come from disadvantaged socio-economic circumstance, which is invariably assumed to be primarily causal, but it would seem that national findings indicate a very different interpretation.

It is suggested that it is the assailant's psychological situation, which impairs their social integration and more likely leads to find them among the socio-economically disadvantaged, therefore what do these unexpected finding mean?

It will be argued that while there is a degree of overlap between neglect and abuse, a re-analysis of those who *actually killed a child* reveals that the problems are essentially psychological and criminal rather than primarily socio-economic, though of course, negative socio-economic features always make a vulnerable situation worse (Bowen et al., 2005; Collins, 2008; Moore, 2005; O'Campo,

Caughy, & Nettles, 2010). However, those of us in the caring professions make the mistake of seeing a clinical correlation between violence and socio-economic disadvantage as casual.

Bearing in mind against the assumption of relative poverty and violent deaths of children and female homicide were not significantly correlated, a re-examination of a regional study of a decade of child homicide, points towards the key factor being psychological and criminological problems, which might also contribute to their relative social exclusion, it is mainly the psychiatric and violent factors that leads to a fatal assault.

Conclusions

Psychiatric-Criminological (Violence)-Child Protection Interface

In answering the question “Who Kill Children in Europe”, it is necessary to confront findings that have been repeated in many countries, that within-family assailants have often a history of mental disorder and/or previous criminal convictions (Brandon, 2009; Cheng & Horon, 2010; Falkov, 1996; Kauppi, Kumpulainen, Karkova & Merikanto, 2010; Pritchard, 2004; Pritchard & King, 2005; West, Friedman & Resnick, 2009). This is often ignored by child protection practitioners who do not want to “discriminate” against the carer (Pritchard, 2004). Consequently, the empirical finding of the strength of the child protection-psychiatric interface is missed or played down (Brandon, 2009; Falkov, 1996; Ofsted, 2010). May be our conclusions are controversial, when we stress that the majority of fatal child assailants are predominately people who are or have a history of mental disorder or criminal violence. In essence, they are significantly different from the majority of parents/carers on the standard child protection caseload, which are essentially about inter-generational “poverty”. For example, there are approximately 388,200 children known to Social Services in England & Wales as being in “serious need” or 4% of Anglo-Welsh child population, which may be well typical

of other parts of Western Europe. Using the Anglo-Welsh patterns of child assailants as a surrogate for other European countries, the numbers of current confirmed homicides of 10 per annum plus the 11 Baby-Infant UnD as maximum of child victims of homicides, *if all victims came from those children identified as being in need*, this would be just 0.005% of disadvantaged children – highlighting that while relative poverty will always make a bad situation worse (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009), it very rarely leads to a violent death, indicating the special nature of the assailants.

It is argued that what is needed for both IPV and child protection situations, is an in-depth analysis, of the antecedents of parents/partners to explore whether either of them has or had a history of mental illness or histories of previous violence. Paradoxically, this is seldom done in the child protection field, not least because often there is inadequate information on “fathers” (Brandon et al., 2008), and often a reluctance to acknowledge mental disorder that might seem discriminatory.

Paradoxically, two major studies of Serious Case Reviews that follow when a child protection case went badly wrong support our position as they reported high levels of IPV and mental illness in the SCR (Brandon et al., 2008; Ofsted, 2010).

There was clear evidence of an overlap with IPV, both independently producing similar rates of 50% or more of IPV and 60% or more of a current or past mental health problem (Brandon et al., 2009; Ofsted, 2010). Yet the investigators failed to highlight these psychiatric-violence elements, focusing predominately upon organisational and practise features, being concerned with procedure and process rather than content, i.e. the characteristics of the carers. This probably occurs because of a “group-think” mentality as agencies respond with a defensive organisational-managerial approach, in response to public outcries following a tragedy and a reluctance to make hard judgments in fear of being thought “judgemental”. This leads them to underestimate the importance of previous violence being a strong indicator of subsequent violence and not wanting to inadvertently stigmatise mentally ill people.

Responding to the Psychiatric Dimension

Yet there is long-standing evidence of a psychiatric link to the homicide of children (Falkov, 1996; West et al., 2009) but adult psychiatrists appear to be reluctant to think in terms of “child protection” and what is happening to children of a patient with a personality or psychosis, especially with paranoid ideas. Equally hesitant are child protection workers to ask themselves if a mental health problem is involved. If the two disciplines thought outside their own specialisms, half the children who died would not have done so (Pritchard, 2004, 2010).

It is important to stress however, the rate of mentally ill parents seriously harming their children is extremely small, but could be smaller if we understood better the child protection-psychiatric interface. Indeed in regard to mentally ill carers, we can be much more confident in positively intervening, as most mental disorders can be treated, resolved or effectively managed, especially if a family focus and an integrated combined bio-psycho-social approach is adopted (e.g. Fallon, 2003; Kingdon & Turkington, 2009; Miklowitz, 2004; Pritchard, 2006; Warner, 2000). We really do not need to be afraid of the mentally ill but be aware and be willing to intervene earlier to resolve their stress situations, especially when it concerns children and families. Indeed, the presence of children should attract optimal priority integrated psychiatric care, and we should be forging a more effective child protection-psychiatric alliance and challenge the policy implications that surround the over-arching and corrosive problem of children and families living in relative poverty. Thus we should acknowledge the cycle of inter-generational deprivation, so if ever the nations of the United Nations are to achieve the millennium goals on children’s health, policies directed to more equality in society are essential (UNICEF, 2001).

The Violence Dimension and Cross-Over with IPV

However, in terms of risk levels, it is self-evident that it is the violent that are the most dangerous

and we need to re-think what do we do about men who are violent recidivists – a highly controversial area that creates a clash of human rights between previous offenders and their potential child victims (Pritchard & Sayers, 2007).

The violence dimension in this cohort and the cross-over with IPV and child neglect and abuse are frequently found as the background of perpetrators often contain both IPV and physical abuse of children, as victim and perpetrator (Cannon, Bonomi, Anderson, Rivara, & Thompson, 2010; Daigneault et al., 2009; Fletcher, 2010; Israel & Stover, 2009), though there can be difficulties concerning definition of IPV (O’Campo et al., 2010). Classically, one often hears assailants say “It was her fault, she knows I’ve got a temper, she shouldn’t wind me up”.

A major problem is that IPV perpetrators often appear to be indifferent to the impact it may make upon the children, while a number of studies have shown that the leading cause of death of women during pregnancy was homicide (Krulewitchz 2009; Cheng & Horon, 2010). Might this be explained in part by the fact that IPV has a degree of tacit acceptance in society, especially people in poorer economic circumstances, whereas extreme violence against a child crosses stronger psycho-social taboos as there is evidence that a proportion of such deaths were unintended as in half the deaths there were no known previous abuse (Cheng & Horon; Fujiwara, Barber, Schaechter, & Hemenway, 2009). The association of lower socio-economic and educational status among women victims of IPV is found across all cultures (Casanueva et al., 2009; Daigneault et al., 2009; Halpern, Spriggs, & Kupper, 2009; Mohammadooseini, Sahraean, & Bahrami, 2010) but as our analysis shows, there is no statistical link with homicide at a national level with relative poverty, suggesting, as with killers of children, such extremes are more related to the psycho-criminological personality rather than the socio-economic per se.

For us however, the question arises what can be done about people, mainly men, with a propensity towards extreme violence, especially if they are non-biological carers of children? Sociologist such as Randall Collins (2008) advocates a greater understanding of the social

determinants that lead to violence, however, a recent review on the psychological and/or psychopharmacological treatment of anti-social personality disordered people was not very encouraging (Gibbon et al., 2010; Khalifa et al., 2010), especially in terms of reducing serious violence in the short-term. Though preventing a person developing aggressive characteristics is vital, it appears to have an epigenetic aetiology and this should be a major area of research. It is the violence that seems to be the problem, rather than the sex per se, that makes some of these men so physically dangerous and poses problems for courts, service and society, but most of all for the children and women with whom they live.

The question must be asked, how can anyone be persistently cruel to young children? Such a comment may seem to be lacking in professional detachment, almost reactionary, as there are dangers that such an approach may impair defendants human rights, yet the evidence points towards either the person was in a deranged state, indeed, often “killing in love” in response to terrifying delusions, or a history of serious violence. There is much we can do with and for the mentally ill but until we have an evidenced-based outcome data of effective treatment for the violent assailant to enable such assailants to live safely among us, then until science resolves the inherent ethical dilemma, then we turn to the poet Milton when he says, “They also serve who only watch and wait”.

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The study of rural crime and violence is scarce in the criminological literature. Although a greater number of such studies are appearing in the United States and Australia (e.g., Barclay, Donnermeyer, Scott, & Hogg, 2007; Barnett & Mencken, 2002; Kaylen & Pridemore, 2011a; Lee, Maume, & Ousey, 2003; Osgood & Chambers, 2000), there are few such rural studies in Europe that cover the late modern period, and even fewer that focus on or even mention homicide in rural settings. These gaps in the literature are a serious deficiency in the homicide literature specifically and the criminological literature more generally. This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the limited research that has been done on rural homicide in Europe since the early 1900s.

Criminologists have long acknowledged the role of environmental factors in crime but tend to ignore rural areas. As Moody (1999) points out, “location plays as important a part in the construction of crime as gender, race or class, and yet the locations chosen for criminological research are almost always urban-centered” (p. 9). One explanation for this urban concentration is the belief that urban crime rates are higher and a more visible problem (Dingwall & Moody, 1999). However, as will be seen later in this chapter, the traditional assumption that rates of violence are

lower in rural compared to urban settings does not always hold true. Regardless of quantitative differences that may or may not exist in rural and urban violence rates, there are other important reasons to study rural violence. Whether a location has high homicide rates or low, much can be learned from studying area characteristics. For example, if rural communities are relatively free of crime, studying these areas could help shed light on how communities with high homicide rates could approach the problem. Focusing on violence and homicide in rural areas is also important for symbolic and political reasons. In a chapter on rural crime in Ireland, McCullagh (1999) highlights the effect of three highly publicized and unrelated murders that occurred in one month in 1996 in otherwise peaceful rural communities. These murders brought about widespread concern about crime throughout the country and police responded in a disproportionate way compared with urban murders. Despite rural homicide rates being low in Ireland, these few cases “have been of greater significance in creating a sense that there is a crime problem in Ireland than the quantitatively greater issue of urban crime” (McCullagh, p. 29). Urban-centered homicide research may not be able to explain rural crime rates. If for no other reason, the importance of studying homicide in rural Europe stems from its absence in criminological literature.

Only a handful of books and articles have a rural crime focus and even fewer discuss rural homicide in Europe since 1900. The literature

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summarized in this chapter can be separated into two categories: general research on violence that mentions rural homicide and rural violence research that mentions homicide. The rest of this chapter summarizes this literature, first giving an overview of reported rural homicide trends and then moving into the substantive research on the associations between rural homicide and social change, alcohol, and rural-specific concerns.

Rural Homicide Rates and Trends in Europe

The belief that rural crime, violence, and/or homicide rates are necessarily lower than urban rates does not hold true for all countries and all time periods. According to Anderson (1999), "... until the last few hundred years violence and unrest were often associated with rural areas, which were home to marauding gangs...against whom towns and cities felt it necessary to construct defensive walls" (p. 45). Further, the Lysova, Shchitov, and Pridemore (2012) chapter elsewhere in this volume reveal that in some Eastern European nations rural homicide rates rival those in urban areas. This section summarizes the longitudinal and cross-sectional trends in rural homicide reported in the literature, moving from the early 1900s to contemporary times. Given the diverse studies from which these data emanate, definitions of rural, time periods under study, and violence classifications are not consistent, and thus comparisons should be made cautiously.

Lehti (2001) reports that in the early 1900s Finnish homicides and the increase in homicides were centered in towns based on the wood-processing industry and rural lumber communes. Prior to this time period, homicide rates were highest among urban industrial workers. In the interwar years (1920s and 1930s), homicide rates increased rapidly among the rural population but rates remained highest among industrial workers. Meanwhile, Lehti also reports that during the interwar period Estonian homicide rates were higher in the rural population. In the 1920s,

Estonia perpetrators of homicide were mostly young farmworkers. Although Western European countries saw a decline in homicides following industrialization, Finland and Estonia did not. However, Estonia did experience a decrease in rural homicides in the 1930s (Lehti).

After World War II, there was a decline in Finnish homicide rates from the 1950s into the 1960s, which then plateaued in the 1970s. Many homicide offenders in Finland were chronically unemployed men who lived in semirural areas (Savolainen, Lehti, & Kivivuori, 2008). By the mid-1990s, Finland, Estonia, and Latvia had similar urban and rural homicide rates (Ylikangas, Karonen, & Lehti, 2001). In contemporary Finland, the highest homicide rates are in the economically and demographically declining rural communities of the north and east, with the largest urban centers having rates below the national average (Savolainen et al., 2008). As Lehti and Kivivuori (2012) report elsewhere in this volume, homicide rates have been decreasing in Finland, though they still remain high compared to other European countries, and there are currently no significant differences between rural and urban homicide rates.

Sweden experienced increased crime rates in rural areas over the past decade. Specifically, one-third of remote, sparsely populated regions and almost half of other rural, more accessible municipalities recorded increased crimes. Between 1996 and 2007, rural areas experienced a relative increase in crime that was higher than the increase in urban areas. Nationally, violent crimes increased by 66%. Although homicide specific data were not presented, Ceccato and Dolmen (2010) report that in 2007, more violent offenses occurred in rural areas than would be expected by the national trend. Specifically, there were 150/100,000 more recorded cases than expected in remote rural areas and 87 more in accessible rural areas (Ceccato & Dolmen).

Homicides in Ireland were predominantly small-town or rural events in the early 1900s, which remained the case up until the 1950s (Rottman, 1980, as cited in McCullagh, 1999). However, crime rates in Ireland were negligible during this period and continue to be low today

(McCullagh). Urban rates of violence continued to increase in the late 1900s. By the 1970s, urban centers accounted for almost half the homicides in Ireland (Rottman, 1980, as cited in McCullagh) and today this increasing trend continues with crime concentrating in urban areas, particularly Dublin (McCullagh).

Contemporary patterns of rural and urban rates of violence in Scotland have behaved like many western European countries, with higher rates in urban areas. Between 1980 and 1995, recorded crimes rose slightly faster in rural areas, narrowing the rural-urban gap (Anderson, 1999). However, the overall ratio of rural to urban offending during that period was 1:3 for recorded crime incidents (Anderson, 1997, as cited in Moody, 1999). In 1995, 14.3% of nonsexual violent crimes occurred in rural Scotland and the greatest difference between rural and urban crime rates was for this category. Since then, crime rates have risen across the country, not only in urban areas but also in rural areas (Anderson, 1999).

Russia is an interesting case for looking at rural and urban homicide trends. First, official data in Russia are difficult to obtain. Second, the country exhibits extremely high rates of violence, and homicide in particular. In 1910, homicide rates were high in the mostly agricultural northern and eastern parts of the country (Stickley & Mäkinen, 2005). These rates continued to be high in both tsarist Russia and decades later at the end of the Soviet period. In the 1920s, homicide and violent crimes continued to be seen as rural problems concentrated among males under the age of 40. In 1924, homicides occurred in the countryside 87% of the time with a rural conviction rate of 10.4/100,000 compared with the urban rate of 7.7. During the transition period, the largest rise in homicides occurred in cities although rural rates remained high (Stickley & Pridemore, 2007).

In the mid-1980s, the Udmurt Republic – a typical industrial region in Russia – had lower urban homicide rates for those aged 15–54 than their counterparts in rural areas. By the mid-1990s, this pattern had reversed. Throughout the country, the rural-urban homicide gap narrowed

during the 1990s (Chervyakov, Shkolnikov, Pridemore, & McKee, 2002). This period was marked by extremely high homicide rates with some regions having higher rates than most violent large cities in the United States. There tends to be a pattern of ascending homicide rates toward the eastern part of the country, which Pridemore (2003) hypothesizes may be attributed to the rural areas in that part of the country. Although homicide is no longer a predominantly rural problem, rural rates remain comparable to or even higher than urban rates (Chervyakov et al., 2002; Iliashenko, 2003; Pridemore, 2003; Stickley, Leinsalu, & Razvodovsky, 2008).

Like other countries, Lithuania has experienced fluctuating rural and urban rates of violence. In the mid-1980s, there was a steeper decrease in rural mortality than urban following the anti-alcohol campaigns (discussed later in the chapter). The decline in rural areas reduced the rural-urban gap in overall mortality, mostly due to a reduction in mortality from suicides, accidents, and violence (Kalediene, Starkuviene, & Petrauskiene, 2004). Although mortality rates were similar in rural and urban areas during Soviet times, rural violent crime rates were low and overall crime rates were 1.5–2 times lower than city rates (Juska & Paulikas, 2006). There was a significant increase in rural crime, however, in post-independence Lithuania. The overall crime rate rose 3–3.5 times between 1990 and 1996. Rural crime rates grew, surpassing urban rates in 1993, and then stabilized. Meanwhile, crime rates in the cities continued to grow by 3% a year until the late 1990s (Juska & Paulikas, 2006). Ceccato (2007) reports that crime was more widespread in urban than rural areas at this time. Kalediene et al. (2004) used Jointpoint analysis to look at mortality rates due to external causes in Lithuania from the time period just before independence to 2005. From 1990 to 2000, the mortality rate due to external causes for rural residents exceeded that for urban residents. During that period the rural-urban gap continued to increase. Rural and urban rates started to decrease in 1994, concentrated mostly with decreases in urban suicides and homicides. The homicide trends were more pronounced among male urban residents, while for females

increases were greater and decreases less apparent among rural residents (Kalediene et al.). During the Soviet era, rural crime rates had been 150–200% lower than urban rates, but by the early 2000s overall rural crime rates were only 25–30% lower than urban rates. Violent crime rates, however, were higher in rural areas in the early 2000s, with homicides being one-third higher in rural than urban areas (Juska & Paulikas, 2006).

From 1990 to 1995, Belarus saw a rapid rise in homicide rates. These rates then stabilized and fell, though in 2005 the homicide rate was still 19% above the 1990 level. In rural areas, the 1990 homicide rate was significantly higher than the urban rate (9.6 vs. 6.4/100,000). By 1995, the urban homicide rate rose sharply (up 81%), while the rural homicide rate also increased, but not as much (up 39%). By 2000, both rural and urban areas experienced a slight decrease in homicide rates. However, by 2005 the rates diverged with a slight rise in rural rates (up 5%) and a sharp fall in urban rates (down 36%). At this time, homicide rates were significantly higher for the rural population (Stickley, Leinsalu, & Razvodovsky, 2008). A study of all-cause mortality in rural and urban areas confirms that in 2002, homicide rates were much higher in rural areas of Belarus (Razvodovsky, 2004, as cited in Stickley et al.).

In looking at age and sex differences in homicide rate trends in Belarus, Stickley et al. (2008) found that, in general, trends were similar for men and women when all age groups were combined, though the rural-urban differences were larger for women than men. Across the entire period, the largest relative changes in rates for men and women were experienced by the youngest age groups. When the divergence in rates occurred in 2005, rural rates rose slightly for almost all male and female groups, while the sharp fall in urban rates mostly affected working-age and retired men and women. To illustrate the rural-urban divergence in rates, the homicide rate for rural women in 2005 was two times higher than the rate for urban women (Stickley et al.).

The reported trends in homicide and violence rates across rural parts of Europe tell an interesting story. While in many countries rural homicide and violence began as a predominantly rural

problem, contemporary rates are sometimes higher in rural areas (e.g., Lithuania, Belarus, Sweden, and Russia), sometimes higher in urban areas (e.g., Ireland and Scotland), and sometimes about even (e.g., Finland, Estonia, and Latvia). I now examine the literature on the historical and theoretical explanations of these trends.

Social Change and Rural Violence

Economic and Social Restructuring

Major political and economic changes disrupt society and often lead to social problems. European countries offer many examples of such transitions during periods of industrialization at the beginning of the twentieth century, population shifts throughout the century, and the reformation of nations after gaining independence. The literature on rural homicide in the post-Soviet era is so expansive it will be discussed separately from the independence literature.

Industrialization

In Finland and Russia in the early 1900s, industrialization led to population shifts that affected violence in rural areas. In Finland, the forest industry had a central role in industrialization. Finnish homicides and increases in homicides were centered in towns based on the wood-processing industry and in rural lumber communes. The forest industry brought laborers to newly developed forest industrial towns. These towns mostly consisted of young single men, experienced high population turnover, and had poor housing conditions and high levels of alcohol consumption. According to Lehti (2001), these conditions contributed to high homicide rates. Stickley and Mäkinen (2005) describe the effects of industrialization in Russia, which brought increased rates of violence to rural areas. Although the country remained largely rural, industrialization brought more people to the cities to work, particularly young peasant males. As crime increased in the cities, recidivists were sent to the countryside, bringing their violence with them.

Population Shift

The literature on the effects of population shifts on rural violence tends to focus on out-migration of the young. This selective population change can lead to decreased crime rates because crime-prone populations are leaving, but can also lead to increased crime rates as social ties are broken and vulnerable populations are left behind.

In the early part of the twentieth century, for example, emigration in Ireland contributed to relatively low levels of rural crime. Young people, often those at greatest risk for violent offending and victimization, left the country in search of economic and social opportunities. Historians often link levels of rural disorder to accessibility to the United States for landless males during this period (Rottman, 1980, as cited in McCullagh, 1999). On the contrary, the out-migration of younger populations in Belarus had a different effect on crime rates. In contemporary Belarus, the young and well educated are also leaving rural areas for urban centers. Between 1990 and 2005, the proportion of the population living in the countryside fell from 33.9 to 28.0%. The resulting rural population structure was distorted, with an excess of elderly people, single men, and the less educated. Stickley et al. (2008) suggest that those who remain are at greater risk of both victimization and violent offending.

In Sweden, population changes have also taken place over the last decade. The population was relatively stable until the 1990s, when more than 200 of the 290 municipalities in Sweden saw population declines. Beginning in 1995, the proportion of people living in sparsely populated areas decreased by 10% due to low birth rates and the out-migration of mostly young people. As people move out and break social ties, the density of acquaintanceship is affected. This selective out-migration has left rural Swedish areas with a higher proportion of poorly educated and elderly males. But then, two groups moved from urban centers to rural areas and contributed to higher crime rates in rural Sweden: those unable to find work in the cities and wealthy older people at the end of their career. According

to Ceccato and Dolmen (2010), as social and economic inequality increased in rural Sweden, so did crime rates.

Independence

Following independence from Russia, Finland experienced a civil war won by the farming class, giving them political and social power. Around this time, vast improvements were made in the agricultural industry that led to better integration of farmers in Finnish society. Farmers not only possessed political and social power at this time, but they also had the highest income level of all social groups. With these changes came increased violent crime rates that were centered in the southern part of the country and rural villages surrounding towns and cities. As the farm population grew, there was a scarcity of good farm land; the problem was magnified by the decreases in childhood mortality that led to large birth cohorts reaching adulthood and seeking farm land of their own. Differences in prosperity and wealth due to modernization and the overflow of young adults in rural and farming areas were exacerbated. These conditions coincided with changing attitudes about violence in which violent tendencies from the Civil War were accepted as a means of social and political behavior. There was also a drastic increase in handgun ownership due to the war and lax gun laws in the 1920s that mostly affected the farm population. In the 1910s, only 5% of homicides were committed with handguns, whereas in the 1920s that figure rose to 30% (Lehti, 2001).

Industrialization and modernization also had an effect on Estonia's rural homicide and violence rates in the 1920s and 1930s following independence from Russia. In Finland, the predominant perpetrators of rural homicides were young farm owners, while in Estonia, the predominant perpetrators of rural homicide were young farmhands. This difference can be explained by differences in land owning conditions in the two countries and their effects on social integration. In Finland, farmers were well integrated in society and held power and wealth after the Civil War. Land owners cultivated their family farms in Finland, while farms in Estonia were owned by a few

Baltic German aristocratic families who hired laborers and tenants to work their land. Land reforms in 1919 shifted ownership of the land away from the Baltic Germans and, over several years, the land was divided and sold. The modernization of agriculture led to an economic boom in Estonia, aggravating differences in wealth and thus potentially increasing motivation and opportunity for violence. However, as the land allotment process allowed young farmworkers – a group whose future prospectus were uncertain – to own land and better integrate into society, homicide rates decreased in the 1930s. Although handgun ownership was similar to Finland, there were very few handgun homicides among rural farmworkers in Estonia (Lehti, 2001).

Post-Soviet Rural Violence

The social, political, and economic turmoil experienced by many former Soviet countries in the post-Soviet period was accompanied by a sharp rise in all-cause mortality (Stickley et al., 2008). This transition period disrupted the social order and led to changes in rural homicide rates specifically and rural violence rates more generally. Because of the individualized effect of this period on each country, the literature on Russia, Belarus, and Lithuania will be discussed separately.

Russia

Although the direct effects of the transitional period on rural Russian homicide have not been studied, a growing body of literature suggests Russian mortality rates mirror the country's turmoil (e.g., Andreeva, Ermakov, & Brenner, 2008; Pridemore & Kim, 2006, 2007). Pridemore (2005) tested the effects of social structure on regional homicide rates in post-Soviet Russia because of regional differences on social, economic, and demographic factors that were partly a result of Soviet economic and social policies. Although he did not examine rural areas separately, Pridemore found that the positive associations between regional homicide rates and poverty, single-parent households and a proxy for

heavy drinking held when removing rural areas from the sample. This finding suggests social structural factors might operate similarly in rural and urban areas though this remains to be tested directly. Further, Pridemore found that homicide rates are higher in regions with a lower proportion of the population living in urban areas. This finding is consistent with other studies that routinely report high levels of violence in rural Russia (Chervyakov et al., 2002; Iliashenko, 2003; Pridemore, 2003; Stickley et al., 2008). In discussing the high rates of homicide in rural areas, Pridemore (2005) says it is not likely that rural rates are higher because of inadequate medical care for those with serious, life-threatening injuries. Post-Soviet Russia does not have considerably better emergency/trauma response in urban compared to rural areas and thus medical response likely does not significantly impact regional differences in homicide rates.

Belarus

Like other countries transitioning from the Soviet era to independence, Belarus experienced immediate and dramatic changes in overall homicide and violence rates. In 1990, the period directly before the fall of the Soviet Union, the homicide rate was significantly higher in rural (9.6 homicides per 100,000) relative to urban areas (6.4 homicides per 100,000). After the founding of the contemporary Belarusian nation state in 1991, the early 1990s were a time of economic and social crisis. Initial attempts to introduce a market economy into the country led to rising unemployment, falling GDP, and sharply increasing inflation. With the difficult economic times came fewer marriages and births and increased divorce rates. The proportion of the population living in poverty quickly increased from under 5% in 1990 to 22% in 1995. The initial effects of poverty were stronger in urban than rural areas. Between 1991 and 1995, unemployment rose in urban-centered areas like transport, construction, and industry but fell slightly in agriculture. During this period, homicide rates increased by 80% in urban areas and 39% in rural areas, though the increases affected age and sex groups differently. Homicide rates rose much quicker for younger

urban males and older rural males. Younger rural women experienced a slight reduction in rates while their counterparts in urban areas saw large increases. Interestingly, the largest absolute rise among females was rural women age 60 and above (Stickley et al., 2008).

Belarus continued to experience the effects of independence in the period following the 1998 ruble crisis in neighboring Russia. Between 1995 and 2004, the proportion of the population employed in agriculture fell over 40%, leaving income for the employed in rural areas at 50% of urban income. Depopulation was also a problem in rural areas. Between 1990 and 2005, the proportion of the overall population that lived in the countryside fell from almost 40 to 28%. The remaining population structure was distorted, as the young and well educated left for the cities. Homicide rates fell slightly in 2000 for all age and sex groups except older urban women, who saw a slight increase. By 2005, there was a divergence in rural-urban homicide rates, with rural rates rising slightly and urban rates falling sharply. Women in rural areas had a homicide rate two times higher than their counterparts in urban areas (Stickley et al., 2008).

Lithuania

Lithuania experienced political, social, and economic changes during the end of the twentieth century as the country shifted from a Republic of the Soviet Union with a centralized economy to an independent state with a newly developing market economy. Living conditions changed drastically as the country experienced great stress (Kalediene et al., 2004). On November 1, 1991, the state-owned and state-run collective farms were ordered to be disbanded or liquidated. These farms were central to the social infrastructure of rural communities and their demise led to the collapse of administration, libraries, culture houses, medical aid posts, and more (Juska & Paulikas, 2006). Conflicts occurred in dividing up the farms because few government regulations existed. As a result, social tension and criminal behavior increased in rural areas (Juska, Poviliunas, & Pozzuto, 2005, as cited in Juska & Paulikas, 2006). Although

conditions were deteriorating in rural areas, the recession and banking crisis led to an influx of low-income urban families moving to cheaper rural areas and thus creating crime-ridden rural ghettos (Juska & Paulikas).

As reported earlier, Lithuania has overall high rates of mortality from external causes. Between 1990 and 2000, the difference in rural and urban age-standardized rates of external causes of mortality increased with urban rates decreasing and rural rates increasing. The rural-urban differences in the rates went from 55.3% for males and 46.3% for females in 1990 to 62.4% for males and 63.6% for females in 2000 (Kalediene et al., 2004). The transition period at the end of the Soviet era had many factors that the authors suggest could potentially increase risk for mortality from external causes, including the sudden increase in motor vehicles, uncontrolled access to drugs, and inefficient policing of crime. The social and economic changes from 1990 to 1994 exacerbated the already existing social problems in rural areas. Mortality rates increased until 1994 and then a shift occurred and rates started to decrease as the economy recovered. The decreased mortality rates from external causes were mostly due to decreases in urban suicides and homicides, leading to large rural-urban inequalities in suicides, traffic accidents, and homicides (Kalediene et al.). Rural crime rates also increased significantly in post-independence Lithuania. Between 1990 and 1995, the overall crime rate tripled, and in 1993 the rate was higher in rural compared to urban areas. Juska and Paulikas (2006) suggest these changes occurred because of a new rural poor that emerged in the 1990s. This class failed to adapt to market relations due to a lack of legal rights and resources to obtain farm land, unpaid salaries or low wages, growing unemployment, rising cost of living, alcohol abuse, and so on. This class developed their own subculture and lifestyle with weak social ties and high levels of social disorganization.

By the early 2000s, rural crime rates were 25–30% lower than urban crime rates (Juska & Paulikas, 2006). Ceccato (2007) confirms that crime is more widespread in urban than rural areas, finding that the proportion of people living

in urban areas is the most important covariate explaining offense ratios or changes in offenses between 1993 and 2000 at the regional level. However, Juska and Paulikas (2006) report that rural violent crime rates were higher during this period. Rural homicides and rapes were one-third higher than urban rates in 2001. The rural situation continued to get worse. Greater social inequalities and social disorganization developed. Violence grew especially among rural youth, and there was a period of high-profile rural crimes committed by juvenile delinquents or rural gangs in the early 2000s. These youth typically came from poor, broken families, had little education or professional skills, and were often drunk when committing crimes. In some instances, police could not control the gangs so local residents formed militias (Juska & Paulikas).

Alcohol and Rural Homicide

The strong association between alcohol and violence throughout Europe at both the individual and the aggregate levels is well established in the sociological and epidemiological literatures (e.g., Norström & Ramstedt, 2005; Pridemore, 2002; Pridemore & Chamlin, 2006). The connection between alcohol and rural homicide and violence has been seen throughout the literature from the early 1900s to the present.

In a number of cases, high alcohol consumption in rural areas was accompanied by increased homicide, violence, and mortality. Although a statistically significant connection has not been tested, Lehti (2001) describes the high-crime forest industrial towns of early twentieth century Finland as places of high alcohol consumption. These high levels of consumption continued into the 1920s and 1930s, with the prohibition of alcohol from 1919 to 1932. The structure of consumption changed in southern parts of the country as well as towns in the north, going from 40% vodka consumption to 96% spirits consumption during this time. Along with this change came a rise in the proportion of intoxicated perpetrators of homicide that was far above average in the

farmer population (Lehti). Later in the century, the deregulation of alcohol resulted in major increases in overall consumption. At this time, the decreasing Finnish homicide rates of the 1950s and 1960s stopped their decline (Savolainen et al., 2008). Russia has also experienced connections between alcohol and violence historically and currently. In the 1920s, rural homicide and violent crimes were mostly committed by males under age 40 and alcohol was often involved. These homicides often occurred at or immediately following rural celebrations (Manns, 1927, as cited in Stickley & Pridemore, 2007). This trend continued into the latter part of the century, with Soviet criminologists estimating that in the 1970s 53% of all homicides took place on holidays and/or were linked to alcohol (Ostroumov, 1976, as cited in Stickley & Pridemore, 2007).

Post-Soviet Belarus experienced high levels of alcohol consumption in recent years accompanied by high levels of homicide. Both alcohol consumption and homicides are high in rural areas in particular. Alcoholism has become endemic among rural populations partially due to the collapse of customs and traditions regulating drinking (Stickley et al., 2008). Ceccato and Dolmen (2010) found significant associations in Swedish rural areas between rates of violence and the density of alcohol outlets and alcohol sales. Lithuania also historically experienced high levels of alcohol consumption in rural areas. However, during the mid-1980s, there was a decrease in alcohol consumption due to Gorbachev's anti-alcohol campaign. This decrease was accompanied by a steep decrease in rural mortality, which reduced the rural–urban mortality gap mostly due to mortality from suicides, accidents, and violence (Kalediene et al., 2004).

Rural-Specific Homicide Concerns

While many of the factors discussed above in relation to rural homicide have also affected urban homicide, research has found a number of rural-specific attributes that characterize rural homicide and violence. First, connections are

made between inadequate policing in rural areas and violence rates. Second, the geography of rural areas affects homicide through social isolation of residents and proximity to urban areas. Finally, a rural-specific type of homicide, blood feuds in Turkey, is discussed.

Policing

In many countries, rural police forces are understaffed, undertrained, and under-resourced. In tsarist Russia, violence was common in the countryside where the police force was so inadequate that people essentially policed themselves and popular, violent justice was common (Stickley & Mäkinen, 2005). In the early 2000s, rural Lithuania also experienced inadequate policing that contributed to high rates of crime. In 2003, on average, there was one rural police inspector in charge of supervising 137 km² with a population of about 3,000 residents. The police were poorly trained and had equipment that often failed. Out of 232 police cruisers in rural precincts, only 3.5% were in satisfactory driving condition and only 16.3% had special police equipment installed (Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybė, 2003, as cited in Juska & Paulikas, 2006). Sweden implemented decentralized policing in the 1990s with police force sizes and locations based on population density and crime levels. As such, rural areas had few police forces in close range. The rural areas of the southern part of the country had relatively quick response times due to their proximity to urban areas, but rural areas of the less densely populated northern part of the country had relatively slow response times given their geographical isolation (Ceccato & Dolmen, 2010).

Geography

The rural European homicide literature often draws a connection between the geographic location of rural areas and homicide. Distance to urban areas is associated not only with physical isolation but also with social isolation. Furthermore, as

population changes occur in rural areas, social ties are broken and social isolation is exacerbated.

Contemporary rural Scotland has relatively low levels of violent crimes compared to urban areas, but the effects of crime in rural areas may be magnified by physical and social isolation. These areas tend to have a lack of victim services and poor transportation networks. Furthermore, there is an assumption that small, close knit communities will look after each other (Anderson, 1999). Moody (1999) cites Shucksmith et al. (1994) assertion that severe disadvantage in rural Scotland is more intractable than deprivation in urban areas because of social isolation, absence of service provision, and social divisions between new and established residents causing deeper divisions between the haves and the have-nots. Monk (2000) also suggests social isolation exists in rural areas because of differences between established residents and new residents. In rural Finland, the changing social structure of rural areas means that people who are culturally different from farmers are moving into the country. Rural residents already experience social isolation because they come into contact with fewer people, but when culturally different people move in, this isolation is reinforced. In an earlier study, Monk (1999) found that the effects of physical isolation on stress was greatest in Great Britain where farms are larger and farm houses are farther apart, while the effect is reduced in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic where farms are closer together.

Ceccato and Dolmen (2010) looked specifically at the issue of proximity to urban centers as it relates to rural violence. In their study of rural Sweden, they divided rural areas into remote rural areas (more than 45 minutes by car from the nearest urban neighborhood with more than 3,000 residents) and accessible rural areas (5–45 minutes by car). They found increases in crime in both types of rural areas over the last decade, although recently the remote rural areas surpassed accessible rural areas in experiencing more violent offenses than expected following the national trend.

Although rural areas may be physically isolated from urban areas, there is an assumption that

higher urbanity means higher anonymity among people (especially neighbors), which leads to lower social control and thus the likelihood of successful completion of crime increases (Entorf & Spengler, 2002). However, the positive association between urbanity and crime rates does not hold in all locations. As discussed earlier, many countries experience higher rates of crime in rural areas. In testing this hypothesis in multiple European countries, Entorf and Spengler found that the proportion of the workforce that is agricultural (i.e., rural) had a significant negative impact on homicide in Denmark and positive association with homicide in Spain and Finland. Furthermore, it had a significant negative association with serious assault in Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands and a significant positive association in Spain.

Blood Feuds

İçli (1994) introduces a particular homicide-related phenomenon in rural Turkey known as blood feuds. Similar to retaliatory violence in urban areas, blood feuds are aimed at getting revenge and maintaining honor. The main causes of these feuds between families are disagreements over land and water supplies, abduction (of women), and matters of honor. While women are not typically the objects of revenge, they play a strong role by encouraging the feuds to continue. When disagreements occur, the offended family murders a member of the offending family. To take revenge and maintain honor, a retaliatory murder is committed. This cycle continues, often for many generations. The communities in which blood feuds are common are small, politically independent communities with no fixed authority.

Summary

Throughout the twentieth century, homicide rates in Europe have not always mirrored the common assumption that rural areas are idyllic, safe havens. Figures from the first part of the

century show higher rural relative to urban homicide and violence rates in Estonia, Ireland, and Russia, while more recent figures show similar rural–urban rates or higher rural rates in Finland, Estonia, Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Sweden. In the criminological literature, explanations for these rural–urban homicide and violence rate differences and for changes in rates over time tend to revolve around three main causes: social change, alcohol, and rural-specific characteristics. National economic and social restructuring have been linked to rural homicide and violence. Dramatic changes from industrialization, population shifts, and independence have resulted in different effects on rural violence. Perhaps the most significant social change of the century, the collapse of the Soviet Union, has been shown to affect violence in rural communities of Russia, Belarus, and Lithuania. Like urban homicide studies, the link between alcohol and violence has also been made in rural studies with increases in consumption being associated with increases in violence. Issues specific to rural areas have also been associated with violence including inadequate policing, the social and physical isolation of rural areas, and a specific form of rural homicide known as blood feuds.

Conclusion

The literature summarized in this chapter provides a centralized source of knowledge about rural violence and homicide in Europe since the early 1900s. However, the other chapters in this book illustrate the abundance of literature on European homicide more generally. A number of serious theoretical, temporal, and geographical gaps in the European rural homicide literature exist, leaving many questions about the phenomenon unanswered.

Theoretically, little is known about rural homicide in Europe. Much of our knowledge about rural homicide comes from studies of rural violence or homicide more generally that briefly suggest

explanations for rural homicide. The empirical work on rural violence tends to look at temporal trends, which are important, but rarely explicitly tests theoretical explanations. In fact, theoretical tests of crime and violence in rural Europe are scarce. However, Kaylen and Pridemore (2011b) recently completed the first direct test of the full systemic model of social disorganization theory on rural violence in the U.K., concluding that (unlike in urban areas) social disorganization is not a good explanation of the variation in rural crime rates. The ideas about links between rural violence and social change, alcohol, and rural specific concerns presented in this chapter offer motivation for empirical tests of theoretical explanations for longitudinal and cross-sectional rural homicide rates.

Much of the rural homicide and violence literature focuses on the industrialization period of the early twentieth century or on more recent times in Eastern Europe since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Although these are important time periods to cover, little is known about rural homicide in the middle part of the century. Perhaps the biggest gap in the rural homicide literature, however, is geographical. For the most part, Western European countries are excluded from analyses. Interestingly, these countries are represented in the medieval to early twentieth century rural homicide literature but not the more modern literature (Cohen & Johnson, 1982; Johnson, 1992; Lacour, 2001; Zehr, 1976).

Despite these theoretical, temporal, and geographical gaps in the rural European homicide literature since the 1900s, the literature that does exist can be useful. When synthesized, this literature reveals patterns about rural homicide rate trends and explanations that would not be seen if looking at studies individually. Generally, rural homicide and violence has been associated with social change, alcohol, and rural-specific concerns in the last century. Hopefully both these patterns revealed in the literature and the gaps in the literature noted here will encourage scholars to more closely examine rural crime and violence in Europe.

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Marieke C.A. Liem and Dietrich Oberwittler

Homicide followed by the immediate suicide of the offender is a rare yet very serious form of lethal violence that mainly occurs in partnerships and families. Although numerous studies have been published describing homicide-suicide events and incidents in different cities, regions, and countries, so far no systematic research on the homicide-suicide phenomenon in Europe has been conducted. As the suicide part of these acts is not recorded in official crime statistics, not even the yearly number of events and victims is known. This is surprising as homicide-suicides constitute an emerging public health concern, victimizing not only those directly involved in the act, but also relatives, friends, and acquaintances. Given the fact that often, multiple victims are involved, the degree of secondary victimization tends to spread drastically. Homicide-suicides lead to shock and incomprehension among society at large. It is therefore crucial to study this significant type of homicide.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, we seek to provide an overview of the international homicide-suicide literature, addressing its incidence, typology, and accordingly, the characteristics of different types of homicide-suicide vis à vis both homicides and suicides as isolated forms of violence. Second, the chapter aims to describe the incidence and patterns of homicide-suicide in

Europe, based on a new data collection of all homicide-suicides that occurred in seven European countries (England and Wales, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Switzerland) in the period 1990–2005. The quantitative scope of this dataset makes detailed analyses of different types of homicide-suicide and cross-national comparisons possible and constitutes a starting point for further European research.

Background

Incidence

Since Donald West's (1965) seminal study on homicide-suicide in London, many epidemiological studies have been conducted, mapping the incidence and prevalence of homicide-suicide in different regions. A review of recent international epidemiological studies reveals that overall, homicide-suicide is a relatively rare event, but that substantial cross-national differences exist (Table 12.1). Although homicide-suicide incidents make up a relatively small proportion of homicides overall, certain subtypes of homicide – notably men who kill an intimate partner with a firearm – are followed by the offender's suicide in over half of all incidents (Barber et al., 2008; Eastal, 1993; Liem, Postulart, & Nieuwbeerta, 2009; Lund & Smorodinsky, 2001; Walsh & Hemenway, 2005).

In recent years, the rate of homicide-suicides in Europe has ranged from as low as 0.05 per

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Table 12.1 Previous studies reflecting comparative frequencies and rates of homicide-suicides in Europe

Country	Study	Period	Homicide-suicide (%)	Rate per 100.000
Denmark	West (1965)	1959–1960	42	0.22
Denmark	Hart Hansen (1974)	1946–1970	30	0.20
Denmark	Gottlieb et al. (1987)	1968–1983	8	0.08
England and Wales	Morris and Blom-Cooper (1976)	1900–1949	29.1	0.11
England and Wales	Morris and Blom-Cooper (1976)	1950–1959	33.3	0.12
England and Wales	HomeOffice (1980)	1969–1979	8.2	0.07
England and Wales	HomeOffice (1993)	1980–1990	7.2	0.07
England and Wales	Barraclough and Clare Harris (2002)	1988–1992	NA	0.06
England, Yorkshire and Humbershire	Milroy (1993)	1975–1992	4.6	0.07
England and Wales	Taylor and Gunn (1999)	1957–1995	NA	0.07
Finland	Saleva et al. (2007)	1987–1988	NA	0.20
Finland	Kivivuori and Lehti (2003)	1988–2000	8	0.17
Finland	Virkkunen (1974)	1955–1970	8	0.18
France (Tours)	Saint-Martin et al. (2007)	2000–2005	11	0.15
Iceland	Gudjonsson and Petursson (1982)	1940–1979	8.5	0.06
Netherlands	Liem, Postulart et al., 2009;	1992–2006	4	0.05
Scotland	Gibson and Klein (1969)	1957–1968	9.2	0.04
Scotland	Scottish Office (1991)	1986–1990	3	0.05
Sweden	Lundqvist (1985)	1970–1981	15.6	0.09
Switzerland	Liem et al. (2010)	1992–2004	11	0.09

NA not available

100,000 persons per year in England and Wales (Flynn et al., 2009) and the Netherlands (Liem, Postulart et al., 2009) to 0.20 per 100,000 in Finland (Hata et al., 2001). In comparison to European countries, the United States has a relatively high homicide-suicide rate. Recent accounts report the homicide-suicide rate to vary from 0.27 per year in Kentucky (Walsh & Hemenway, 2005) to 0.38 per 100,000 persons per year in central Virginia (Hannah, Turf, & Fierro, 1998). One of the highest homicide-suicide rates are reported in the Durham region in South Africa, averaging around 0.89 per 100,000 (Roberts, Wassenaar, Canetto, & Pillay, 2010). In Australia and New Zealand, the homicide-suicide rate ranges from 0.07 (Moskowitz et al., 2006) to 0.11 (Carcach & Grabosky, 1998).

When comparing the overall rate of homicide-suicides within and between countries, Coid (1983) proposed three epidemiological “laws” to explain why homicide-suicides followed different patterns than homicides committed by “normal”

offenders. Coid’s first law states that the higher the rate of homicide in a population, the lower the percentage of offenders who are found to commit suicide. In countries with an already high frequency of homicide, the proportion committed by those who kill themselves is small. In contrast, countries with a low frequency of homicide have a relatively greater percentage of homicide-suicides and other types of what he termed “abnormal homicides.” Coid’s second law holds that the rates at which homicide offenders commit suicide appear to be “the same in different countries, despite considerable differences in the overall rates of homicide” (p. 867). Coid’s third law states that the homicide-suicide rate remains the same over time despite a fluctuation in the overall homicide rate. Several researchers have tested Coid’s laws, finding support for the first law: The higher the homicide rate the smaller the proportion of offenders who subsequently commit suicide (Large, Smith, & Nielszen, 2009). This inverse association reflects the fact

that overall homicide rates are dominated by extra-domestic, male-on-male violence in most countries, whereas homicide-suicides are more closely linked to intimate and domestic killings (see later), which show lower frequencies and less fluctuations. Later studies did not support Coid's second law, instead finding a substantial difference in homicide-suicide rates between countries. Milroy (1995), for example, held that countries with higher rates of homicide-suicide are those in which the homicide rate is high. Based on this finding, he suggested that the availability of weapons may therefore be a contributing factor. This assumption is further supported by a recent systematic review of population-based studies of homicide-suicides by Large et al. (2009), which showed that in studies from the United States the rates of homicide-suicide appeared to be positively associated with the rate of homicides by firearms. However, the same study did not find a significant association between the homicide-suicide and the general homicide rates outside the United States, in the mainly European countries studied.

Empirical support for Coid's third law is mixed. The findings from Felthous and Hempel's (1995) study supported Coid's observation regarding the stability of the homicide-suicide rate over time. They held that, since homicide-suicides involve predominantly intimate or family victims and the rates of these killings fluctuate less than both suicide and homicide rates, homicide-suicide rates are subject to similar influences and are of comparable stability as the rate of intimate homicide. Other studies oppose Coid's third law. Milroy (1995), analyzing homicide-suicide trends in England in the period 1946–1996, found a decline in the proportion of homicide offenders who committed suicide. Kivivuori and Lehti (2003), too, report a long-term decline in Finland: The proportion of male intimate partner killers who committed suicide halved from 42% in 1960–1964 to just 20% in 1998–2000. Little is known about trends in homicide-suicide in other European countries. Explaining this overall decline in homicide-suicides is a difficult task. This downward trend, which is also observed in North America, has been ascribed to a growing

availability of contraceptives, smaller families, greater access to and social acceptance of divorce, increased social and economic support for single-parent families, improved access to counseling, and advances in diagnosing and treating mental health problems (Gartner & McCarthy, 2008).

Homicide-Suicide Compared to Other Types of Lethal Violence

Several studies have compared homicide-suicides to other homicides not followed by suicides, as well as to suicides. The major research question in these comparisons is whether homicide-suicides tend to have more in common with either homicides or suicides, or should be viewed as a distinct type of lethal violence. One of the first studies on homicide-suicide, conducted by West (1965), relied on London city-level data. He found “an overwhelming domestic nature” of homicide-suicide in almost all comparisons made. The second study, performed by Stack (1997) was based on city-level data from Chicago. He found that homicide was more likely to be followed by a suicide if the relational distance between offender and victim was smaller. Carcach and Grabosky (1998) compared homicide-suicides to homicides using Australian data. They found that the odds for homicide-suicides are increased when the victim and offender are Caucasian and a fire-arm is used in the offence. These findings were replicated in a recent study based on nationwide data from the Netherlands (Liem, Postulart et al., 2009; Liem & Nieuwbeerta, 2010).

The first scholar to compare homicide-suicides with other *suicides* was Cavan (1928) in a qualitative analysis based on Chicago data. In a second study, based on Denver and Los Angeles coroner's reports, Selkin (1976) quantitatively compared 13 homicide-suicides with 13 suicides and found that none of the homicide-suicide cases included old, single individuals at a declining stage in their lives. He concluded that individuals committing suicide bore little resemblance with homicide-suicide offenders, a finding later corroborated by Berman (1979). Studying police and coroner's reports in Philadelphia, Baltimore,

and Washington D.C., Berman found that, compared with suicides, homicide-suicides were more likely to be committed by males, take place in the bedroom and to involve a gun. More recently, Malphurs, Eisdorfer, and Cohen (2001) and Malphurs and Cohen (2005) compared a sample of homicide-suicides by older persons to a control group of other suicides in Florida, finding a care-giving strain to be a predominant factor among older homicide-suicide offenders compared with those committing suicide only. Finally, Barber et al. (2008) recently compared the presence of antidepressants in suicide offenders to homicide-suicide offenders and found no difference between the two groups.

So far, few studies have conducted simultaneous bilateral comparisons of homicide-suicides vs. homicides and suicides. Conducting such a comparison based on data from 17 US states, Logan et al. (2008) found that homicide-suicide offenders were more likely to belong to an older age group and to be Caucasian compared with homicide-only offenders. Contrasting to suicides-only, however, homicide-suicide offenders were less likely to be Caucasian. Similar findings were reported in the Netherlands by Liem and Nieuwbeerta (2010). The authors also found homicide-suicide offenders to be older than homicide offenders, but overall younger compared to those committing suicide. These findings are in line with results from studies conducting unilateral comparisons. A recent study by Flynn et al. (2009) based on findings from England and Wales reported that significantly fewer offenders of homicide-suicide, compared with homicide or suicide only, had been in contact with mental health services. In short, both unilateral and bilateral comparisons of homicide-suicide with other types of lethal violence show that these acts cannot easily be equated with either homicide or suicide.

Classifying Homicide-Suicide

Marzuk, Tardiff, and Hirsch (1992) were the first to develop a classification system that categorized homicide-suicide victim-offender relationships. The four most common types of homicide-suicide

according to this classification were spousal homicide-suicide, child-suicide, familicide-suicide, and extrafamilial homicide-suicide. Familicide-suicide constitutes an overlap of both spousal homicide-suicide and child homicide-suicide. Extrafamilial homicide-suicides involve victims outside the family realm. In further examining the different homicide-suicide subtypes, Marzuk et al.'s (1992)-classification scheme will be used as taxonomy. This system has been used by many others throughout the years in both the presentation of case study material as well as in further analysis of homicide-suicide acts (Chan, Beh, & Broadhurst, 2003; Liem, Postulart et al., 2009; Logan et al., 2008). Next, the general characteristics of homicide-suicide will be reviewed according to these different subtypes.

Intimate Partner Homicide-Suicide

The killing of an intimate partner (also known as uxoricide) is not only the most common type of domestic homicide, but also the most prevalent in cases of homicide-suicide. Intimate partner homicide-suicides are typically committed by males who are older and more likely to be married compared with those not committing suicide (Belfrage & Rying, 2004; Koziol-McLain et al., 2006). Reasoning that homicide-suicides involve a high proportion of mental disorders, Felthous and Hempel (1995) argue that an older age may be a function of mental disorders, with depressive and paranoid conditions increasing with age. In addition, they hold that an older offender will have had time to establish an intimate relationship lasting long enough for bonding, dependence, turmoil, and instability to develop. Others have cross-culturally reported a high prevalence of previous (physical) abuse by homicide-suicide offenders (Lindqvist & Gustafsson, 1995; Stack, 1997; Starzomski & Nussbaum, 2000).

In Marzuk et al.'s (1992) classification system, a twofold division in cases of intimate partner homicide-suicide is made. The first focuses on a pathological type of possessiveness and the latter clusters around a theme of old age and ill health, resembling so-called suicide pacts. Cohen (1961, p. 145) defined a suicide pact as "a mutual arrangement between two people who resolve to die at

the same time and, nearly always, in the same place.” West (1965) was one of the first to point out that death in a suicide pact may be difficult or even impossible to distinguish from homicide followed by suicide or even an accident. Other, more recent studies support this claim, pointing out that in a suicide pact one person coerces the other to join rather than the pact consisting of two voluntary cooperators, thereby resembling a homicide-suicide (Rosenbaum, 1990). In uxoricide-suicides that do not take the form of a suicide pact, a high occurrence of previous abuse has been reported cross-culturally (Lindqvist & Gustafsson, 1995; Malphurs & Cohen, 2005; Starzomski & Nussbaum, 2000). A fear of losing control over the victim is a recurrent theme in these cases, also referred to as the “male proprietariness theory” (Daly & Wilson, 1988; Wilson & Daly, 1993; Wilson, Daly, & Daniele, 1995). According to this theory, men exhibit a tendency to think of women as sexual and reproductive “property” that they can own and exchange. When this control is lost, for example, in cases of (suspected) infidelity, the male cuckold responds with violence in a last attempt to regain control. Sometimes, this results in lethal violence. Research indicates that such an event is typically triggered by the female’s rejection of her partner, through a threat of withdrawal or estrangement (Bourget, Gagne, & Moamai, 2000). Some regard the offender as primarily suicidal and his suicide as premeditated, whereas others believe that the suicide arises out of remorse of the primary homicidal act (Berman, 1979; Guttmacher, 1960; Henry & Short, 1954; Lester & Lester, 1975; Stack, 1997).

Child Homicide-Suicide

The killing of a child (also known as filicide) followed by a suicide of the offender is found to be the second most common type of homicide-suicide (Barraclough & Clare Harris, 2002; Harper & Voigt, 2007; Malphurs & Cohen, 2002; Marzuk et al., 1992; Milroy, 1993; Stack, 1997).

Both men and women are offenders of child homicide-suicide. Overall, biological parents who kill their child are found to be more likely to engage in suicidal behavior compared to

stepparents (Daly & Wilson, 1988; Daly & Wilson, 1994). In addition, previous studies found suicidal parents to be older than those not committing suicide after the homicide (Shackelford, Weekes-Shackelford, & Beasley, 2005). Accordingly, the victims in child homicide-suicide tend to be older as well (Hatters Friedman, Holden, Hrouda, & Resnick, 2008; Krischer, Stone, Sevecke, & Steinmeyer, 2007; Shackelford et al., 2005). Suicide is found to be uncommon when mothers kill a child less than 1 year of age (Felthous & Hempel, 1995; Krischer et al., 2007).

With regard to the homicide method in these cases, Dettling et al. (2003) report child victims of homicide-suicides to present patterns usually found in suicides. Women use relatively nonviolent *modi operandi* compared to men, poisoning or smothering their children rather than killing them with firearms or other weapons (Byard, Knight, James, & Gilbert, 1999; Milroy, 1995). The main intention of parents killing themselves and their children is reported to be their own self-destruction, with the children being killed as part of an “extended suicide,” a phenomenon first described by Näcké (1908). A parent decides there would be no one else to care for the child(ren) after having committed suicide (Marleau, Poulin, Webanck, Roy, & Laporte, 1999; Messing & Heeren, 2004; Milroy, 1995; Somander & Rammer, 1991). In line with this motivation, depression (with and without psychotic features) is the most prevalent disorder found in these offenders (Chan et al., 2003; Hatters Friedman et al., 2008; Léveillé, Marleau, & Dubé, 2007; Lewis & Bunce, 2003; Polk, 1994; Rohde, Raic, Varchmin-Schultheiß, & Marneros, 1998).

Others point out that a child might be in danger of becoming a part of a homicide-suicide when the offender’s primary aggression is directed toward the (estranged) spouse. Here, the child is killed in order to hurt the (estranged) intimate partner (Okumura & Kraus, 1996). This has also been referred to as the Medea complex, as in the ancient myth where Medea sought to hurt her estranged husband Jason by killing their mutual children. In reality, though, offenders in these cases are almost always male.

Family Homicide-Suicide

Family homicide-suicide constitutes an overlap between the killing of both spouse and child(ren), whose offenders are also referred to as family annihilators. Familicides are almost exclusively committed by men (Liem & Koenraadt, 2008; Somander & Rammer, 1991), typically in their 30s or 40s, and usually older than those who commit filicide (Alder & Polk, 2001). Frazier (1975) described two main types of familicidal offenders, namely the “suicide-by-proxy” type and the “murder-by-proxy” type (Websdale, 2010). The first refers to a husband and father who feels despondent over the fate of the family unity and takes his own life as well as that of his child(ren) and spouse to protect them from perceived pain and suffering to come following the loss of a job or a breakdown of the family union. The murder-by-proxy type applies to cases in which victims are chosen because they are identified with a primary target against which revenge is sought. In this light, a man might slaughter all of his children because he regards them as an extension of his wife, and he seeks to get even with her, as described previously in the case of child homicide-suicide.

Other Domestic Homicide-Suicides

This residual category involves homicide-suicides of parents, siblings, and others persons inside the family realm. While the killing of parents (also known as parricide) and siblings (also known as siblicide) are infrequent events, such killings followed by suicide are even more uncommon. A review of the literature shows that in samples of parricide offenders none or very few commit or attempt to commit suicide after the offence (Bourget, Gagné, & Labelle, 2007; Marleau, Auclair, & Millaud, 2006; Millaud, 1996; Mouzou & Rushforth, 2003). The same accounts for empirical studies on siblicide (Marleau, 2003). The relative absence of suicidal behavior following parricide has been attributed to the so-called “him or me” dilemma (Crimmins, 1993). In such cases, adolescents may either proceed to suicide *or* opt for homicide, rather than a combination of the two.

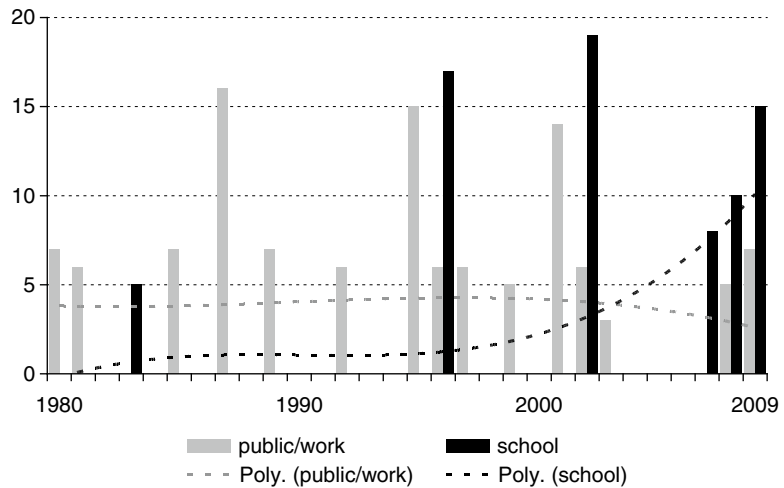
Extrafamilial Homicide-Suicide

As a final subcategory, homicide-suicides outside the domestic sphere are very rare. Opposed to the impression given by the media, the most common type of extrafamilial homicide-suicide does not take place within the context of mass murder, but rather in the course of a criminal act or between friends and acquaintances. However, single violent acts committed by adult “pseudocommandos” and adolescent “school shooters” may claim multiple victims, are heavily reported, and cause a lot of public concern. Recent research also has focused on school and college shootings in the United States, which is reflected in the following brief literature review.

The notorious school shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado in 1999, which claimed the lives of 12 students and 1 teacher, has sparked major attention and prompted research into the causes and possible prevention of mass shootings (Harding, Fox, & Mehta, 2002; Newman & Fox, 2009; Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002; Wike & Fraser, 2009). There have been two recent school shootings with mass casualties in Germany (2002 in Erfurt with 16 victims, and 2009 in Winnenden with 15 victims) and two in Finland (2007 in Tuusula with eight victims, and 2008 in Kauhajoki with ten victims) all of which terminated with the offenders killing themselves or provoking the police to kill them (suicide-by-cop). In the United States, high school shootings have clearly increased during the 1990s and declined again in the early 2000s (Newman & Fox, 2009), whereas college shootings have become much more frequent and deadly after 2000.

Figure 12.1 reports the annual number of victims of mass homicide-suicides (claiming three or more victims) in Western Europe since 1980, differentiated by public/work and school spheres. Western Europe is defined as Europe without the former communist countries for which information is less reliable before the mid-1990s. There were 15 incidences of mass homicide-suicides in public or work places claiming a total of 116 lives (mean 7.7), and seven incidences in schools with a total of 74 victims (mean 10.6). The trend lines clearly show that mass homicide-suicides in public or work places have

Fig. 12.1 Annual number of victims of mass homicide-suicides in Western Europe, 1980–2009, by public/work and school spheres



been fairly stable over time, whereas school shootings have become more frequent after 2000. In fact, the only two incidents of school shootings in Western Europe before 2000 were committed by adult offenders, and the first ever school shooting by a (former) student in western Europe happened in Germany in 2002. The spread of school shootings is so far restricted to Finland and Germany and might be seen as so-called copycat crimes. Shootings as the Columbine massacre provide susceptible adolescents with a “cultural script” to express their grudges (Newman & Fox, 2009). This script had not been available previously and is impossible to erase in the age of mass media and the Internet.

In an attempt to outline certain characteristics that make adolescents susceptible to this extreme form of violence, Newman, Fox, Harding, and Roth (2004) studied several offenders of American school shootings. The authors identified severe psychological problems and a marginalized social position as important risk factors (Newman et al., 2004). Offenders often suffer from narcissistic personality disorders, which make them extremely vulnerable to rejection and perceived degradations (Wike & Fraser, 2009). They feel anger and hatred against their peers and teachers. The wish to commit suicide, the idea of “payback time” as well as the expectation of posthumous fame constitute important motivations for mass killings

(Meloy et al., 2004). A strong fascination with weapons is another frequent trait; the availability of weapons to adolescents has led to public debates about restricting weapon regulation each time a school shooting occurs. Although school shootings are sudden and unexpected in nature, previous threats and hints by the offenders have been reported in many of the cases (Fritzton & Brun, 2005). Recent research in Germany focuses on these “leakages” during the often long period of secretive preparation, which may offer important avenues for preventing school shootings (Bondü & Scheithauer, 2011).

Psychosocial Characteristics of Homicide-Suicide Offenders

The brief overview on the taxonomy of homicide-suicides has already shown that these events are far from being a homogeneous type of lethal violence. Nevertheless, researchers have tried to find more general characteristics, which transcend the aforementioned subcategories of events and help to understand why some offenders decide to take both their own life and that of other persons, mostly close to them. Again, several studies compared homicide-suicide offenders with homicide-only offenders to identify distinguishing factors. A frequent finding is that homicide-suicide

offenders are more likely to be Caucasian and less likely to belong to ethnic minorities than “normal” homicide offenders (Felthous & Hempel, 1995; Koziol-McLain et al., 2006; Liem & Roberts, 2010; Logan et al., 2008). There is also evidence that homicide-suicide offenders are more often middle class or live in middle class areas and are less often unemployed than homicide-only offenders (Harper & Voigt, 2007; Kivivuori & Lehti, 2003; Koziol-McLain et al., 2006; Palermo, 1994; Starzomski & Nussbaum, 2000, but see Liem & Roberts, 2010). In line with these sociological characteristics, some studies also found less evidence of previous violence and criminal convictions (Dawson, 2005; Hillbrand, 2001; Koziol-McLain et al., 2006), but more evidence of mental problems as depression (Dawson, 2005; Liem, 2010; Liem, Hengeveld, & Koentraadt, 2009; Rosenbaum, 1990).

These results confirm judgments by early scholars that homicide-suicide offenders “deviated less markedly than ordinary murderers from the standards and attitudes of the normal law-abiding community” (Wolfgang, 1958). If they have less of the “usual” risk markers, homicide-suicide offenders may instead share specific personality traits associated by some researchers with the inability to cope with stress and familial strife. One element is a weakened and vulnerable self-esteem, which is very manifest in narcissistic personalities; another striking element is overly strong emotional bonds to intimate partners or family members whose identities are perceived by the offender as being inseparable from his or her own identity (Felthous et al., 2001; Liem, 2010; West, 1965). Following from these close bonds is a loss of respect for the autonomy of partners and family members (Starzomski & Nussbaum, 2000). Still another element is linked to attribution styles, which may combine self-blame and other-blame in a peculiar way (Batton & Ogle, 2007; Hillbrand, 2001). Yet, rather than assuming homogeneity in the direction of blame attribution in homicide-suicide events, it seems more realistic to acknowledge that some offenders tend to blame their victims for the problems which they intend to solve violently, whereas other offenders tend to blame themselves. If the

former is true, the attitude toward the victim is more hostile and the primary focus of the violence may be on the homicide motivated by the wish to control or to punish; if the latter is true, the attitude is less hostile and the main focus may be on the suicide, rendering the homicide part of the violence to a “taking along” with the offender in his wish to die (Liem, 2010). In a similar vein, Websdale (2010) distinguishes “livid coercive hearts” (motivated by anger and coercion) from “civic reputable hearts” (motivated by shame and perceived failure) in cases of familicides. Thus, the motives of homicide-suicide offenders across different subtypes may be placed on an emotional continuum between two poles – a hostile and a nonhostile pole. It has to be stressed, however, that judgments about emotional states and motives are extremely difficult to make and should often be viewed as plausible assumptions rather than knowledge, particularly as the offenders of homicide-suicides are dead and surviving offenders may differ in important respects from deceased ones.

Method

This chapter further aims to give an overview of the incidence and patterns of homicide-suicides in Europe from 1990 to 2005. In the remaining part of this chapter, we focus on empirical results from the “European Homicide-Suicide Study (EHSS),” an epidemiological study on domestic homicide-suicide in seven European countries.

European Homicide-Suicide Study (EHSS)

The “EHSS” is a recent collaborative project including seven European countries, which aims to put research on homicide-suicide in Europe a broader empirical basis, particularly with a view on cross-national comparisons. The cornerstone of EHSS is the collection of complete national samples of (domestic) homicide-suicide cases covering the years ca. 1990–2005, with some variations, that are stored in a single, unified

database. The study covers England and Wales, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Switzerland, with a combined total population of around 240 million people. The EHSS database comprises information on more than 2,000 overall cases, but due to varying scopes with respect to time periods and inclusion criteria the sample size for comparative analyses is smaller (see below). Only completed domestic homicide-suicides are covered in all countries, omitting attempted homicide-suicides in some countries, and extra-domestic homicide-suicides in other countries. In addition to this complete cross-national sample of homicide-suicide cases, additional samples containing more detailed variables and also comparative samples of homicides-only are available in some countries taking part in the EHSS (e.g., Liem, Postulart et al., 2009).

Assessing the completeness and quality of the data, at least two groups of countries can be distinguished. In the first group (England and Wales, Finland, and the Netherlands), data collection made use of national homicide monitoring systems or registers, which are very reliable both in terms of completeness and data quality. The Finnish Homicide Monitoring System is jointly managed by the police authorities and the National Research Institute of Legal Policy (Kivivuori, Lehti, & Aaltonen, 2007). The English data are based on the homicide register administered by the Home Office Research and Statistics Department, and were checked and supplemented with information from death certificates (Barraclough & Harris, 2002). Data from the Netherlands are based on the Dutch Homicide Monitor, including basic information on all homicides that take place in the Netherlands. Details on homicide-suicides were supplemented with information stemming from media reports (Liem, Postulart et al., 2009).

Switzerland differs from the first group of countries in that no official monitoring system exists, but homicide-suicide cases were instead selected from the research-initiated Swiss Homicide and Suicide Database (Killias, Markwalder, Walser, & Dilitz, 2009). This database identifies homicides based on information from forensic medicine departments and may suffer from under coverage

to the extent that public prosecutors do not order autopsies. It is estimated that under reporting may amount to 16%.

In the second group of countries (Germany, Poland, Spain), due to the absence of national homicide registers and the infeasibility of police or judicial data sources, data collection had to rely on searches in media archives. Epidemiological studies of homicide-suicide have often been based on media reports (Danson & Sothill, 1996; Liem & Koenraadt, 2007; Malphurs & Cohen, 2002). Although it can be assumed that homicide-suicides, as a more spectacular form of lethal violence, receive media attention on a regular basis, at least in countries with low homicide rates, doubts about the completeness of collections are warranted, as well as about the accuracy of information contained in these reports.

The success of searches in media archives depends first on the completeness and quality of media coverage and second on the capacities for automatic retrieval from large-scale text archives. Complex search strings considering many linguistic variations of describing homicide-suicide events were constructed based on an empirical “word cruncher” analysis of several 100 preselected reports in each language. In Germany and Poland, full-text searches were conducted in the digital archives of the countries’ largest news agencies, supplemented by regional and local newspapers. In Germany, computational linguistic methods additionally helped to condense the number of (mostly false-positive) hits from around 120,000 to 25,000 articles, finally yielding reports on 1,100 cases of H-S. Because archives of news agencies were not accessible in Spain, data collection had to rest on the two main national and some regional newspapers. In Poland and Spain but not in Germany, a steep increase in cases during the 1990s suggest that media coverage of homicide-suicide cases was incomplete at the beginning of the observation period and improved later.

In some German states, it was possible to validate the media-based sample with police-generated lists of homicide-suicide cases, indicating that undercoverage may be between 15 and 20%. However, for cases with more than one killed

victim (as familicides), the media-based sample proved to be 100% complete in Germany. In sum, media-based samples of homicide-suicides are less complete than samples based on official registers, and when interpreting the findings reported below, one needs to acknowledge an underestimation of the frequency of homicide-suicide in Poland, Spain, and (to a somewhat lesser extent) Germany, especially for less spectacular cases.

Inclusion Criteria

The core definition of homicide-suicide applied in all seven countries is completed domestic homicides with a subsequent successful suicide within 24 h of the homicide. This excludes extra-domestic homicide-suicides in some countries, and attempted homicide-suicides in other countries. Before we present findings based on this strictly comparable criteria, it is useful to gauge the relative importance of the omitted categories. Extra-domestic cases have a share of all homicide-suicide cases of 4% in England and Wales, 13% in both Switzerland and the Netherlands, and 20% in Finland (Kivivuori & Lehti, 2003). Thus, the overwhelming majority of cases are related to conflicts in either families or partnerships. Slightly less than a third of homicide-suicide cases terminate with unsuccessful suicide attempts (parasuicides) (25% in Spain, 29% in Germany, 30% in Switzerland, 33% in Finland, and 37% in Poland) (cf. Barber et al., 2008; Liem, 2010). It is noteworthy that suicides committed with a firearm are successful in almost all cases (90% in Finland, 93% in Germany, 94% in

Spain, and 96% in Poland) whereas suicides by all other methods have a much lower success rate (39% in Finland, between 60 and 63% in Germany, Spain, and Poland), a large difference that has also been found in the US (Barber et al., 2008). There are also some cases where an offender kills him/herself after an *attempted* homicide (4% of cases in Spain, 7% in Poland, and 8% in Germany, based on all completed and attempted homicide-suicide cases) (Saleva, Putkonen, Kiviruusu, & Lönnqvist, 2007).

Results

Victimization Rates

First, we report on the counts and rates of homicide-suicide in the seven European countries. The number of homicide-suicide events per annum range from five to seven cases in small countries like Switzerland, Netherlands, and Finland to 29 cases in England and Wales and 63 cases in Germany. Table 12.1 reports incidence rates per 100,000 population. As extra-domestic homicide-suicides are only included in England and Wales and the Netherlands, we focus mainly on domestic homicide-suicide. A victimization rate per 100,000 based on the number of killed victims in homicide-suicide incidences is reported in Table 12.2. The domestic homicide-suicide rate was highest in the Finland (0.163 per 100,000), followed by Germany (0.093 per 100,000) and Switzerland (0.091 per 100,000) (Table 12.2). Poland and Spain had the lowest rates with 0.044 and 0.038 per 100,000, respectively.

Table 12.2 Mean annual (domestic) homicide-suicide victim rates per 100,000 per country (95% C.I.)

	Years	Homicide-suicide rate	Domestic homicide-suicide rate
England and Wales	1988–1992	0.071 (0.059–0.083)	0.066 (0.051–0.081)
Finland	1996–2006	–	0.163 (0.117–0.210)
Germany	1996–2005	–	0.093 (0.083–0.103)
Netherlands	1992–2006	0.059 (0.045–0.073)	0.054 (0.040–0.067)
Poland	1999–2006	–	0.044 (0.035–0.053)
Spain	2004–2006	–	0.038 (0.037–0.039)
Switzerland	1980–2004	–	0.091 (0.073–0.110)

When comparing these results it has to be reiterated that rates are likely to be accurate for England and Wales, Finland and the Netherlands, but might be lower than the real rates by a factor of 15–20% for Germany and Switzerland, and maybe even more for Poland and Spain. This would put Germany and Switzerland, together with Finland, in a group of countries with high rates, whereas the other countries, and definitely England and Wales and the Netherlands, have much lower rates.

Event Characteristics

Table 12.3 gives an overview of the homicide-suicide incidents by type in the aforementioned countries. The majority of events were intimate partner homicide-suicides with an average share of 65% (lowest in the Netherlands with 51%, highest in Spain with 80%). Only a few cases were familicides involving both a partner and a child (or children), with an average share of 9% (lowest in England and Wales and Spain with 5%, highest in Poland with 14%). Taking these both types together, three-quarters of homicide-suicide incidences included intimate partners. In 15% of events, only the offender's child(ren) were killed. England and Wales has the highest share of this type (25%), Spain the lowest (7%). Finally, in 11% of cases, the victims were neither partners nor children, but other relatives of the offenders.

In all countries, the majority of the homicide-suicides (83% on average) involved one victim; the average number of killed victims is 1.2. In the Netherlands and in Finland, the highest percentage of multiple victim homicide-suicides was reported (22% each), whereas Spain had the lowest share (9%). In most countries, three or four is the maximum number of victims killed in one homicide-suicide event. In Germany, one offender killed five, and another killed seven victims before killing himself.

The sampling criteria exclude suicide pacts, which are defined as a consensual suicide by two or more persons, and most frequently concern elderly couples. As a result, almost no case in the

sample involved more than one offender. Only in England and Wales, two cases involve suicide pacts of parents who in addition killed their small children. In practice, the distinction between a suicide pact and a homicide-suicide, especially among elderly couples, can be difficult to determine if no suicide note explaining the joined will of both partners exists (see above).

Victims and Offenders

In all seven countries, the large majority of the homicide-suicide victims were female, and the large majority of offenders were male, reflecting the proximity of homicide-suicide to gendered domestic violence more generally (Table 12.4 – top). This gender imbalance becomes even more pronounced if one omits child victims below 18 years who show an even gender distribution. Without them, between 80% of the victims in Finland and 88% of the victims in England and Wales are female. Uxoricides, killings of an intimate partner, as well as familicides, are almost exclusively committed by male offenders in all countries. The share of all intimate partner killings in this sample where women kill their male intimate partner is between 0 in Finland and 6% in Switzerland. As a rule, women who kill their partners do not commit suicide afterwards because they intend to terminate the relationship, contrary to male partner killers who paradoxically intend to prevent (or sanction) a separation (Wilson & Daly, 1992, see above). Female offenders of homicide-suicides predominantly kill their children, mainly in the context of depression. However, in Germany and Switzerland, a sizable share (29 and 42%, respectively) of female offenders killed their intimate partners, not their children, before committing suicide.

The age of victims shows a bimodal distribution, with young children and middle-aged partners as the two most frequent groups. Except for England and Wales and the Netherlands, where many of the adult victims are in the age range between 25 and 40, many victims are older than 40 years, probably reflecting that the risk of homicide-suicides increases with the duration of

Table 12.3 Domestic homicide-suicide event characteristics per country

Type	England and Wales		Finland		Germany		Netherlands		Poland		Spain		Switzerland		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Intimate partner and child	6	5	4	6	59	9	8	9	15	14	2	5	10	10	106	9
Intimate partner	85	63	41	59	433	69	48	51	57	54	35	80	83	68	782	65
Child	34	25	12	17	78	12	20	21	21	20	3	7	15	12	183	15
Other family	9	7	13	19	57	9	18	19	13	12	4	9	12	10	126	11
Number of homicide victims																
1	111	81	56	78	537	85	73	78	84	79	41	91	102	82	1,004	83
2	22	16	12	17	61	10	11	12	17	16	4	9	14	11	141	12
3≥	4	4	4	6	32	5	10	11	5	5	0	0	9	7	64	5
Average per case	1.2		1.3		1.2		1.4		1.3		1.1		1.3		1.2	

Table 12.4 Homicide-suicide offender characteristics per country

Offender characteristics														
England and Wales														
	Finland		Germany		Netherlands		Poland		Spain		Switzerland		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender														
Male	36	21	26	28	188	23	42	33	43	29	10	18	41	26
Female	132	79	67	72	620	77	85	67	105	71	45	82	118	75
Age														
≤17	57	34	20	22	172	21	51	40	46	31	6	11	38	24
18–24	17	10	7	8	61	7	7	6	11	7	3	6	12	8
25–39	35	21	14	15	201	24	36	28	28	19	16	29	43	27
40–64	49	29	38	41	255	31	21	17	38	25	16	29	41	26
≥65	10	6	14	15	141	17	12	9	28	19	14	26	25	16
Mean	29.0 (±21.6)		40.7 (±24.7)		40.3 (±25.6)		28.7 (±23.3)		38.7 (±28.9)		49.8 (±28.8)		37.6 (±25.1)	
Homicide method														
Stabbing/cutting	21	13	12	13	141	17	35	28	38	25	13	24	10	6
Hitting/blunt object	9	5	1	1	62	8	6	5	22	15	4	7	4	3
Shooting	48	29	66	71	414	50	48	38	30	20	25	46	125	79
Strangulation	34	20	3	3	91	11	0	0	24	16	5	9	14	9
Other/unknown	56	33	11	12	122	15	38	30	37	25	8	15	6	4
Mean	40.6 (±13.8)		45.8 (±14.3)		48.2 (±15.7)		42.3 (±13.9)		45.0 (±14.1)		46.7 (±18.3)		47.1 (±17.3)	
Gender														
Male	118	86	66	92	575	92	85	90	90	85	42	93	113	90
Female	19	13	6	8	52	8	9	10	16	15	3	7	12	10
Age														
≤17	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0
18–24	17	12	4	6	22	4	5	8	3	3	3	7	7	6
25–39	54	39	17	24	175	28	40	43	28	26	14	31	34	27
40–64	58	42	40	56	323	51	40	43	56	53	16	36	48	38
≥65	8	6	11	15	109	17	8	9	17	16	12	27	36	29
Mean	40.6 (±13.8)		45.8 (±14.3)		48.2 (±15.7)		42.3 (±13.9)		45.0 (±14.1)		46.7 (±18.3)		47.1 (±17.3)	
Mean	40.6 (±13.8)		45.8 (±14.3)		48.2 (±15.7)		42.3 (±13.9)		45.0 (±14.1)		46.7 (±18.3)		47.1 (±17.3)	46.2 (±15.6)

(continued)

Table 12.4 (continued)

Suicide method	Offender characteristics															
	England and Wales		Finland		Germany		Netherlands		Poland		Spain		Switzerland		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Stabbing/cutting	11	8	1	2	76	12	6	6	6	6	6	13	5	4	111	9
Shooting	41	30	37	51	315	50	34	36	17	16	18	40	79	63	541	45
poisoning	7	5	0	0	12	2	3	3	0	0	1	2	1	1	24	2
Hanging	19	14	1	1	99	16	9	10	55	52	11	24	3	2	197	16
Jumping/crashing	14	10	0	1	63	10	12	13	17	16	4	9	4	3	114	9
Other/unknown	45	33	33	46	65	10	30	32	11	10	5	11	33	26	222	18

partnerships. The mean age of victims is highest in Spain – it could be argued that this is both due to fewer child homicide-suicide victims as well as to a larger proportion of victims who are 65 years and older.

In all seven countries, homicide-suicide offenders were almost exclusively males between the ages of 25 and 64. Virtually no homicide-suicides are committed by those under the age of 17. Homicide-suicides in Spain and Switzerland, however, stood apart in terms of the age distribution of offenders, as approximately one third of them is older than 65. The mean age of offenders is lowest in England and Wales, where offenders were on average 8 years younger than those in Germany.

Modus Operandi

Even though in all countries except for Poland, firearms were the foremost killing method in homicide-suicides, their use was particularly dominant in Finland and Switzerland, where 71 and 79% (respectively) of all homicides were committed by firearm, followed by Germany with a share of 50% (Table 12.4 – top). The majority of the suicides in Finland, Switzerland, and Germany were also committed by firearm (Table 12.4 – bottom). The observation that these three countries also have the highest rates of homicide-suicide lends support for the idea that the availability of firearms could play a decisive causal role in the frequency of homicide-suicide.

Conclusion

Homicide-suicide is a serious form of lethal violence combining two forms of aggression – against others and against the self – which are mostly mutually exclusive, and rarely occur together. Homicide-suicides most frequently happen in domestic contexts and often involve multiple victims. Previous research on homicide-suicide suggests that while the phenomenon displays characteristics familiar from research on both homicide and suicide, it should best be viewed as a distinct type of violence. Also, homicide-

suicides constitute a heterogeneous group of events, and rather than looking for unified patterns and explanations, it may make more sense to disaggregate these events into subtypes. Most scholars have done this by differentiating homicide-suicide according to the relationship between the victim and offender.

In the empirical section of this chapter, we reported on the epidemiology of homicide-suicide in seven European countries. By making use of a newly established database, the EHSS, we were able to give a systematic quantitative overview on all domestic homicide-suicide cases in England and Wales, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Switzerland over a period of more than 1 decade. Because the data collection in some countries rested on national homicide monitoring systems whereas other countries had to rely on media reports, the data quality varies cross-nationally, and the frequency of homicide-suicides can be assumed to be underestimated in countries without national homicide monitoring systems.

Nevertheless, the results of our quantitative analyses show that the patterns of homicide-suicides are very similar cross-nationally. In all seven countries, intimate partner homicide-suicides constitute the most frequent subgroup of cases, followed by child homicide-suicides (except for Spain). In all countries, offenders are predominantly male and victims are predominantly female, and the majority of victims are either middle-aged or children. Although the statistical patterns look very similar in most countries, Spain seems to deviate from the European average in that homicide-suicide is more clearly dominated by intimate partner killings by male perpetrators, whereas other types of homicide-suicide, particularly involving child victims, are very rare.

In all countries (except for Poland), shooting is the most frequent killing method. Shooting almost always results in a completed suicide, whereas other methods are much less “reliable” and leave more offenders surviving a suicide attempt. The countries with the highest proportion of firearms are also the countries with the highest incidence rates (Finland and Switzerland).

Although certainly not the only relevant research question, the role of firearms in homicide-suicide is particularly intriguing and has previously been found to be one of the main distinguishing factors when comparing homicide-suicides from homicides-only (Koziol-McLain et al., 2006). The results from the EHSS suggest that the availability of firearms might be one causal factor in the genesis of homicide-suicide. This finding calls for further research on the role of firearms. Among other issues, the question arises as to what kinds of firearms are used in homicide-suicide, and what individual characteristics differentiate offenders who have access to weapons from those who do not.

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Mark Dechesne

Terrorism is, in essence, a form of psychological warfare that involves the use of indiscriminate violence or threat of violence to civilians with the aim of achieving social, political, religious, or otherwise ideological goals. It deserves a place in a sourcebook on homicide. But terrorism is certainly not an everyday form of homicide. In terrorism, killing is a by-product of a tactic of influence with a primary aim to terrorize rather than to kill. It does kill, however, and it has done so, in Europe from time to time more so than anywhere else. The present chapter deals with terrorism in Europe in the period from 1945 until present. The chapter describes existing terrorism databases and their characteristics. A combination of the databases yields insight into major episodes and trends of terrorist activity in Europe. The focus will then be on the intersection of terrorism and homicide. First, however, it is of importance to further clarify what is meant by terrorism.

The Definition Issue

Defining terrorism, just as defining homicide, is not an easy task. Alex Schmid and Berto Jongman (1988) used a review of the prevailing definitions of terrorism in the 1980s to formulate a

comprehensive definition that contains no less than 116 words. Its full presentation here primarily serves to illustrate the complexity of defining terrorism:

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby - in contrast to assassination - the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought.

Its presentation is not intended, however, as guiding operational definition for the research to follow. One of the implications of these 116 words' complexity is that policy makers, law enforcement agencies, and academics may find it very difficult to work with. One rarely finds a case that perfectly fits the definition, or one simply may lack the information to match the definition, and as a result, one may not be able to decide or act swiftly in response to incidents.

The major institutions that deal with terrorism, therefore, tend to espouse much simpler and cruder definitions. Moreover, because institutions have specific mandates in their response to terrorism, they tend to emphasize those aspects of terrorism that are most relevant to them.

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In his insightful introduction to terrorism, *Inside Terrorism*, Bruce Hoffman (2006) illustrates the idiosyncrasies of the definitions of several of the major US agencies that deal with terrorism. While, for example, the US State Department emphasizes that terrorism is conducted by “nonstate actors” who target “noncombatants,” the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a law enforcement agency emphasizes the “unlawful” nature and explicates that targets may not involve persons but also “property.” Further, the Department of Homeland Security emphasizes the threat of terrorism to “critical infrastructure or key resources.”

In Europe, one also finds these idiosyncrasies. In the Netherlands, where the threat of terrorism has been substantial for a large part of the last decade, but the actual number of incidents has been very limited both historically and in recent years, the coordinating body of counterterrorism efforts, the NCTb, includes “preparations for” acts of terrorism in its definition.¹ Accepting that each institution has its own perspective in relation to terrorism, it is perhaps also not surprising that the definition of terrorism used by the European Union does not capitalize on the commonalities of the definitions of its national constituents, but rather emphasizes the relevance for the EU by frequently mentioning the term “international organization.” Within the EU “Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism” (2002), terrorism is defined as:

Criminal offences against persons and property that; given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation where committed with the aim of: Seriously intimidating a population; or unduly compelling a Government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act; or seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation.

However, for research on terrorism in Europe, this emphasis may lead away from substantive analyses. In fact, researchers aiming to develop a general perspective on terrorism, perhaps even more so than policy makers and law enforcement agencies, benefit from a broad, inclusive

perspective. The largest open-source database on terrorist incidents, the Global Terrorism Database (GTD; LaFree & Dugan, 2007), for example, has three very broad criteria for determining the terrorist nature of an incident:

1. Intentional act of violence or threat of violence by a nonstate actor.
2. The violent act was aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal.
3. The violent act included evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) other than the immediate victims.

The worldwide Incident Tracking System (WITS) of the US Department of State uses an even simpler criterion: “The data provided in WITS consists of incidents in which subnational or clandestine groups or individuals deliberately or recklessly attacked civilians or noncombatants (including military personnel) and assets outside war zones and war-like settings.”²

Directly following this criterion, however, is a cautionary statement that seems appropriate not just in relation to the WITS, but to all databases, and indeed to all conceptualizations of terrorism, including the ones in this chapter:

Determination of what constitutes a terrorist act, however, can be more art than science; information is often incomplete, fact patterns may be open to interpretation, and perpetrators’ intent is rarely clear. Moreover, information may become available over time, changing initial judgments about attacks. [...] Reasonable people may differ on whether a particular attack actually constitutes terrorism or some other form of political violence.

Trends and Developments in Terrorism in Europe

With this cautionary statement in mind, available databases were used to describe the trends and developments of terrorism in Europe from the end of the Second World War until present.

¹http://english.nctb.nl/themes/what_is_terrorism/.

²http://www.nctc.gov/witsbanner/wits_subpage_criteria.html.

Four sources of data,³ of which two have already been mentioned, are deemed particularly relevant:

1. The GTD: This database is an initiative of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (NC-START). Based at the University of Maryland and sponsored by the US Department of Homeland Security, the consortium seeks to provide social scientific insight into the factors that lead individuals and organizations to adopt terrorism and into the factors that contribute to optimal response. The GTD⁴ is currently the largest open-source database on terrorist incidents. It contains over 87,000 incidents that occurred worldwide in the period from 1970 until present, including those that occurred in Europe. It contains information about the location of the incidents, the number of fatalities and number of wounded per incident, the type of incident (e.g., kidnapping, bombing, etc.), and the weapons that were used.
2. The Worldwide Incident Tracking System (WITS) is an initiative by the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) of the US Department of State. At the time of writing (fall 2010), the WITS⁵ contained almost 71,000 incidents. It contains similar information categories as the GTD, including the number of fatalities per incident, information on the perpetrator, the location, etc.
3. The European Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) has been published on an annual basis by Europol since 2007. The TE-SAT⁶ provides an overview of terrorism in the EU

from a law enforcement perspective. It contains data regarding the number of attacks (failed, foiled, or executed) and the number of people tried, and other relevant court information such as the number of convictions, verdicts, and acquittals. Separate analyses are provided for each of the major categories of terrorism, i.e., Islamist terrorism, ethno-nationalist terrorism, left-wing and anarchist terrorism, right-wing terrorism, and single-issue terrorism.

4. The Centre for Defense and International Security Studies (CDISS) publishes a database of terrorist incidents through its webpage. The database⁷ claims to “provide a snapshot of the wide-range of terrorist attacks and political violence experienced worldwide since World War II.” It contains only a selection of incidents, and no explanation is given for why particular incidents are considered capable of providing the snapshot. For present purposes, therefore, the CDISS database is not particularly useful, although of the four databases mentioned, it is the only database that reports incidents before 1970.

The Current State of Affairs

The TE-SAT is specifically published to provide an overview of the most recent trends and developments in terrorism in Europe. The most up-to-date report, i.e., the report of 2010, describes the situation in 2009 in terms of the following three findings: (1) Six member states (Austria, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, and Spain) experienced failed, foiled, and successful attacks in 2009, amounting to a total of 294 failed, foiled, or successful terrorist attacks and 578 individual arrests; (2) The majority of suspects were arrested on suspicion of membership in a terrorist organization; and (3) A total of 391 individuals and one NGO were tried on terrorism charges in the member states, resulting in a total of 125 court decisions (TE-SAT 2010, p.11).

³At the time of writing (November, 2010), RAND was developing a “RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents” (RDWTI). On its website (<http://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/terrorism-incidents/>), it is noted that RAND is “still in the process of updating our dataset and we plan to have the complete dataset available later this year” (accessed 18 November 2010). Because the database was still in development, it was decided to not use its data.

⁴The GTD can be accessed through the NC-START website: <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.

⁵The WITS can be accessed through the NCTC website: <https://wits.nctc.gov/>.

⁶The TE-SAT reports can be accessed through the Europol website: <http://www.europol.europa.eu/index.asp?page=publications>.

⁷The database can be accessed through: <http://www.timripley.co.uk/terrorism/>.



Fig. 13.1 WITS concept cloud for terrorist activity in Europe from 1945-present

It also provides figures of the developments from 2007 to 2009 regarding the number of attacks and number of arrests. For both numbers, the data of the 27 member states are provided (see TE-SAT 2010, p.50 for details). A decline in number of attacks and number of arrests is observed. According to the estimate, there were 581 attacks in 2007, 441 attacks in 2008, and 294 attacks in 2009. Regarding the number of arrests, there were 841 terrorism-related arrests in 2007. In 2008, there were 753 terrorism-related arrests. And, as noted before, there were 578 individual arrests in 2009.

A table (TE-SAT, p.50) specifies the number of registered attacks (failed, foiled, or successful) per country and the manifestations of terrorism. Terrorism can come in a variety of manifestations. The TE-SAT distinguishes between Islamist terrorism, separatist terrorism, left-wing terrorism, right-wing terrorism, and single-issue terrorism and incorporates a “not specified” category. The vast majority of attacks in Europe are separatist in nature. Out of 581 attacks in 2007, just under 92% were instigated by separatist intent. Out of 441 attacks in 2008, 90% were in the separatist category. In 2009, 80% of the 294 attacks were instigated by separatists. The separatist attacks primarily occur in France and Spain. In France, 253 separatist attacks were registered in 2007, 137 in 2008, and 89 in 2009. Most of these attacks

are linked to Corsican separatist movements. In Spain, 264 separatist attacks were recorded in 2007, 137 attacks were reported in 2008, and 89 attacks were reported in 2009. A substantial portion of these attacks are carried out by the Basque separatist movement, in particular the ETA and related movements (such as Taldes Y and SEGI).

The Worldwide Incident Tracking System (WITS) provides an interesting alternative way of presenting the essence of terrorist activity in Europe in recent years. It contains a “concept cloud” option. Figure 13.1 displays the concept cloud for terrorist activity in Europe for the same time span as the TE-SAT reports, i.e., from beginning of 2007 until the end of 2009. The figure essentially depicts the prominence of a concept in descriptions of terrorist incidents. The larger the font size of a particular concept, the greater its relevance in typifying terrorist incidents in Europe for the specified time period. The WITS reports 995 incidents for the specified time period, which is less than the 1,316 of the TE-SAT. Consistent with the earlier reported TE-SAT data, words related to separatist movements in France (e.g., “France” and “Corsica”) and Spain (e.g., “Spain” and “Basque fatherland”) figure quite prominently in the cloud. However, there appears to be a striking difference with regard to Greece. Whereas the TE-SAT report reports 31, all left-wing, incidents, concepts related to Greece such

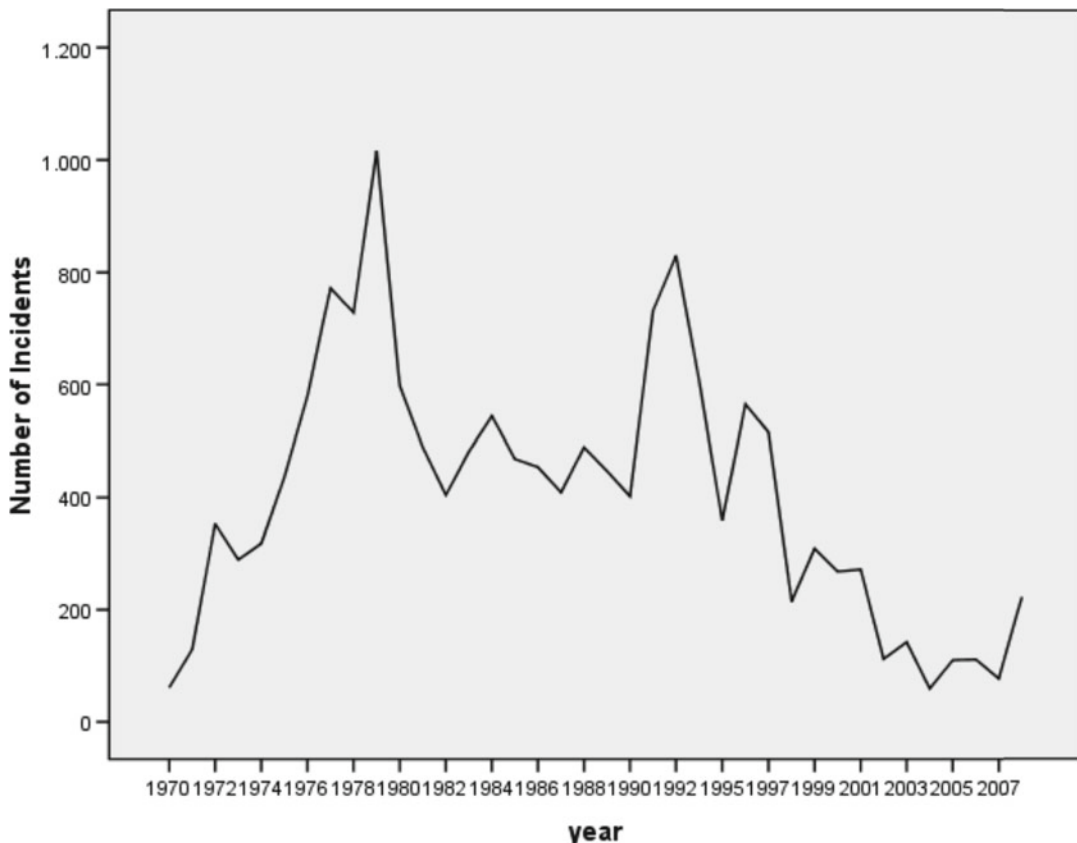


Fig. 13.2 Development of total terrorist activity in Europe 1970–2008. Based on the Global Terrorism Database

as “Greece” and “Athens” dominate the concept cloud. Indeed, the WITS database contains no less than 386 incidents in Greece, predominantly instigated by anarchist cells.

At present, then, although a great deal of attention is devoted to Islamist terrorism in Europe, the TE-SAT and the WITS indicate that separatist movements in Spain and France, and anarchists in Greece, have been responsible for the vast majority of attacks in Europe from 2007 until present.

Developments from 1970 Until 2008

The GTD is used to describe the developments in terrorism in Europe from 1970 until 2008. The GTD website clusters various countries in regions.

The two regions of relevance for the current chapter are Western Europe and Eastern Europe.⁸

For the purposes of this contribution, first the Eastern and Western Europe regions were combined. Figure 13.2 shows the GTD data regarding the total terrorist activity in Europe from 1970

⁸The codebook of the GTD puts the following countries in the Western Europe region:

Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Corsica, Denmark, East Germany (GDR), Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Man, Isle of, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and West Germany (FRG). The following countries are in the Eastern Europe region: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia-Montenegro, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and Yugoslavia.

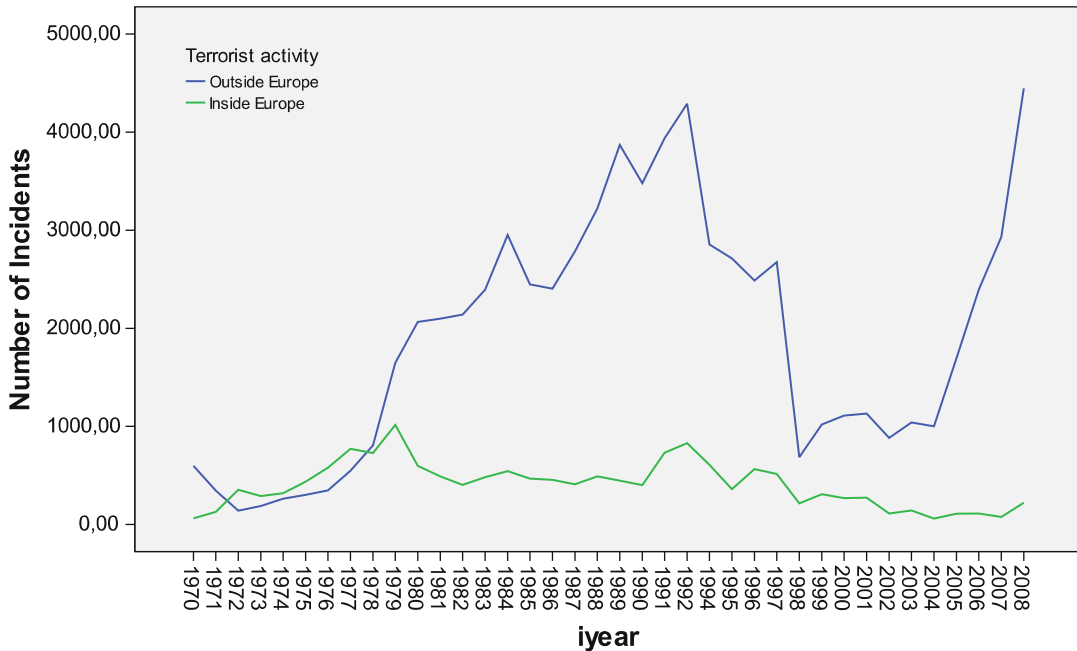


Fig. 13.3 Development of terrorist activity inside and outside Europe 1970–2008. Based on the Global Terrorism Database

until 2008. It shows a build-up towards a first peak of violence in 1979, after which there appears to be a general downwards trajectory regarding the total number of incidents with two spikes in activity, the first in 1992 and the second from 1996 to 1997.

Before exploring the nature of the pattern, it is of importance to first consider the number of incidents in Europe in relation to the total number of incidents worldwide. To do so, Fig. 13.3 depicts the development of terrorist activity inside and outside Europe per year. Figure 13.3 shows that, from 1972 until 1977, the frequency of terrorist activity in Europe was higher than the total activity outside of Europe. Later, activity in Latin America (during the 1980s) and the Middle East and South Asia (since 2000) has dominated, and Europe witnessed only a fairly marginal proportion of the total terrorist activity.

Figure 13.4 (see Appendix, pg. 471 or online at extras.springer.com) shows a comparison of terrorist activity in Eastern and Western Europe and provides a first hint of the nature and location

of terrorist activity in Europe. Remarkably, no terrorist activity is observed in Eastern Europe in the period from 1970 until 1991. This could reflect the absence of terrorist activity in Eastern Europe, but it could also reflect to a greater extent the absence of *available recordings* of terrorist activity than absence of actual activity. A word of caution is therefore in place. Even after 1991, terrorist activity is primarily found in Western Europe relative to Eastern Europe.

Table 13.1 (see Appendix, pg. 477 or online at extras.springer.com) shows the top ten European countries and regions within countries with the highest number of terrorist incidents in the period from 1970 until 2008, according to the GTD.⁹ Over the entire stretch from 1970 until the present, the United Kingdom (Great Britain and Northern Ireland),

⁹The data provided by the GTD are somewhat confusing because regions such as Northern Ireland and Corsica are coded as countries. However, not all regions are classified as such. The GTD contains no “Basque region,” for example. Nonetheless, the data do provide some valuable insight into the location of terrorist activity in Europe.

Spain, and France (including Corsica) have received the vast majority of terrorist attacks, with the number of incidents respectively being 4,415, 3,182, and 2,456. Italy, Germany (Germany, FDR, and GDR), and Greece also received a substantial amount of terrorism: 1,494, 1,133, and 893 attacks, respectively. All other countries are recorded to have received less than 200 incidents (Fig. 13.4 - see Appendix, pg. 471 or online at extras.springer.com).

Figure 13.5 (see Appendix, pg. 472 or online at extras.springer.com) plots the terrorist activity for the six countries with the highest terrorist activity level (i.e., United Kingdom, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, and Greece) on a timeline from 1970 until 2008. The United Kingdom has several peaks of violence, the first in 1972, the second in the late seventies, and the third in the early nineties. Spain has its main episode of terrorism in the late seventies, after which there is a characteristic gradual decline (as opposed to a sudden decline). France has its major episodes of violence in the late seventies and especially in 1996. Italy is most struck by terrorism in the late seventies and early eighties, after which terrorism disappears. Germany experiences terrorism during the seventies and mideighties, but, in terms of number of incidents, had its most active episode of terrorism after the reunification, from 1992 until 1995. Finally, Greece experienced an episode of terrorism in the late seventies, the late eighties, and is currently undergoing another episode of terrorism.

These episodes are caused by a relatively small number of terrorist organizations. In the UK, the GTD attributes close to 59% of all terrorist activity to the (Provisional) Irish Republican Army, known for its armed struggle against British rule over Northern Ireland. In comparison, “unknown” is the second “group” that is attributed 11% of terrorist activity, and the third ranked group is labeled “protestant extremists” and is attributed 7% of the attacks. In Spain, the GTD attributes just under 61% of all terrorist activity to the socialist Basque separatist movement ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom). The next most active group is labeled “unknown” and attributed 18.7%, and the third

group, GRAPO (First October Antifascist Resistance Group), is attributed 6.5% of the activity. In France, 37% of attacks are attributed by unknown groups. Among the groups that are known, however, the vast majority are attributed to the Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC), with just above 28%. In Italy, 43% of attacks are attributed to an “unknown group.” The Red Brigades are attributed 15% of terrorist activity, with the next most active group, the Primo Linea, being attributed only 4% of attacks. Germany has had to deal with a more diversified threat. According to the GTD, the largest group of perpetrators (40%) is unknown. The known groups include the Neo-Nazi’s with 15%, the PKK (Kurdistan Worker’s Party) with 11%, and leftist cells (including the RAF which is coded separately from the Baader Meinhof group), who are attributed about 15% of attacks. Finally, the GTD attributes 45% of terrorist activity to unknown perpetrators, while the two major organizations, the 17th of November Revolutionary Organization and the Revolutionary People’s Struggle (ELA) are attributed 12 and 10% of the attacks, respectively.

Not surprisingly, many of the organizations just mentioned figure prominently in the list of the most active terrorist organizations in Europe in the period from 1970 until 2008. Table 13.1 (see Appendix, pg. 477 or online at extras.springer.com). Shows the top ten most active organizations. As with the Europol Situation and Trend Report, the GTD analysis also shows that in the period from 1970 until 2008, separatist movements (in the UK, Spain, and France) and left-wing groups (in Italy, Germany, and Greece) have shaped the landscape of European terrorism far more than other movements and groups. This general depiction is also corroborated by the selection of terrorist incidents from 1945 until 1969 provided by the CDISS, although their database describes attacks instigated by separatist movements against European targets who are outside of Europe. Examples include attacks by Israeli separatists, notably the Irgun, against British soldiers in the late 40s, and attacks by Algerian separatist against the French colonizers.

Table 13.1 Top ten most active terrorist organizations in Europe from 1970 until 2008

Rank	Country	Number of Incidents
1	Irish Republican Army (IRA)	2,668
2	Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA)	1,989
3	Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC)	569
4	Protestant Extremists	318
5	Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)	260
6	Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF)	252
7	Red Brigades	219
8	Neo-Nazi Group	211
9	First of October Antifascist Resistance Group (GRAPO)	210
10	Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	164
	Total	15,371

Based on the Global Terrorism Database

Terrorism in Relation to Homicide

The foregoing description pertains to terrorism in general, irrespective of its relevance for homicide. Terrorism is clearly different from homicide. For instance, the WITS reports 1,288 terrorist incidents in the period from 1 April 2004 until 29 June 2010 that did not involve casualties (let alone fatalities) and 854 incidents that did involve casualties (although this also includes nonfatal casualties). Also, Fig. 13.4 uses GTD data to plot the number of incidents in Europe (1970–2008) against the number of fatalities. As shown, the vast majority of terrorist attacks in Europe (69%) do not involve fatalities. The TE-SAT does not contain any data relating to number of fatalities.

Given the description of homicide as “the act of killing another human being,” the vast majority of terrorist attacks therefore are unrelated to the issue of homicide. Moreover, as apparent from the definition of terrorism by Schmid and Jongman (1988), in terrorism the direct targets are typically not the main target. Rather, the attacks against the direct targets serve as “message generators.” Hence, even though killing may be involved in a case of terrorism, it is questionable whether we are dealing with homicide in the conventional sense (see Smit & Bijleveld’s contribution on the definition of homicide in this volume). Exploding a bomb on a public square, for example, may kill people, but the individual victims were not the specific targets of the attack.

And even in the case of assassination by terrorist groups, the terrorist group often seeks out targets because of what they signify or represent, not to stop specific policies that only the targeted politician seeks to pursue.

Nonetheless, to explore the relation between terrorism and homicide, this section considers the relationship between terrorism in general and cases of terrorism in which fatalities were involved. Figure 13.7 (see Appendix, pg. 472 or online at extras.springer.com) depicts the number of fatalities resulting from terrorism in Europe and in the rest of the world. Even more so than in the case of the number of incidents, the figure shows that Europe had more fatalities as a result of terrorism than the rest of the world combined. But, since 1975 the worldwide number of fatalities has increased dramatically and has remained high until present, while Europe has taken a marginal proportion of the total number of fatalities.

Figure 13.8 depicts the average number of fatalities per incident and contrasts the European average and the rest-of-the-world average. As shown, even when the number of incidents is controlled for, the number of fatalities per incident remains substantially lower in Europe than in the rest of the world. In a sense, one could conclude therefore that terrorism in Europe is less homicidal than in the rest of the world. Figure 13.8 also shows the development of the average number of victims per attack. In the early 1970s, this number was quite high, then it dropped throughout the seventies to less than 1, and

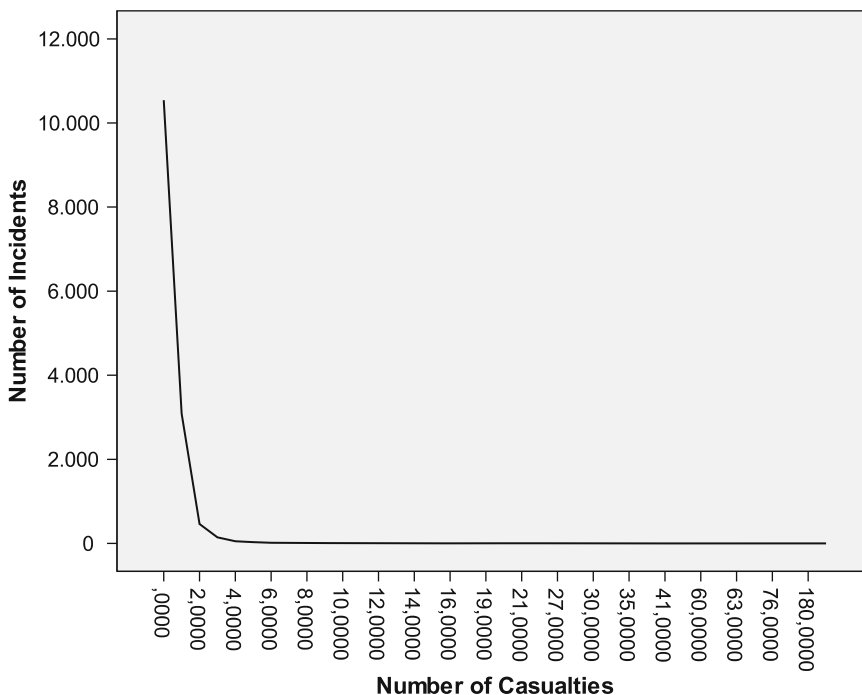


Fig. 13.4 Number of fatalities in relation to the number of terrorist incidents. Based on the Global Terrorism Database

in recent years shows several new peaks. Of interest, while there appears to be an upward trend in the rest of the world regarding the average number of fatalities per incident, there is no upward trend in the number of fatalities in Europe.

Figure 13.9 (see Appendix, pg. 473 or online at extras.springer.com) clarifies the suggestion of a flat trend line, despite several peaks in the number of fatalities in recent years. The figure shows the total number of fatalities, specified for the six countries in Europe that were hit hardest. The peak in 2004 occurred in Spain, where the Madrid train bombings killed close to 200 individuals. A peak in 2005 is primarily found in the United Kingdom, where the 7/7 2005 London transit bombing killed over 50. Hence, the peaks in recent years are explained by single incident, mass-fatality terrorism, primarily caused by international Islamist terrorism.

More generally, the figure reveals that the UK clearly has had the highest number of fatalities as a result of terrorism, and this was particularly

the case in the early seventies. Spain reached its maximum average number of fatalities in the late seventies/early eighties, after which there was a gradual decline. France also had the highest number of fatalities in the late seventies/early eighties, also followed by a gradual decline. Note that in the cases of the UK, Spain, and France, a similar trend emerges. First, there is a strong and immediate escalation of the number of incidents, after which there is a gradual decline in incidents. The similarity in pattern may be explained by the nature of the groups involved. In all three cases, the vast majority of attacks were carried out by separatist movements. In contrast to the UK, Spain, and France, the three other main victims of terrorism in Europe, Italy, Germany, and Greece, experienced scattered episodes of terrorism whereby an episode is characterized as an escalation that is followed by a rapid deescalation. For these countries, left-wing terrorist organizations are predominantly responsible for the attacks.

Figure 13.10 (see Appendix, pg. 474 or online at extras.springer.com) clarifies shows the average number of fatalities specified for the six countries in Europe that were hit hardest. The figure shows that generally, the number of fatalities has been limited (less than two for most of the time span), with exceptions in 1974 in Greece and in recent years (2003–2007). For this exception, a single mass fatality incident is responsible. The GTD reports a 1974 hijacking in Greece of an Israeli plane en route to the US, causing 88 fatalities, but this incident is not reported elsewhere and no sources are provided. And as noted before, the Madrid bombings of 2003 caused over 200 fatalities, while the London transit bombings of 2005 left over 50 dead. Hence, single mass fatality incidents in Europe, carried out to impact political processes not only inside Europe but also outside of Europe, are responsible for peaks in average number of fatalities.

Types of Attacks

Apart from the number of incidents and number of fatalities, it is also of interest to consider how terrorist organizations have carried out their attack. The GTD provides data on the types of attacks and distinguishes between armed assaults, assassinations, bombings, and explosions. In addition, it distinguishes between facility and infrastructural attacks, hijackings, hostage takings, kidnapping, unarmed assaults, and an “unknown category.” As shown in Fig. 13.11 (see Appendix, pg. 475 or online at extras.springer.com) bombings are the most common mode of attack for terrorist organizations inside Europe and have been for most of the time from 1970 until the present. Assassination is the second most common mode of attack, followed by facility attacks and armed assaults that figure about equally in terrorist actions. Figure 13.12 (see Appendix, pg. 476 or online at extras.springer.com) shows the average number of fatalities per attack type. In none of the cases except for hijackings does the average exceed 1. It is primarily the already mentioned

(unconfirmed) GTD report of a 1974 hijacking in Greece that increases the number of fatalities per hijacking.

To illustrate the dynamics of terrorist campaigns, the campaigns of the IRA and ETA are described in terms of their activities and lethality. The IRA and ETA are chosen because of the intensity of their campaigns. Indeed, it was noted before that the IRA and ETA have been the most active terrorist organizations in Europe in the time from 1945 until present. Figure 13.13 (see Appendix, pg. 476 or online at extras.springer.com) shows the pattern of attacks for both organizations specified per year. The IRA had its first peak of activity earlier in the seventies than the ETA, which had its first episode of violence in the late seventies, but both organizations show a similar general pattern of activity. The height of activities of both organizations is from the late seventies to early nineties. For both organizations, terrorist activity comes in cycles that last a few years, after which there is a decline, again followed by a rise in violence. Three cycles of violence (1978–1980, 1982–1984, 1988–1992) coincide, although the level of activity and the rises and falls in activity are more pronounced for the IRA than for the ETA. Figure 13.14 (see Appendix, pg. 477 or online at extras.springer.com) shows that there is also a noticeable similarity in the average number of fatalities per incident. For both the IRA and ETA, the earlier years of the campaign had higher average fatality rates than the later years.

Figure 13.5a shows the pattern of IRA activity specified for attack type. The figure shows that the IRA generally made use of four types of attacks: assassinations, bombings, armed assaults, and facility attacks. First, the IRA primarily made use of assassinations, but later bombing became the preferred attack mode. Hence, while the number of assassinations reached their peak in 1972 and subsequently showed a gradual decline until 1992, the number of attacks using bombings rose from the early seventies until a peak was reached in the late eighties and early nineties, after which there was a general decline in activity. The early nineties also yielded an intensified campaign of facility attacks. Figure 13.5b shows that the ETA

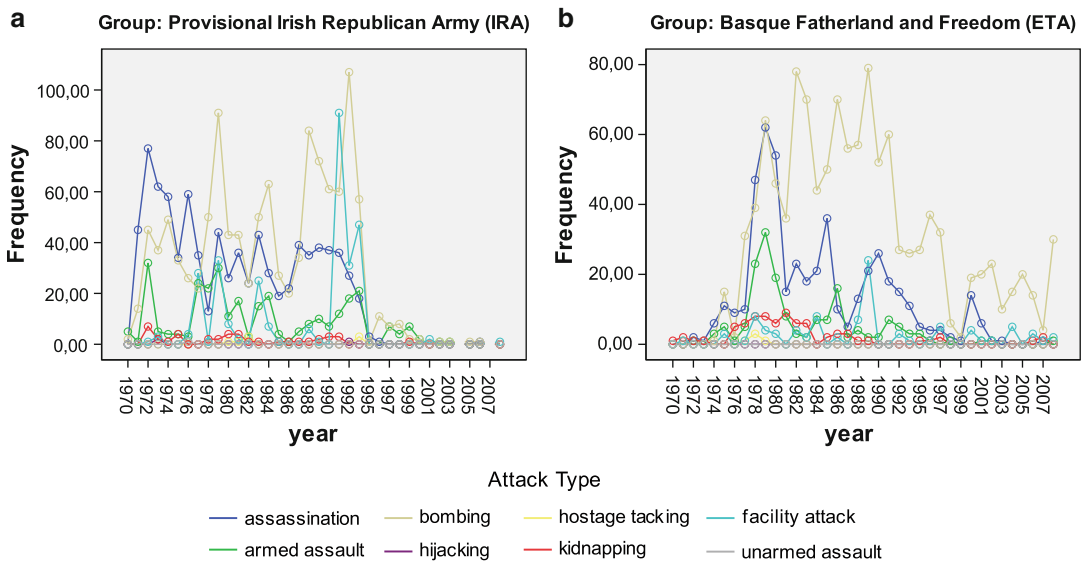


Fig. 13.5 (a) Overview of PIRA campaign. *Source:* Global Terrorism Database. (b) Overview of ETA campaign. *Source:* Global Terrorism Database

campaign has considerable similarities with the IRA campaign, not only in timing of the attacks, but also in general strategy. Like the IRA, the ETA initially made use of assassinations, but subsequently, bombings became the predominant mode of attacks. The ETA also made use of armed assaults and facility attacks, but similar to the IRA, to a much lesser extent than assassinations and bombings. Overall, it appears that in terms of timing, number of fatalities throughout the campaign and the attack modes used, the IRA and ETA (i.e., the two most terrorist organizations in recent European history), show considerable similarities. This is consistent with various sources that have argued that the IRA and ETA have intensively collaborated during their campaigns (e.g., McGirk, 2001).

Overall Assessment of Terrorism in Europe in the Period from 1945 Until Present

What do these data suggest about the general pattern of terrorist activity in Europe from 1945 until the present? Despite the diversity of sources and an extensive time span under consideration, there

appear to be general trends and a situation that has remained fairly stable since 1945. That is, three general manifestations of terrorism have dominated the European terrorism landscape, essentially since the end of the Second World War.

1. *Separatist movement or ethno-nationalist groups* are dominating the databases in terms of the number of attacks. The prime examples of this class of terrorist groups, the IRA, the ETA, and the Corsican separatist movement FLCN, together comprise the top three of the most active terrorist organizations in Europe, with the IRA and the ETA responsible for substantially more terrorist attacks than any other organization in Europe in the period from 1970 until 1997. Nowadays, the TE-SAT report suggests that separatist movements, especially the ETA and related groups, and the FLCN, continue to be the most active groups by far. The separatist movements are persistent, as reflected in the long duration of their campaigns. Although the number of attacks does fluctuate on an annual basis with several 2–3 year episodes of intensified activity, the number of attacks remains high throughout the campaigns. There is not a year during the campaign without violence. Both the ETA and

IRA show a gradual decrease in number of fatalities from the beginning of their campaign until the end. The use of bombings as the prime mode of attack has the potential to cause a considerable number of fatalities, but on average the number of fatalities has not exceeded two per incident. In the last year of the campaigns of the IRA and ETA, there was far less than one fatality per incident.

2. *International terrorist organizations* comprise organizations that use terrorism in Europe in the pursuit of a political agenda outside of Europe. Examples of this class of terrorism include the anticolonial independence movements that carried out attacks against Europeans and in Europe during the decolonization era, Palestinian groups (e.g., the Black September) that carried out terrorist attacks in Europe to get attention for their cause in the Middle East, and the current violent Islamist movement (most notably Al-Qaida). When it comes to attacks in Europe, one sees scattered activity rather than a prolonged, systematic campaign. Characteristically, however, the incidents (e.g., the 1972 hostage taking in Munich by the Black September, and the Madrid and London public transport bombings) that have taken place involved a greater number of fatalities compared to other manifestations of terrorism. The main focus on a political arena outside of Europe explains this. Organizations in this class of terrorist groups only carry out attacks in Europe to the extent that these attacks impact policies of European countries toward the Middle East. In order to create such an impact and affect public opinion, the attacks need to involve considerable damage or fatalities. Hence, international terrorism in Europe tends to produce scattered, isolated mass-fatality events.
3. *Left-wing and anarchist activity* involves attacks carried out by small-scale revolutionary cells seeking utopian transformation of society based on Marxist and other left-wing ideology. Exponents of this manifestation of terrorism include the Red Army Faction in Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy, and the anarchist cells in Greece. The graphs presented in this chapter demonstrate that the activity of these groups is

characterized by scattered periods of violence. Individual incidents do not produce large numbers of fatalities. Nonetheless, as these groups tend to target public figures (such as politicians), this form of terrorism can also significantly affect society. The relatively short-lived nature of the campaigns can be explained by the absence of a clear constituency that left-wing organizations represent (cf. Hoffman, 2006). Although left-wing groups may claim otherwise, it is unclear whether these groups appeal to any real group or sentiment in society. Consequently, the organizations may lack the facilities (e.g., hide-outs) and material and financial resources that a real constituency would obtain and use to instigate a prolonged antigovernment campaign.

Closing Remarks

This chapter sought to describe the major trends of terrorist activity. It made use of the available databases on terrorist activity in Europe. While large-scale databases such as the GTD and the WITS have made inroads in the study of terrorism in recent years, they are certainly not without controversy. The current US ambassador for counterterrorism Daniel Benjamin (2008), for example, has dismissed numbers as having “relative unimportance” in determining the threat coming out of terrorism. A report by the Human Security Report Project (HSRP, 2007) also cautions against the use of databases, because of their reliance on media reports and because of the already mentioned complexities of classifying an incident as terrorism. In line with these cautionary remarks, it should be stressed that the present chapter should not be interpreted as a threat assessment of terrorism in Europe. An individual incident can have dramatic consequences, and it may not fit in any of the categories and groups described in this chapter. Nonetheless, the present provides a concise overview of the trends and patterns of terrorist activity in Europe spanning over more than 60 years’ time. Currently, in realizing this important task of terrorism studies, it is hard to imagine any other means than a database of terrorist incidents that is able to do so more effectively.

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Elin K. Bye

This chapter deals with a review of recent literature and research concerning the association between alcohol consumption and homicide in Europe. Most literature and research on the alcohol-homicide association originates from the United States and Western Europe. In addition to this, several studies have been conducted using Russian data during the past 10–15 years, and some recent studies have been carried out in other eastern European countries. Several empirical studies have shown that the violent consequences of alcohol consumption are related both to total consumption and to the pattern of drinking. The main focus in this chapter will be how changes in alcohol consumption affect homicide rates, and how the association between alcohol consumption and homicide throughout Europe seems to vary with different drinking patterns. The results of previous research will be discussed regarding their implications for alcohol policy.

Alcohol Consumption, Public Health, and Homicide

From a public health perspective, alcohol is considered to be one of the most important risk factors for mortality and morbidity on a global scale. Alcohol increases the risk of a wide range

of social harm, and several international and European reports have highlighted the numerous public health problems caused by alcohol (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006; Babor et al., 2010; Norström, 2002; WHO, 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2006). In 2004, WHO's Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study estimated that 3.8% of all global deaths were attributable to alcohol, and the highest proportion (6.5%) was found in the European region (the highest proportion in Europe was for the countries of the former Soviet Union) (Rehm et al., 2009). It was estimated that 24% of homicides are attributable to alcohol worldwide (Rehm et al., 2004; WHO, 2002). In the European Union (EU), over 2,000 homicide deaths per year are attributable to alcohol use (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006). This might seem like a small proportion of the total harm done by alcohol, but it means that four of every ten homicides that occur in the EU are alcohol-related. Within the EU, the countries referred to as the EU10¹ (the ten member states that joined the EU in 2004: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) generally have much higher homicide rates than in the EU15 (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom). However, when we look outside the EU, Russia stands out with one of the highest homicide rates

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¹Bulgaria and Romania became members in 2007 and are not included here.

in the world. In 2002, age-adjusted homicide in Russia was 31 per 100,000 inhabitants, twice the level recorded in 1990 (Pridemore & Chamlin, 2006). The Russian homicide rate is about 5 times higher than in the United States, usually considered the most violent industrialized nation in the world, and about 25 times higher than the mean for the 25 countries that have been EU members since May 2004 (1.19 per 100,000 inhabitants) (WHO, 2006).

Theoretical Explanations for Alcohol's Effect on Violence

According to Pernanen, Cousineau, Brochu, and Sun (2002) and Graham et al. (1998), the association between alcohol consumption and violence is dependent on: (1) the situation, setting, or social context in which drinking occurs, (2) characteristics of the drinker (e.g., gender, age, drinking history, and some biological factors), (3) national and cultural differences, and (4) the type of drinking, such as amount of alcohol consumed. Further, Pernanen (1981) gives a theoretical discussion of different possible forms of the alcohol/violence link, and four² of these are discussed by Parker and Rebhun (1995) in relation to homicide. The first and most obvious form is that alcohol has a direct, independent relationship to homicide. However, this simplistic assumption is rejected by most analysts (Collins, 1981; Fagan, 1990; Pernanen, 1981). The second form is that alcohol could serve as an intervening or mediating factor between homicide and other causes of homicide. Third, alcohol could moderate the association between other causal factors and homicide. The fourth form is that the relationship is spurious: that alcohol and homicide are not directly causally related and that increases in drinking and homicide rates are caused by a third confounding factor, common to them both.

A number of theories have been put forward to explain the relationship between alcohol and violence, and many empirical studies have addressed

various aspects of violence and alcohol (for reviews see Graham et al., 1998; Lenke, 1990; Parker & Auerhahn, 1998; Parker & Rebhun, 1995; Pernanen, 1991). According to the disinhibition theory, for example, the pharmacological effect of alcohol impairs the self-control that normally inhibits a person from acting violently (see Pernanen, 1991 for a discussion). An alternative theory, the theory of selective disinhibition, has been proposed by Parker (1993a, 1995). This theory holds that people who have been drinking feel less inhibited from using violence to achieve their ends in some (but not all) interactions. In this theory, the effect of alcohol on behavior is strongly influenced by the social and cultural context in which it is consumed. While the disinhibition theory cannot explain why all interactions involving alcohol do not result in violence, the selective disinhibition theory attempts to specify the conditions under which violence and alcohol occur together. MacAndrew and Edgerton's study (1969) "Drunken Comportment – A Social Explanation" is the study that has contributed most in favor of the assumption that an individual's reaction to alcohol is socially learned and affected by expectations in the environment. In their view, the ways in which people behave when they drink have mostly social explanations and are to a lesser extent consequences of the chemical or psychological effect of alcohol. This is supported by experiments that show that people act aggressively even when the alcohol they believed they have consumed was only a placebo (Bushman, 1997; Gustafson, 1995).

Another approach is the structural/strain perspective, which stresses conflict, oppression, inequality, and marginalization as explanatory factors (Agnew, 1992; Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997). This perspective explores how social structure causes strain in individuals who fail in terms of prevailing social expectations. According to this view, lack of social integration could increase the risk for both heavy drinking and alcoholism and then violence. Studies at the individual level have shown that the link between alcohol and violence often operates via intoxication (Rossow, Pape, & Wichstrøm, 1999; Wells, Graham, & West, 2000). That is, alcohol consumption in itself

² See Parker and Rebhun (1995), pp. 41–44 for various examples of the four different forms.

is not problematic, but heavy alcohol consumption is a risk factor for violence. Drinking to intoxication could be seen as an acute type of anomie, a time out situation where ordinary rules for conduct are set aside (MacAndrew & Edgerton, 1969; Skog, 1991a, 1991b). This situation can result in frustration, which in turn leads to violence triggered by the inebriation. When it comes to the understanding of violence in general, and homicide in particular, recent studies have emphasized the routine activity, or the “lifestyle” approach (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978). The daily routines that individuals engage in, and particularly the increase in night-time activity, are important factors in this perspective. The consumption of alcohol places people in contexts where violence is much more likely to occur. Routine activity and lifestyles that involve going out in the evening have been found to be significantly related to the risk of victimization (Miethel, Stafford, & Long, 1987; Sampson & Wooldredge, 1987). The importance of including additional variables when considering the relationship between alcohol and violence, and specifically homicide, is outlined in several works by Parker (1993a, 1993b, 1995).

Alcohol and Homicide: A Complex Relationship

The mechanisms underlying the observed alcohol-violence (and homicide) relationship are complex and causes of violence are probably multiple, conditional, and interactive. Alcohol use, and particularly intoxication, may not only enhance or trigger aggressive behavior and increase the risk of violent victimization, but may reduce the likelihood of any by-standers intervening when a violent incidence occurs (Pernanen, 1991). Such complexity, involving a combination of physiological, psychological, situational, social, and cultural factors, may be difficult to assess in studies at the individual level. Moreover, inferences of causality from the alcohol-violence association at the individual level may well be hampered by methodological problems, such as selection

effects and failure to control for potentially confounding factors.

The complexity of underlying mechanisms and selection effects can be less of a problem in studies at the aggregate level. At the aggregate level, the focus will then be on the extent that changes in overall consumption have an effect on homicide rates in a society, and not on the individual’s risk. To what extent a given increase in overall alcohol consumption influences violence rates in society is of considerable interest for public policy. Thus, it has been argued that the use of aggregate time-series data is the most feasible approach for this kind of question and that it is useful for assessing the plausibility of relationships at the individual level, particularly those prone to be confounded by selection effects (Norström & Skog, 2001). Additional advantages of this approach are that aggregate level data on alcohol and homicide are easy and cheap to obtain. Time series are available for many countries, thus providing a base for comparing the relationship of alcohol and harm across countries and over time. One of the more influential approaches for empirically assessing the aggregate alcohol-harm relationship is the time-series analysis technique developed by Box and Jenkins (1976), often referred to as ARIMA modeling (Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average). In short, this method analyses differenced data, that is annual changes. This means that the association will only be confounded if year-to-year covariation between confounding factors and alcohol consumption exists (see Norström and Skog (2001) for details). Most studies from European countries on the alcohol violence link at the aggregate level have applied a multiplicative model (semilogarithmic). This model is based on the assumption that the absolute effect of changes in alcohol consumption on violent behavior may depend on other factors associated with violence. For example, the effect of an increase in alcohol consumption on violent behavior may be greater in times of high unemployment or poverty, and it might depend on the level of informal social control (Parker & Cartmill, 1998; Rossow, 2001). In this case, the effect of alcohol would be relative, i.e., a nominal

increase in alcohol consumption would imply a relative change in the level of violence. The ARIMA estimates from the models then express the average change in the violence rate given a change in per capita consumption of 1 L (henceforth denoted the alcohol effect).

Alcohol Consumption in Europe

The EU is the heaviest drinking region of the world, and alcohol is the third leading risk factor for death and disability in this region, after tobacco and high blood pressure. It is estimated that each adult drinks 11 L of pure alcohol each year, almost 2 times the average for the rest of the world (WHO, 2004a, 2004b). Compared to the mid-1970s, when the consumption level was 15 L, consumption has decreased substantially, mainly due to a decline in wine consumption in France and southern Europe in recent decades (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006). Half of the alcohol consumed in the EU is beer, and the rest is divided between wine (1/3) and spirits (1/4) (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006). Table 14.1 shows

how consumption has developed since the 1970s, and that the eastern European countries have the highest consumption per capita, along with France. These estimates, however, do not include unrecorded consumption (i.e., alcohol that comes from smuggling, home production, and cross-border shopping). Unregistered consumption is especially high in Eastern Europe, particularly in the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Poland, Bulgaria, and Slovenia, and it is estimated to be 5 L per adult per year (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006). Unregistered consumption is also high in Russia, where alcohol consumption is among the highest in the world. Annual consumption in Russia for 1998 was estimated to be nearly 15 L per capita (Nemtsov, 2000; Trembl, 1997), and consumption is believed to have increased to an even higher level since then. According to information from the Russian Ministry of Health, it is now estimated that almost 50% of alcohol production is on the black market, and that per capita alcohol consumption in Russia is about 18 L per capita, which is twice the critical limit set by the World Health Organization (www.Eurocare.org).

Table 14.1 Annual sales of alcohol in some European countries measured in liters of pure alcohol

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2008
Czech Republic	–	–	–	12.2	12.3
Romania	5.8	7.6	8.5	10	11.5
Russia	–	–	–	8.6	10.8
France	17.2	15.6	12.6	10.9	10.4
Austria	10.3	11	11.9	10.9	10.4
Germany	12	13.3	12.3	10.7	10
Spain	12	13.5	10.8	9.4	9.8
Hungary	9.9	12.9	12.1	11	9.8
Denmark	6.8	9.3	9.8	9.5	9.3
Portugal	9.8	10.8	9.9	11	9.3
Ireland	5.9	7.4	7.3	9.9	9.1
Switzerland	10.8	11.1	11.4	9.6	9.1
Poland	5.1	8.4	6.7	6.7	8.8
Finland	4.3	6.1	7.8	6.4	7.6
Greece	–	–	7.5	6.9	7.6
United Kingdom	5.3	7.3	7.6	7.6	7.5
The Netherlands	5.5	8.6	8.1	8.1	7.4
Italy	16	13.9	9.5	8	6.9
Sweden	5.8	5.6	5.8	5.3	5.7
Norway	3.6	4.6	4.1	4.4	5.1

Source: British Beer & Pub Association, Statistical Handbook 2010

We see from Table 14.1 that there has been a homogenization of the Western European drinking cultures, reflected in a convergence of per capita consumption levels across the region. The traditional beverage preferences have become less distinct across countries. Wine consumption has gone down considerably in the Mediterranean countries, while beer and wine are now more dominant beverages than spirits in the Nordic countries (WHO, 2004a, 2004b). There also has been a movement away from traditional beverage preferences in the East European countries. For example, beer has either replaced or is closing in on spirits as the dominant beverage in Poland and the Baltic countries (WHO).

Drinking Patterns in Europe

Empirical studies have shown that the consequences of alcohol consumption are related to the pattern of drinking as well as to the volume (Midanik, Tam, Greenfield, & Caetano, 1996; Rehm et al., 1996, 2003; Room, Bondy, & Ferris, 1995; Rossow, 1996; Wells, Graham, Speechley, & Koval, 2005). Studies have demonstrated a significantly increased risk of involvement in violence among heavy drinkers, who are also more likely to be victims of violence (Greenfield & Henneberg, 2001; Rossow, Pernanen, & Rehm, 2001).

Although there has been some convergence in the level of consumption of alcohol in Europe, studies show that significant differences in drinking patterns still exist across European nations (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006; Hemström, Leifman, & Ramstedt, 2002; Kuendig et al., 2008; Leifman, 2002; Mäkelä et al., 2006; Simpura & Karlsson, 2001). Several studies have demonstrated a significant variation in the number of occasions of drunkenness, showing that a significantly higher proportion of drinking occasions resulted in intoxication among students in the northern European countries, compared to those in the southern European countries (Babor et al., 2010; Schmid et al., 2003). Less is known about drinking patterns in East European countries. However, studies of drinking patterns in Russia and Belarus have shown that an intoxication-oriented

drinking pattern is widespread (Malyutina et al., 2001; Pomerleau et al., 2005; Simpura, Boris, & Mustonen, 1997), and that nearly one third of Russian men admit to binge drinking at least once a month (Bobak, McKee, Rose, & Marmot, 1999). Historically, the drinking patterns in Bulgaria, Hungary, and the former Czechoslovakia are characterized by almost daily drinking of alcohol and often drinking with meals, whereas Poland is characterized by nondaily drinking with irregular binge-drinking episodes (Iontchev, 1998). We would expect more violence related to overall consumption in countries or cultures where intoxication is relatively more prevalent.

The recently developed hazardous drinking pattern score developed by Rehm et al. (2004)³ provides a useful approach to a classification of the variety of drinking cultures in Eastern Europe. Patterns of drinking are shown in terms of a country-specific hazardous drinking score, based on a combination of empirical data and expert judgment. The hazard score consists of a four-point scale that reflects *how* people drink, with a range from 1 (least harmful) to 4 (most harmful), and combines scores in six dimensions: high quantities of drinking per occasion, frequency of being drunk, festive drinking being common, drinking in public places being common, drinking with meals being uncommon, and low rate of daily drinking. The hazard score measures the degree of hazard associated with each extra liter of alcohol consumed per capita. As we shall see later, a few recent comparative time-series studies have applied this hazard score when studying the relationship between alcohol consumption and different measures of harm in Eastern Europe (Bye, 2008; Landberg, 2008; Landberg, 2010; Ramstedt, 2007).

As shown in Table 14.2, Russia has the highest score, and Poland, Hungary, and the other northern European countries have high scores. In the EU countries, there were scores of 1 and 3

³The score was developed in the Global Burden of Disease study for the year 2000 to estimate the degree of hazard (with regard to causes, violence, and social harm) associated with a given volume of drinking in different countries (Rehm et al., 2004).

Table 14.2 Hazard scores for different countries and regions (Rehm et al., 2004; Anderson & Baumberg, 2006)

	Hazard score		Hazard score
Russia	4	Northern Europe ^a	3
Former Czechoslovakia	2	Central Europe ^a	1.5
Poland	3	Southern Europe ^a	1
Bulgaria	2	Canada	2
Hungary	3	United States	2
EU10	3	EU15	1

^aRegional average

Table 14.3 The percentage of homicide offenders and victims influenced by alcohol in some European countries

	Offender under the influence of alcohol (%)	Victim under the influence (%)
Finland 2002–2006	80	78
Estonia 1990–1995	73	
Sweden 1990–1998	62	51
United Kingdom	60–70	
Scotland 2002	45	
Ireland 1992–1996	39	42
Russia 1998–1999	70	
Norway 1980–1989	75	
Copenhagen 1985–1994	–	36
Oslo (Norway) 1985–1994	–	52

Sources: Bødal and Fridhov (1995); Chervyakov et al. (2002); Dooley (2001); Hougen et al. (1999); Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS); Kivivuori & Lehti & Aaltonen (2007); Lehti (2001); Lehti (2002); Rying (2000); The Scottish Government (2002)

in both EU15 and EU10, but the EU10 countries mainly had a score of 3, while most of the EU15 countries had a score of 1 (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006).

Alcohol-Related Homicides

A number of studies using various designs and methods have demonstrated a positive association between alcohol and violence, and alcohol consumption has been found to be a common factor in violent incidents, and an important risk factor for committing violent acts and for victimization (Lenke, 1990; Pernanen, 2001; Roizen, 1997). Alcohol intake and number of heavy drinking episodes have been shown to increase the risk of being involved in violence (Rossow, 1996; Wells et al., 2000). The involvement of alcohol in violence and homicide offenses is not routinely recorded across Europe. However,

the proportions of violent crime offenders who were under the influence of alcohol at the time of a crime have been estimated in some nations: Sweden 70–80%, Norway 70–75%, Finland 60–70%, the United States 55–60%, and Canada 30–45% (Rossow et al., 2001). Regarding homicides, a recent review by Anderson and Baumberg (2006) suggests that 40–70% of homicides in Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (UK) are alcohol-related in some way. We see from Table 14.3 that the proportion of intoxicated homicide offenders in Northern Europe is of the same magnitude as the proportions in Eastern Europe. Finland and Norway have proportions around 75–80%, whereas Estonia and Russia have approximately 70%. This picture is in accordance with aggregate studies that show that the association between alcohol consumption and homicide rates is stronger in Northern and Eastern Europe compared to in Southern Europe, as we will see in the next

sections. Moreover, we see that the proportions of intoxicated victims are substantial.

Empirical Studies of the Alcohol-Homicide Link

Many empirical studies, employing various perspectives and methods, show the significant role that alcohol has in both homicide and other violent behavior (see Graham et al., 1998 and Room & Rossow, 2001 for a review). The number of studies from European countries that examine the association between alcohol and homicide at the population level has grown substantially over the past 10 years. In addition to the more recent studies from European countries, there are several studies of alcohol consumption and homicide in the USA that should be mentioned. Parker et al. have shown an association between alcohol consumption and homicide rates in several studies based on cross-sectional data, time-series data, and a combination of the two (Parker, 1995; Parker, 1998; Parker & Cartmill, 1998; Parker & Rebhun, 1995).

Several studies from Russia have shown an association between alcohol consumption and homicide. However, most of these studies have used a proxy for consumption that comprises one or several alcohol-related causes of death (alcohol poisoning) and the studies have mainly had cross-sectional designs. In a cross-sectional panel analysis of Russian regions, Andrienko (2001) found alcohol to be associated with increases in regional homicide rates. A strong positive association between heavy drinking and homicide in cross-sectional studies of 78 Russian regions was found by Pridemore (2002). Pridemore (2004) studied death records from the Udmurt republic in Russia and found a significant association between the daily distribution of fatal alcohol poisoning and homicide deaths. A time-series analysis of homicide and alcohol consumption (all deaths due directly to alcohol was used as a proxy for alcohol consumption) in Russia 1956–2002 found a significant alcohol effect on homicide (Pridemore & Chamlin, 2006). Razvodovsky (2007) found a close relationship between homi-

cide and heavy drinking (measured by fatal alcohol poisoning) in Russia in his time series analysis for the period 1956–2005. Based on data from Belarus, Razvodovsky (2003) analyzed beverage-specific effects on homicide rates. He found that a 10% increase in spirit consumption per capita resulted in an 11.4% increase in homicide rates for the period 1970–1999, and that total consumption had no effect (using a combination of time-series analysis, factor analysis, and cluster analysis). Razvodovsky (2010) recently replicated this study with an ARIMA analysis on Russian data for the period 1980–2005 and found a significant total alcohol effect of approximately 5%, while the effect of spirit consumption was 12.5%. Unregistered consumption was not included in the alcohol consumption measures in Razvodovsky's studies of Belarus and Russia.

A reduction in assault rates and homicide rates has been demonstrated in countries with sudden and large changes in alcohol consumption due to antialcohol campaigns and rationing. In Russia during the antialcohol campaign during the Gorbachev era, alcohol consumption (including unregistered consumption) was estimated to have decreased by 25%, from 14.2 L of pure alcohol per capita in 1984 to 10.7 in 1987. During the same period, deaths for men from homicide fell by 40%, from 19.3 per 100,000 to 11.5 (Nemtsov, 1998; Shkolnikov & Nemtsov, 1997). Another example is Sweden, where alcohol consumption fell dramatically from about 6 to 1 L per capita during rationing under the First World War, and at the same time, the assault rate fell from 70 to 40 per 100,000 inhabitants (Lenke, 1990).

Studies from Western Europe

Several time-series analyses of aggregated data have demonstrated that an increase in alcohol consumption is followed by an increase in assault and homicide rates in Western Europe (Bye, 2007; Lenke, 1990; Norström, 1998; Skog & Bjørk, 1988). A study from Sweden for the periods 1870–1913 and 1921–1984 estimated the alcohol effect to be 12 and 11%, respectively (Lenke, 1990). Another study from Sweden for the period

1956–1994 estimated the alcohol effect to be 14% (Norström, 1998).

Alcohol-related aggression is known to vary greatly according to culture (MacAndrew & Edgerton, 1969), and studies have demonstrated that, in addition to being associated with the level of consumption, the alcohol-violence association is conditioned by patterns of drinking and cultural expectations about behavior while drinking (Room & Rossow, 2001). This indicates that an increase in per capita consumption of 1 L would lead to a larger increase in violence in countries with an intoxication-oriented drinking pattern compared to countries with a less “explosive” drinking pattern.

The hitherto most comprehensive comparative research project regarding alcohol consumption and homicide was conducted as a part of the European Comparative Alcohol Study (ECAS) (for details, see Norström, 2002). The ECAS project used ARIMA modeling of aggregate time-series data to estimate how various forms of alcohol-related mortality⁴ were related to changes in population drinking in 15 European countries during the period 1950–1995. In Rossow’s study (2001) of alcohol consumption and homicide, beverage- and gender-specific effects were estimated in addition to the effect of total consumption. A positive and significant association was found between total consumption and homicide in Finland, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Germany (the former Bundesrepublik Deutschland, BRD). The estimates were pooled into three European regions⁵: Southern, Central, and Northern Europe. The strongest alcohol effect was found in Northern Europe (13%), the weakest in Southern Europe (6%), with Central Europe in-between (9%). Rossow (2004) also conducted a study with Canadian data and the results from this study

suggested an alcohol effect of 6% per liter, which was similar to that in Southern Europe.

Regarding gender-specific effects, it was expected that the association between total consumption and violence rates would be stronger for men than for women. This was based on the assumption that since men’s share of total consumption is much larger than women’s, the number of heavy drinking occasions would be larger for men. The homicide rates were generally higher for men than for women in all 14 countries, and the pooled estimates from the Southern, Central, and Northern European countries were statistically significant for men in all three regions and for women only in the Central European countries. The associations between beverage-specific alcohol sales and homicide rates showed that beer sales were positively and significantly associated with homicide rates for all countries and pooled for the Central European countries. There was no significant effect of spirits sales either across any one particular region or across all the 14 countries. Wine sales displayed a moderate effect in the Southern European countries. Thus, the results suggested that a 1-L increase in per capita consumption was associated with a larger increase in violence in countries where drinking often leads to intoxication (Northern Europe) as opposed to in countries with a less explosive drinking pattern (Southern Europe). That is, the adverse effect of an added (or subtracted) liter of pure alcohol per person is moderated by the predominant patterns of drinking in a population.

Studies from Eastern Europe

There is sparse knowledge about the association between alcohol and homicide in the Eastern European countries besides Russia, and thus how the association differs between these countries and between western European countries. There are several reasons why a study of the association between alcohol and violence in Eastern Europe is an issue of great interest. As previously mentioned, alcohol consumption and homicide rates are considerably higher in the East European countries than in the West European countries,

⁴The mortality outcomes included liver cirrhosis, homicide, suicide, nonintentional injuries, ischaemic heart disease, and all-cause mortality.

⁵Northern Europe included Finland, Sweden, and Norway. Central Europe included Austria, BRD, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, the UK, and Ireland. Southern Europe included Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal.

life expectancy is lower, and mortality rates are higher (Cockerham, 1999). While alcohol consumption is declining in most West European countries, it is rising in the Central and East European countries. The high levels of alcohol consumption in combination with detrimental drinking patterns in the East European countries would suggest high levels of alcohol-related homicides and an expected strong association between changes in alcohol consumption and homicide in the East European countries. This is supported by the earlier mentioned studies from Russia. Another issue is the extensive political, social, and economic changes that have taken place in many of the countries during the years prior to and following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many of the East European countries face severe socioeconomic challenges, such as economic recession, falling living standards, and unemployment (Cockerham, 1999). Recent studies in Russia and Eastern Europe suggest that the primary causes of increased alcohol consumption and homicide rates are related to widespread social problems due to social stress and disorganization during the transition to a free market (Gavrilova, Semyonova, Evdokushkina, & Gavrilov, 2000; Kim & Pridemore, 2005; Leon & Shkolnikov, 1998; Pridemore & Spivak, 2003).

However, as for Western Europe, the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe should not be treated as a unified group with respect to alcohol consumption. Despite their common socialist past, the countries in the region have experienced different social, cultural, and economical developments, which are reflected in how alcohol is consumed (Landberg, 2010). Countries in the northern parts of the region (Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine) are traditional vodka-drinking countries with intoxication-oriented drinking patterns, whereas a Mediterranean style of drinking appears to be more common in countries such as Bulgaria, Hungary, and the former Czechoslovakia (Popova, Rehm, Patra, & Zatonski, 2007).

A few recent comparative time-series studies have used the same approach as ECAS for Eastern European countries when studying the relationship between alcohol consumption and different

measures of harm. They have applied the hazard score rate to classify different drinking patterns in the countries included. The aim in Bye's (2008) study was to see whether drinking patterns, in addition to overall alcohol consumption, contributed to differences in homicide rates in six eastern European countries. The countries included⁶ had the following hazard scores: Russia 4, Belarus 3.6, Poland and Hungary 3, and Bulgaria and the Former Czechoslovakia 2. The estimated alcohol effects were compared between two groups: high hazardous drinking pattern (Belarus and Russia) and less hazardous drinking pattern (Bulgaria, the Former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland). The results showed a positive and significant association for eastern European countries as a whole, implying that a 1-L increase in alcohol consumption would yield a 5% increase in homicide rates on average. Moreover, the estimated alcohol effect was approximately 10% for Russia and the Former Czechoslovakia, while it was 5% for Belarus, and the pooled alcohol effect was significantly stronger in the countries with the most hazardous drinking pattern (7.2%) than in the countries with the least hazardous drinking pattern (3.7%). Thus, the findings were in line with previous findings and support the hypothesis that the alcohol effect tends to be stronger in countries with more detrimental drinking patterns. Compared to Western Europe (the ECAS study), the estimated change in absolute homicide rates due to an increase in alcohol consumption of 1 L of pure alcohol for Eastern Europe as a whole was of the same magnitude as for Northern Europe, and twice as high (0.25) as for Western Europe as a whole (0.11). Moreover, the pooled estimate for the European countries with the most hazardous drinking pattern was over 3 times higher than for Northern Europe, while the countries with the least hazardous drinking pattern had an estimate similar to that of Central and Southern Europe.

A recent comparative time-series study of alcohol and homicide in Russia (1959–1998) and

⁶The time periods for the countries were: Belarus 1970–2004, Bulgaria 1964–2003, the Former Czechoslovakia 1953–1989, Hungary 1961–2002, Poland 1959–2002, and Russia 1959–1998.

the United States 1950–2002 estimated the alcohol effect to be about 10% in both Russia and the USA. Due to differences in homicide rates in the two nations, however, a 1-L increase implied a larger absolute number of additional homicides in Russia compared to in the USA (Landberg & Norström, 2010). The authors estimated the alcohol attributable fraction and suggested that 78% of homicides in Russia and 57% in the USA were attributable to alcohol.

There have been some suggestions of a beverage-specific effect on homicide, especially for Russia and Belarus (Pridemore, 2002; Razvodovsky, 2003, 2010). The reasoning for this is that consumption of vodka is argued to result in quicker intoxication, and that this in combination with binge drinking would imply more frequent violence (Razvodovsky, 2003). On the other hand, it is suggested that beverage-specific effects have more to do with the social definition of the beverage (drinking pattern and social norms) than with pharmacology (Graham, Schmidt, & Gillis, 1996). However, the findings from Western Europe are not conclusive and suggest that beverage-specific effects appear to be most prominent within drinking cultures where the beverage in question dominates (Rossow, 2001). This is in line with the results from Bye's (2008) study, where associations between alcohol consumption and homicide were found in two countries where spirits are dominant (Belarus and Russia) and one country where beer is dominant (the Former Czechoslovakia).

Implications for Policy and Further Research

Both natural experiments and time-series analyses show that the health burden from alcohol is related to changes in consumption. There is a growing body of evidence that a substantial number of homicides are alcohol-related and that an increase (or decrease) in total alcohol consumption will result in an increase (or decrease) in homicide rates. In addition to the overall drinking in a country, the level of alcohol-related problems is related to the particular pattern of drinking.

This is supported by several studies of violence in general and homicide in particular. Alcohol consumption is more closely connected to homicide in cultures with prevailing intoxication-oriented drinking patterns. Even though there are several examples of convergence in drinking across Europe, the main drinking pattern in Northern Europe, and in several East European countries, still consists of irregular and intoxication-oriented drinking and the acceptance of drunkenness in public, while Southern European countries are characterized by frequent daily drinking, mainly during meals, and less acceptance of drunkenness in public.

The studies presented here support the hypothesis that the association between changes in alcohol consumption and homicide in East European countries is stronger than in West European countries due to a more detrimental drinking pattern. The results indicate that changes in alcohol consumption have even more dramatic effects in Eastern Europe than in Northern Europe. This was clearly illustrated in Russia during the antialcohol campaign of 1985–1988. The drinking pattern in Russia is dominated by intoxication-oriented, heavy drinking episodes. Rapid intoxication in conjunction with the often unregulated private or semiprivate settings, and thus lack of regulatory mechanisms, is suggested to be one explanation why, for example, a simple argument could lead to a homicide when alcohol is involved (Pridemore, 2002). Social and cultural factors play an important role in alcohol-related violence, and tolerance of violence and heavy drinking is high in Russia (WHO, 2006).

A basic assumption in the WHO report, *Alcohol Control Policies in Public Health Perspective* (Bruun et al., 1975), was that there is a positive relationship between overall alcohol consumption and the prevalence of alcohol-related problems in the population. Based on this, alcohol-related problems should be prevented mainly through policies directed at total population consumption, and particularly policies that regulate the price and limit the availability of alcohol. However, as mentioned earlier, research has shown that the relationship may be modified by factors such as drinking pattern, drinking

context, and social norms for the use of alcohol in a society (Rehm et al., 1996; Lemmens, 2001; Stockwell, Single, Hawks, & Rehm, 1997). The possible tools for prevention have been more nuanced during the past decade, and other policies than those directly targeting per capita consumption have been added (see Babor et al. (2010) for a review). It is now commonly recognized that in addition to the general level of consumption, the pattern of drinking affects the level of a country's alcohol-related problems, and that the effect of a given volume of alcohol on population health can therefore vary from one society to another (Norström & Ramstedt, 2005; Babor et al., 2010). This could make reducing alcohol-related harm more complex, as it is likely more difficult to change drinking culture than it is to manipulate overall consumption level via taxes or limits on availability.

There is strong evidence that policies that regulate the alcohol market (e.g., taxation and physical availability) are effective in reducing the harm done by alcohol (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006; Babor et al., 2010; Lenke, 1990; Pridemore & Snowden, 2009; Shkolnikov & Nemtsov, 1997). In addition, strategies that alter the drinking context have been shown to have an impact (Babor et al., 2010). However, these strategies are primarily applicable to drinking in bars and restaurants; thus they are difficult to implement where consumption mainly takes place in private or semiprivate settings.

Regarding different alcohol policy strategies throughout Europe, a scale has been developed that measures the overall strictness of alcohol policy, ranging from 0 (no restrictions) to 20 (all restrictions) (for details see Anderson & Baumberg, 2006:389). This measure shows that all the lowest values (below 8) are for countries in Southern Europe (Portugal, Greece, Malta) and a cluster are for countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Luxembourg). In the North European countries, all the values were above 15. However, the scores do not decrease consistently from north to south. France has a high value, while Ireland and the UK have relatively low values. There is also variation in the EU10 countries. There are strict

controls in Poland and Lithuania, while the controls in the Czech Republic in particular are much less restrictive.

The findings from the research presented in this chapter suggest that policy measures directed at total alcohol consumption and the occurrence of binge drinking should lead to a reduction in violence in the Eastern European countries, and especially in Russia. However, in Northern Europe, traditional alcohol policy measures such as price controls, taxation, and availability are already very strict, yet the effect of alcohol on violence and homicide is stronger here than in the Southern European countries, where total consumption is much higher. Alternative strategies that alter the drinking context would probably have more potential in these countries. This is supported by several studies from Sweden (Wallin, 2004). Considering the large amount of illegally produced vodka and cheap nonbeverage alcohols in Russia (Leon, Shkolnikov, & Mckee, 2009), one unintended effect of increased taxation on legally sold vodka may be a further shift towards the consumption of surrogate alcohol. Thus, traditional measures should be combined with complementary measures aimed at reducing the supply of illegal sources of alcohol to obtain a successful alcohol policy (Khaltourina & Korotayev, 2008).

However, the population level studies referred to in this chapter have mainly considered one dimension of alcohol consumption, that is total consumption. Thus, they do not directly consider factors such as dominant drinking patterns and percentage of abstainers in a population. Although the hazard score developed by Rehm et al. (2004) provides an approach that can classify different drinking cultures, there is clearly a need for more studies on how drinking patterns vary throughout Europe, especially in Eastern Europe where research on the topic was not possible until the last decade or two. The issue of the high amount of unregistered alcohol in Eastern Europe represents a challenge when one wants to gauge the impact that alcohol consumption has on homicide rates. Moreover, although data of alcohol consumption and homicide now are available for many European countries, there is need of a

more routinely and standardized registration of homicides and the involvement of alcohol in homicides for both offenders as well as victims.

Much remains to be learned about alcohol consumption and different types of harm, but without doubt there is sufficient evidence that alcohol consumption is a significant threat to world health. However, the mechanisms underlying the observed alcohol-homicide relationship are complex and multifaceted, and more studies are warranted to further explore the mechanisms through which consumption may operate to influence levels of homicide. Considering the fact that the EU is the heaviest drinking region of the world and the high homicide rates especially in the East European countries, this is an issue of great importance for public health.

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Roberta Belli and William Parkin

Introduction

This chapter focuses on homicides involving immigrants, both legal and illegal, in Europe. Over the past decade, episodes of violence involving immigrants have increasingly been covered by the media. Violent, antiimmigrant protests aimed at North Africans, for example, swept through the southern Spanish town El Ejido after two Moroccan immigrants were arrested, weeks apart, for separate incidents in which three Spanish nationals were killed (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2000; Cohen, 2000). A decade later in Milan, Italy, an Egyptian immigrant was stabbed to death by immigrants from South America, resulting in a brief, but destructive riot. Immediately after the violent incidents, members of one of Italy's antiimmigration parties called for the expulsion of those responsible for the death and damage (Gumuchian, 2010). The son of a Ghanaian immigrant was murdered by three neo-Nazis in the winter of 2001, targeted for the color of his skin. The homicide took place in Oslo, Norway, whose immigrant population at the time was roughly 25% of the capital's total population (Cowell, 2002).

These events have contributed to feelings of insecurity and distress and the subsequent adoption of restrictive immigration policies.

They have also led to legislation aimed at protecting immigrants. The first section of this chapter focuses on trends in European immigration over the last 20 years. Next, methodological problems with studying the relationship between immigration and violence are discussed. A review of prior research on violence generally, and homicide specifically, involving immigrants in Europe is summarized. The chapter concludes with a discussion of honor killings and hate crimes, two types of homicides that involve immigrants as offenders and/or victims.

Past and Present European Immigration Trends

In the past two decades, migration flows towards Europe have substantially increased and changed the features of the "old continent." In the period between 1989 and 1998, migration flows towards Western European countries were considerably higher than movements to any other region of the world. On average, there were over 1,650,000 persons per year who moved to Western Europe, compared to 1,000,000 persons per year who migrated to the United States, a country that has traditionally welcomed migrants (Solivetti, 2004).

The current immigration phenomenon is not limited to specific countries, but involves Western Europe as a whole. However, immigration patterns have not been homogenous across the

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different European nations. Southern countries like Italy, Spain, Greece, and Portugal have transformed from heavy emigration areas in the past, to important transition and destination hubs for a wide variety of foreigners, including refugees and asylum seekers, guest workers, illegal immigrants, and ethnic-based criminal organizations (Antonopolus, 2005; Savona, di Nicola, & da Col, 1996). As a result of these new trends, the foreign population in these countries grew from less than 0.5% in the 1980s to around 1–3% of the current overall population. Other countries, like France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, actively recruited guest laborers from other parts of Europe since the early twentieth century. In the 1960s and 1970s, the percentage of nonnative citizens in these countries was between 4 and 10%. Today, the same percentage is even higher, ranging from 5 to 18% of all legal residents (Solivetti, 2004).

Recent historical developments help explain the various push and pull factors connected to the current immigration scenario. This present situation is characterized by new geographical patterns that involve a variety of immigrant types with different or no resident statuses (i.e., economic migrants, “illegal” or “undocumented” immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, etc.). In the aftermath of the Second World War, and until the 1970s, various European governments promoted the movement of guest workers from the south to the north (e.g., from Italy, Spain, and Turkey, to France, Germany, Switzerland, and Benelux) to increase their workforce and facilitate economic development (Engbersen, Van der Leun, & De Boom, 2006; Golini, 2000). At the same time, ex-colonial countries, such as the Netherlands and United Kingdom, received a steady flow of foreign laborers from their former colonies in the Caribbean and Indian regions (Goodey, 2000; Layton-Henry, 1994).

The economic crisis that started in the 1970s and the subsequent growing unemployment rate that affected most destination countries produced an inversion of this trend. In the 1990s, these “pull factors” were almost entirely replaced by “push factors” that motivated people living in

underdeveloped countries to look for better opportunities abroad. Disadvantaged economic conditions associated with an increasing birth rate, the growing number of regional armed conflicts, human rights violations and political persecutions, and the recent enlargement of the European Union produced an increase of migration movements from exterior areas such as sub-Saharan Africa and the former communist bloc in Eastern Europe (Barbagli, 1998).

Some countries were more affected than others by these changes. Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, for example, had to face pressures from large migrant movements from Eastern European countries as well as the flow of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing the war in Yugoslavia (Engbersen, Van der Leun, & De Boom, 2007; Vazsonyi & Killias, 2001). Britain, on the other hand, never faced these particular pressures, but began to deal with racial tensions in an increasingly multiethnic and multicultural society (Goodey, 2000). In the south, countries like Italy, Spain, and Greece soon became the most trafficked routes for undocumented migrants and asylum seekers from Asia and Africa (e.g., China, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Morocco, Tunisia, Nigeria, Somalia; Alscher, 2005).

Today, the percentage of non-EU citizens in Italy, Spain, and Portugal is higher than 60% of all immigrants, whereas in Germany, Luxembourg, and Ireland it is less than 20% of the total foreign population (Solivetti, 2004). In this sense, countries that have a low number of immigrants in absolute terms may have to deal with individuals who come from completely different socioeconomic and cultural realities. Social integration of these groups in the local community may, therefore, be more challenging than it would be for individuals who come from similar cultures. As a result of these changes, governments that previously welcomed foreign guest workers started to adopt increasingly restrictive immigration policies both at the national and international levels.

The first step towards creating what some have defined “Fortress Europe” was the Schengen Agreement in 1985. This treaty eliminated internal border controls to facilitate economic exchange, but reinforced external controls (Albrecht, 2002).

The European Union subsequently incorporated the principles of the Schengen Agreement and expanded the competencies of its institutions to immigration and asylum policies. The 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam shifted attention to illegal immigration, the expansion of cross-border criminal activities (e.g., drug smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal arms trade), and the need to improve police and judicial cooperation mechanisms to control these crime problems. The recent enlargement of the European Union created new exterior borders, which are likely to become even more fortified against foreign intrusions (Alscher, 2005). These developments form the basis of the current political debate in Europe, which increasingly associates migration with crime and security issues.

Complexities in the Study of Migration and Homicide in Europe

Before we begin our review immigration and homicide research in Europe, it is important to discuss some obstacles faced by researchers. The first issue refers to the lack of uniform definitions concerning the status of immigrants in Europe. Currently, there are various types of migrants moving predominantly to Western Europe from other EU- or non-EU countries. These include: (a) economic migrants, i.e., individuals who migrate to legally work in another country; (b) temporary migrants, e.g., tourists or students; (c) asylum seekers and refugees; and (d) illegal or undocumented migrants – individuals who crossed the border illegally, arrived on a tourist visa and never left, or were refused refugee status (Engbersen et al., 2007; Goodey, 2000). Although there have been interventions at the international level to regulate migrant flows and control associated criminal activities, migration is still considered a national “problem.” Each EU government autonomously determines and implements immigration policies and legislations that are more or less restrictive based on the number and type of immigrants it is willing to accept in the country and the rights and benefits it wishes to grant.

These differences make it complicated for researchers to analyze migration and crime trends using official records by police, courts, and other government agencies. Statistics vary depending on the specific definitions used at the time the data were collected. Additionally, official data may reflect different definitions of “legal aliens,” as some may include naturalized citizens by referring to nation of birth, whereas others may only refer to noncitizens (Lynch & Simon, 1999). For example, law enforcement agencies in the UK and Germany, which have the most extensive and reliable official research on crimes by immigrants, use two different definitions (Goodey, 2000). In Britain, statistics usually focus on British citizens who belong to an ethnic minority, while the available data on foreign nationals are limited. Conversely, German “minorities” are intended as foreign nationals (in light of the difficulties for a foreigner to acquire German citizenship; see Lynch & Simon, 1999) and are further classified as illegals, resident guest workers, and tourists. Unfortunately, there is no central agency in Europe that systematically collects information on violent incidents committed by immigrants as well as their victimization and criminal justice experiences. Hence, comparative studies are especially challenging.

National agencies sometimes inaccurately label immigrants using abstract classifications or referring to stereotypical views of perpetrators and victims. In Greece, police statistics are aggregated by nationality based on cultural, ethnic, or religious traits (Antonopolus, 2005). In this sense, the “South-American” group includes Brazilians, Colombians, and Dominicans, whereas the “Ex-Yugoslavs” incorporate Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croatians, Muslim Bosnians, and Albanians. Additionally, these statistics often do not clearly distinguish between migrants (i.e., individuals who intend to take up residency in a new country) and nonmigrants (e.g., tourists or criminal offenders temporarily present on the territory).

Another problem relates to the necessary statistical approximations researchers make when studying ethnicity, since inquiring about a person’s race or ethnic background is prohibited by law in

many European countries (Body-Gendrot, 2007). Data may also be biased by public perceptions, media representations, immigration policies, and law enforcement practices. Lynch and Simon (1999) argue that “the more restrictive a nation’s immigration policy the greater the incarceration rates of foreigners and the greater the public’s belief that immigrants increase crime rates in their country” (p. 13).

Finally, the biggest obstacle in the study of violent crime by immigrants is the problem of identifying criminals as aliens. Often in violent criminal incidents, the perpetrator remains unknown and their citizenship status cannot be determined (Lynch & Simon, 1999). The problem of the “dark figure” of crime is especially relevant when immigrants are victims of intra-group violence, as in the case of honor-related violence (Chesler, 2010; Terman, 2010). It is likely that many violent incidents targeting immigrants are unreported because victims might not report the incident due to lack of trust in public authorities, fears related to their unlawful status, and other sociocultural factors (e.g., ignorance of the language, fear of reprisals by community members, etc.; Antonopolus, 2005).

Despite these problems, the majority of studies conducted on immigration and violence in Europe rely on official statistics, although the use of victimization and self-reported delinquency surveys has started to take hold. In the next sections, we present an overview of this research.

Research on Immigration and Violence

In the past 20 years, migration movements toward EU countries have increased and diversified. The types of immigrants have changed: before many were guest workers attracted by employment opportunities, whereas now there is a growing proportion of illegal or undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. There has also been an increase in interpersonal violence across Europe (Aebi, 2004; Eisner, 2008). Violent incidents involving immigrants frequently receive

extensive coverage in the media, suggesting to its audience that there may be a relationship between current immigration trends and the perpetuation of violence in Europe.

Importantly, it is impractical, if not impossible, to draw a comprehensive picture of the relationship between migration and violence at the European level. Migration factors and trends vary by country and sometimes even areas within national borders. Additionally, European governments have dealt with the migration “problem” differently, adopting a variety of policies that depend on past and current political, economic, and social structures. These differences are reflected in the status immigrants hold in their host country (e.g., noncitizen but EU national vs. non-EU national, legitimate economic migrant vs. undocumented migrant, asylum seeker or refugee), the rights and benefits granted by host governments, and the opportunities or difficulties migrants face when attempting to integrate within the host society (Goodey, 2000). Keeping these issues in mind, we provide a review of the available research and proposed theories focusing on main themes by referring to country-level definitions, policies, and statistics.

The extant literature concerning immigrants’ violent behaviors around Europe presents a fragmented scenario and a variety of conflicting perspectives. Official statistics show an overall increase in arrest and incarceration rates of non-citizens across European countries since 1990 for offenses that vary from administrative violations and misdemeanors (e.g., violations related to their illegal status, traffic offenses, etc.) to more serious violent crimes (e.g., rape, assault, kidnapping, and murder; see Eisner, 1997; Killias, 2009; Solivetti, 2004). Various explanations have been offered to explain these trends. Unfortunately, interpretations and comparisons of official statistics are often problematic, as there is no consistency in the way governments define immigrants and record their criminal behaviors as well as victimization experiences. To provide a comprehensive summary of existing studies, *we will not adopt any specific definitions* and instead refer each time to the terms chosen by researchers.

Aebi (2004) examined crime trends in Western Europe, using the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics, which provide a comprehensive database created by compiling official police data from 16 countries and compared these data with the upward trend in foreigners' imprisonment rates. He found an overall increase in violent crime rates across Western Europe in the period between 1990 and 2000, focusing specifically on four offenses (i.e., rape, assault, robbery, and intentional homicide). With intentional homicide, however, the rates were unequally distributed (i.e., higher in Finland, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Spain, the UK, Scotland, Denmark and Germany; lower in Austria, France, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and Northern Ireland). According to Aebi (2004), these violent trends may be partially related to the expansion of transnational organized crime activities, such as trafficking of drugs, goods, commodities, and human beings, perpetrated by nationals of various countries within and outside the European Union.

Bianchi, Buonanno, and Pinotti (2008) examined the relationship between immigration and violent crimes in Italy through an econometric analysis of police data. The researchers found no significant correlation between immigration and the majority of offenses examined (e.g., rape, assault, and theft), with the exception of murders and robberies, which appeared to be significantly affected by immigration. However, these findings should be taken with caution, as the impossibility to account for measurement errors related to the illegal immigrant population, on which data are almost nonexistent, may produce biased results. Other prominent scholars argue that, to truly understand the nature and scope of these crime trends, it is crucial to distinguish between "legal" (i.e., first-, second- and in some cases third-generation immigrants who are legal residents) and "illegal" or "undocumented" immigrants (i.e., individuals who entered the country illegally, overstayed their visa, or undertook illegal labor; see Angel-Ajani, 2003; Goodey, 2000; Melossi, 2003).

Studies focusing on illegal immigrants are more challenging, as their status forces them to remain hidden until they are apprehended.

However, there seems to be consensus among academics that illegal immigrants tend to be involved in less serious crimes compared to legal immigrants (Engbersen et al., 2007). Goodey's (2000) study on non-EU citizens' criminal behaviors in Germany found that undocumented migrants were mostly involved in petty offenses for "survival," such as shoplifting and immigration violations, whereas the foreign resident population engaged in more serious crimes, including violent behaviors primarily related to their involvement in street gangs or organized crime groups. Similarly, Van der Leun's study (2003) shows that only 5% of undocumented immigrants arrested by Dutch police in the city of Rotterdam between 1989 and 1994 were wanted for serious offenses, including robbery and murder, whereas the majority were apprehended for illegal residence and illegal labor or drug-related offenses.

These trends can be understood by considering the different situational contexts in which legal and illegal immigrants operate. The marginal and "underground" status of illegal immigrants may be more conducive to survival-type crimes and, on the other hand, promote law-abiding behaviors. Lack of integration or assimilation of the local society's values, however, may explain why legal residents of foreign descent, especially second- and third-generation immigrants, instead display more deviant tendencies (Junger-Tas, 2002). According to Lynch and Simon (1999), government policies concerning the treatment of nonnatives have an impact on crime rates among immigrants: "guest-worker policies that lure young males (a high offending group) but make it difficult for them to marry or to attain permanent residence could foster higher crime and incarceration rates for immigrants relative to the native-born" (p. 14). Hence, restrictive immigration policies that foster social exclusion and marginalization, instead of promoting integration programs, may explain violent reactions by immigrants.

According to some experts, not all immigrant groups are equally involved in violent crimes (Tonry, 1997). In Germany, the percentage of non-natives accused and arrested for violent offenses is especially high and involves for the most part

immigrants of Turkish or former-Yugoslav origin (Albrecht, 1997). On the other hand, in the Netherlands, Turkish and Chinese immigrants have lower arrest rates compared to Northern Africans (Junger-Tas, 1997). In England, violent crime rates involving immigrants of Indian and Pakistani descent are substantially lower than those involving individuals from the Caribbean region, and they are similar to those of the overall population (Smith, 1997). Various cultural and social factors are cited to explain differences across immigrant communities. Asians, for example, appear to be less prone to become involved in crime because of high levels of community and parental controls. Moroccans and Antilleans, on the other hand, experience more alienation and stigmatization, which are related to low education, high unemployment, and family problems (Gijssberts, Hagendoorn, & Scheepers, 2004).

With respect to the Dutch context, which is likely to be comparable to other countries that have experienced similar immigration trends (e.g., Belgium and Germany), Engbersen et al. (2007) make an important distinction between “old” and “new” immigrant groups. “Old” immigrant groups include nationals from former colonies and guest workers who were recruited in the 1960s (i.e., Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, and Antilleans). Among the “old” groups, second-generation immigrants, contrary to conventional wisdom, are suspected of crimes less often than their progeny. This trend, however, is inverted for second-generation Turks and Moroccans, who have higher crime rates than first-generation. “New” immigrant groups hold a “weak” residence status (e.g., asylum seekers and irregular immigrants from the former Yugoslavia, former Soviet Union, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sierra Leone, etc.). The “new” immigrants are those who appear to be most problematic and present the highest violent crime rates, which in some cases are 5 times as high as those involving the native Dutch population.

Van San, Snel, and Boers (2002) examined a group of young Yugoslav asylum seekers through an analysis of police data and interviews. They found that most of the respondents were suspected of being involved in serious violent offenses such

as armed robbery, bodily harm, kidnapping, and murder, and around 25% had been convicted of attempted, or actual, homicide or manslaughter. This trend is explained by a combination of factors. In addition to the lack of proper integration, such as the difficulties to find employment as an asylum seeker, the frustration experienced by those who were rejected through the asylum procedure, the memories of the war experience, and the contact with Yugoslav community members already involved in crime increased violent behavior.

Some hypothesize the existence of a “criminal specialization” process which runs from legal to illegal immigrants belonging to the same ethnic or cultural group. For example, illegal Turkish immigrants, similarly to legal Turkish residents in the Netherlands, are more often arrested for violent crimes than members of other immigrant groups. In this sense, criminal behaviors by “old” immigrants influence criminal patterns of the “new” immigrants (Leerkes, 2005). Engbersen et al. (2007) propose a new theoretical framework to explain these immigration trends, combining Cloward and Ohlin’s differential opportunity structures (1960) with Merton’s structural constraints (1996). Accordingly, “immigrants who have little or no access to formal and informal institutions and who cannot fall back on a community sufficiently well established to provide jobs, housing, and relevant documentation (passports, health insurance, and social security numbers) face stronger pressures to turn to illicit means” (2007, p. 36).

Relationships have been shown between the increase in immigrant populations, both in the general public and in prisons, and violent crime. However, the evidence of these relationships suffers from the inability to control for additional explanatory variables. In addition, lack of reliable data across multiple countries, or even within one country across multiple time periods, makes it almost impossible to conduct sound, statistical analysis and determine actual trends. More detailed data might allow researchers to parse out the impact of immigration on violent crime rates across many unique political and social landscapes. Meanwhile, it is important for researchers

to develop theoretical frameworks that future datasets can test to better understand the role of immigrants in the European violent crime scenario, not only as offenders, but also as victims.

Research on Immigration and Homicide

Even when compared to violent crime in general, research concerning the relationship between immigration and homicide in Europe, both qualitative and quantitative, is scarce. That does not mean, however, that information cannot be obtained on the types of homicides involving immigrants, nor suggest ways in which future research should be conducted. Experts agree that, despite public concerns about the growing “foreign threat,” for the most part homicides committed by immigrants, like crime in general, are typically against members of their own communities or other foreign nationals (Antonopolus, 2005; Goodey, 2000). In this section, we review the extant literature on immigrants and homicide in Europe broadly, before identifying types of homicide of which immigrants are at higher risk of victimization and/or offending.

Hiatt (2007) maintains that there is a relationship between immigration and homicide rates in Europe, but not in the way typically discussed in the media. In fact, using official documents, such as medical examiner reports, researchers may be able to show that immigrants are disproportionately victims of homicide rather than perpetrators. However, Hiatt recognizes that even with medical examiner reports, identifying victims as immigrants is often problematic, especially when ethnic identity and national origin are not confirmed by family or friends – either because there are none or because they refuse to cooperate with law enforcement and government officials as they themselves may be living in the country illegally.

Focusing specifically on homicide incidents in Germany, Albrecht (1997) argues that when higher rates of offending are observed by immigrants, one should also expect higher rates of victimization based on the idea that crime victims

and offender come from the same population; in this case, ethnic minorities. Sesser (1981; as cited in Albrecht, 1997) supports this claim as research in the 1970s, although dated, showed that the majority of homicide victims in Germany who were foreign nationals were killed by foreign nationals. Conversely, only a small percentage of German national offenders chose foreign nationals as their victims. To further the argument that crime is intraethnic and victimization and offending rates within specific ethnic populations should be correlated, cohort data matched with police records demonstrated that in Germany at least, nearly 60% of homicides involve a victim and an offender from the same ethnic population.

Belfrage and Rying’s (2004) study on spousal homicide in Sweden found 40% of the offenders and 30% of victims were from a country other than Sweden, which was disproportionate to the overall numbers of these groups living in the country. The victims and offenders primarily came from other Nordic countries, the Middle East, and what is now present day Serbia and Montenegro (Belfrage & Rying, 2004). Turning to Italy, Barbagli and Colombo (2009) found that immigrants are 3 times more likely to be victims of homicides when compared to Italian nationals. In addition, males that are born outside of Italy make up 20% of male homicides in Italy, while females born outside of the country represent 25% of female homicide victims. Unfortunately, the body of empirical research examining the connection between homicide and immigration is minimal. To further our understanding of these complex and understudied issues, in the following sections we provide a discussion of two types of homicides affecting various immigrant communities and individuals in Europe, namely honor killings and hate crimes.

Honor Killings

After her arranged marriage led to a physically and sexually abusive relationship, Banaz Mahmod, an immigrant to the United Kingdom, separated from her husband and moved back in with her parents. Unfortunately, she soon fell in love with

an Iranian Kurd who was not a strict adherent to Islam, which was unacceptable to her father (Barton, 2007). After being seen in public kissing her boyfriend, Banaz's father and uncle decided that she should be killed to save their family's honor. On New Year's Eve, 2005, Banaz was forced to drink alcohol by her father who then attempted to kill her, but she escaped (Oliver, 2007). In the hospital, the police dismissed her story as that of a drunk, overdramatic young woman seeking the attention of a boyfriend (McVeigh, 2007c). In January 2006, 20-year old Banaz disappeared. The police arrested Banaz's father, uncle, and a family friend, while issuing warrants for three others who believed to have fled the country (McVeigh, 2007a). Three months later, her body was found stuffed inside a buried suitcase, the shoelace used to strangle her still wrapped tightly around her throat (Sears, 2007). Even before the body was found, creating a list of suspects was not difficult for the police. Days before her disappearance, Banaz once again met with law enforcement and gave them a list of individuals she thought were trying to kill her (McVeigh, 2007b). Banaz, a Muslim Iraqi Kurd, was the victim of an honor killing, murdered because she shamed her parents and extended family (Rees, 2007).

Based on ethnic and cultural differences, immigrants to Europe, like Banaz Mahmod, are at much higher risk for specific types of homicide, one of which is honor killings. Honor killings represent homicide events where individuals from specific cultures and countries outside of Europe (with the exception of Turkey) are at higher offending and victimization risk when compared to the indigenous populations of these countries. This is not to say that European nationals are not at risk of victimization and offending for gender- and "honor-" based crimes; it is only to say that immigrants (legal and illegal, first- and second-generation) from specific cultures, religions, and areas of the world are more likely to be viewed through a specific type of lens that will label their actions as honor-based crimes.

In Europe, public debate concerning violence within immigrant communities intensified over

the past few years in response to a series of honor killing incidents (Korteweg & Yurkadal, 2009). There is no commonly accepted definition of this violent crime type, as the term "honor" carries special qualities that vary across languages, history, and cultures (Terman, 2010). Human Rights Watch (2001) defines "honor crimes" as "acts of violence, usually amounting to murder, committed by male family members against female family members who are perceived to have brought dishonor upon the family." To restore the family's honor and clean the "stain" left by the female member's behavior, which may or may not involve actual sexual misconduct, the only solution appears to be eliminating her. The responsibility and burden to protect the family honor lies on the father or husband (the "patriarch"), but the decision is taken collectively by the victim's family and, sometimes, the entire community (Mojab, 2004).

Until recently, these crimes were not frequently publicized, and governments have been reluctant to intervene by sanctioning practices which are considered legitimate "family business" or treated leniently by courts in certain countries (e.g., in Jordan, Syria, Pakistan, and Turkey; see Coomaraswamy, 2005). In addition, no uniform effort across Europe has been organized to collect statistical data on the frequency and nature of these acts, although a few governments and research organizations have undertaken efforts for specific regions. An often cited report by UNFPA estimates that globally approximately 5,000 females are killed each year in honor killings, and even this number may be low (2008). In the United Kingdom, government officials estimate that nearly a dozen women are killed every year in incidents that fit the definition of an honor killing, although, once again, the number could be higher. The offenders linked to these deaths are primarily from South Asia, for the most part Muslims who are first- or second-generation immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh (Brandon & Hafez, 2008). In a report to the European Parliament, the Directorate General for Internal Policies (2008) reported anecdotal evidence of honor-related murders in Austria,

Sweden, and Serbia. Analyzing homicide data, researchers identified 70 victims of honor killing and attempted honor killings in Germany between 1996 and 2004. A United States State Department report authored by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (2010) cites the Turkish National Police who reported 43 honor killings in the first 8 months of 2009.

Honor killings are not particular to any region of the world, as examples can be found in Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and the Americas, or to a specific religion or faith (Wikan, 2008). However, in Europe they have come to be associated with the Muslim Diaspora. One of the most discussed cases concerns the 2002 murder of Fadimi Sahindal, a young Swedish woman of Kurdish origin who was shot to death by her father because she chose to be with a Swedish man against her family's will. In addition, she talked about her experience as a victim of domestic abuse in the media, promoting awareness campaigns in Sweden and abroad (Kurkiala, 2003).

In the past decade, incidents similar to those that involved Banaz and Fadimi, involving immigrants from North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, have been registered in various European countries, including Germany, Italy, the UK, the Netherlands, and Turkey. A quantitative study comparing honor-killing trends in the Middle East, the United States, and Europe analyzed 172 incidents and 230 victims between 1989 and 2009 (Chesler, 2010). In Europe alone, there were 67 victims in the period under consideration. For the most part, these victims were women, with the exception of a few men that were killed by the female victim's family because they were deemed unacceptable partners or husbands. Most of the perpetrators and victims were first- and second-generation Muslim immigrants (96%), while Sikhs were a small percentage. Killings involving underage females were perpetrated by the victim's father in 100% of cases.

Chesler's study identifies two types of honor killings targeting two distinct victim populations. The first type, which is significantly more common in Europe and the United States than in the Middle East, concerns female children and young

women in their early twenties killed by their families of origin for being "too Western," which is intended as being too independent, refusing to wear traditional Islamic clothing (e.g., the hijab), wanting to pursue an advanced education or professional career, having non-Muslim or non-Sikh friends or boyfriends, refusing to marry a cousin, wanting to choose their partner autonomously, and so forth. "Westernization" is indicated as the alleged driving motive in 71% of incidents occurred in Europe. The second type involves older women, usually mothers whose average age is 36, murdered by their husband or father, often assisted by other male and female members of the victim's or husband's family of origin. Honor (and dishonor) is perceived as a collective value that affects the victim's own family and community even after marriage (Sen, 2005; Wikan, 2008). According to Chesler (2010), the presence of multiple perpetrators, including the victim's father or husband as the primary executor and family members (e.g., the victim's mother, siblings, cousins, aunts, and uncles) as accomplices, clearly distinguish this homicide type from Western intimate partner homicide (as discussed by Prichard, 2012). Although the motives sometimes overlap, as in both cases the victim is subjugated to male violence and is expected not to leave her husband or children, there are significant differences. Specifically, "the need to keep a woman isolated, subordinate, fearful, and dependent through the use of violence does not reflect a Western cultural or religious value; rather, it reflects the individual, psychological pathology of the Western batterer-murderer. On the other hand, an honor killing reflects the culture's values aimed at regulating female behavior – values that the family, including the victim's family, is expected to enforce and uphold" (Chesler, 2010).

In conclusion, honor killings are unique in that they appear to solely affect certain immigrant communities within Europe, representing both the offenders and victims of these violent encounters. In the next section, we discuss a different type of violence, i.e., "hate crime," which is also unique, as immigrants represent a large proportion of the victims.

Hate Crimes

While sitting on a bench in the city of Antwerp, Belgium, Songul Koc was shot in the chest by a teenager with a shotgun. Moments later, Oulematou Niangadou, a pregnant nanny was shot, along with Luna Drowart, a child in her care (New York Times, 2007). Koc, who was of Turkish descent, survived. Niangadou, an immigrant from Mali who was black, and the child she was baby-sitting, did not. All three were shot by Hans Van Themsche, a Belgian teenager with a shaved head, who was later shot and injured by police as he trolled the city for additional victims (Graff, 2006). Van Themsche informed police that he was purposefully hunting down foreigners. In addition, he had familial links to far-right political groups in Belgium, as his father had once cofounded an antiimmigration political party and was a ranking member of an off shoot of the original party at the time of the shooting (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2006). A jury convicted Van Tehmsche of racially motivated murder, the first Belgian to be convicted of such a charge, which was instated to protect minority groups from hate-related crimes, and sentenced to life in prison (New York Times, 2007).

In Europe, hate crimes are also difficult to track, as the colloquial and legal definitions change between countries, as do the intended victims and the motivations behind the violent acts. Although immigrants to European countries are not the only targets for hate-motivated acts, often their religious, cultural, and physical differences set them apart from Europe's often homogeneous populations. Even though hate crimes only target small proportions of a country's total population, their impact is much larger. According to Bleich (2007), "racist violence is viewed as a threat to social cohesion, because it affects not only an individual victim but also members of the victim's group and society as a whole. It is viewed as a force that can divide a nation" (p. 149).

In Europe, however, each country has a different set of laws aimed at protecting individuals, such as immigrants, who might be targeted for violence. Gerstenfield (2010) states that "the simplest

definition of *hate crime* is this: a criminal act which is motivated, at least in part, by the group affiliation of the victim" (p. 11). Typically, hate crime laws specify which types of groups are protected, whether it is based on criteria such as one's ethnicity, religion, or race. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which is part of the Council of Europe, tracks, among other things, racist violence and related criminal codes. Out of the 22 countries for which the ECRI publishes reports, more than 70% of the countries have language in their criminal code that allows police, prosecutors, and judges to consider the biased motivation of certain offenses when an offender is charged and/or sentenced (<http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/>).

For example, in Albania, "the racist nature of an offence or its hate-based motivation shall constitute a specific aggravating factor" and the law "covers motivations based on gender, race, religion, nationality, language and political, religious or social convictions" (European Commission, 2010, pp. 13–14). Similarly, the Greek Criminal Code specifically states that "committing an offence on the basis of, *inter alia*, ethnic, racial, or religious hatred it considered an aggravating circumstance" (European Commission, 2009b, p. 13). Tracking historical immigration patterns of ethnic minorities into Western Europe, Bleich (2007) reports that "the British, German, and French states have recently stepped up their actions against racist violence, defined as violence against persons or property motivated by racism, ethnocentrism, religious intolerance, or xenophobia" (p. 150).

In addition to tracking legal efforts aimed at deterring hate crimes, ECRI also identifies vulnerable populations in each country report. These lists highlight the unique histories of each country, and the minority populations that might be threatened. In Bulgaria, for instance, the ECRI identifies the Roma, Turks, Macedonians, and Pomaks as vulnerable populations (European Commission, 2009a), while in Spain they believe that the Roma, North African Muslims, Jewish populations, and noncitizens need to be protected from possible hate crimes. Interestingly, for over 80% of the countries on which they report, the ECRI identified migrants, refugees, and asylum

seekers as populations vulnerable for being targeted based on their social status. This percentage, although high, is, in all likelihood, an undercount of the total population of immigrants, as other vulnerable populations that are listed include immigrants (e.g., Muslims, Turks, and Africans). Although it is apparent that immigrants share an unequal risk of being targeted by host populations for hate-based crimes, statistics on violent incidents, whether fatal or not, are not uniformly collected or distributed by European governments and therefore difficult to ascertain. Subsequently, trends in racist crime might be more meaningful if comparisons are made within countries across time, instead of between countries as the definition of racist crime and type of data will vary (Goodey, 2007, 2009).

As already demonstrated, the information on hate crimes by county varies greatly, with specifics related to victimization of immigrants even more difficult to determine. One example of a country where several sources help in outlining the scope of hate crimes committed against immigrants is Germany. Watts (2001) notes that, since unification, about 60% of right-wing hate crimes in Germany have been directed against foreigners, who make up a significant amount of the German population. Although the numbers are not disaggregated, an investigative report by the German newspapers *Tagesspiegel* and *Zeit* showed that between 1990 and 2009, there were 137 homicide victims of right-wing extremism who were most often the homeless, left-wing youths, and foreigners. It is also worth noting that the number reported by newspapers was almost 3 times greater than the 47 victims reported in official statistics (Spiegel, 2010). In addition, data have shown that between 2000 and 2005, at least, the number of racist crimes increased in Germany (Goodey, 2007).

The raw numbers collected on hate crimes are not enough, but as with all other crimes that include immigrants, reliable data must first be collected on these incidents before more in-depth analyses can be performed. Unlike honor killings, however, homicides motivated by hate affect more than immigrant populations and interest on both national and international levels demonstrates

this. On the international level, the European Union enacted the Charter of Fundamental Rights (2010), while on the national level, many countries have taken action to protect groups that have historically been discriminated against because of race, ethnicity, or nationality. Migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees are populations that have been singled out in need of protection from hate-based violent crimes. Uniform data collection efforts, however, such as those described by Goodey (2007), are needed to both understand and address the root causes of these crimes.

Conclusion

Europe encompasses many populations segmented by political borders, religious beliefs, ethnic identities, and collective histories. Immigrants and host nations face unique challenges in navigating the difficulty of merging these often dissimilar world views. For EU nationals, the threat of immigrant violence can seem omnipresent as ignorance of different cultures and xenophobia is fueled by sensationalist media accounts of atypical acts of fatal violence perpetrated by non-EU citizens. For foreign nationals, the perceived threat from other immigrants and even citizens of the host country is just as real. The extent of homicides that involve immigrants, whether legal, illegal, first-generation or second-generation, is not known, however, and an empirical reality has not emerged to pacify populous fear or guide policy makers concerned with protecting fundamental rights.

This chapter has briefly discussed immigration in Europe and the impact it might have on violent crime, generally, and homicide, specifically. Unfortunately, the extant body of literature suffers from researchers' inability to access reliable data. Measurement issues range from how to define who is an immigrant to reconciling the fact that Europe, as a whole, includes more than two dozen countries, each with its own set of laws and policies that dictate what types of information can be collected and disseminated about what types of crimes. In addition, each country has a unique history, which sets the context for

the environment into which immigrants are entering, whether it be hostile or amicable. One thing is certain, however, that as individuals continue to migrate to Europe, both legally and illegally, accurate data related to the relationship between these populations and violence is needed. The more information European countries have regarding the impact of immigrants on crime rates, and the risk presented not only to themselves but to those relocating within their borders, the better prepared policymakers and law enforcement agencies can be to protect both their native and immigrant populations from the threat of homicide.

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Introduction

Do guns cause more violence, and especially more homicide? This question has been a subject of debate over decades, particularly in the United States. It is not the purpose of this chapter to review the evidence assembled in the context of this debate. The problem is that, despite differences in homicide and gun ownership rates across American regions, guns are relatively widespread throughout America and homicide rates are fairly high. Thus, the critical test of the relationship between gun availability and homicide comes from regions of the World where both variables vary considerably more than within America, that is from samples of countries that include nations with a near-zero gun ownership rate and with homicide rates that are just a fraction of American numbers – even after the crime drop. Given the large number of studies that have addressed this issue within the United States, this essay will focus on firearms and violence in the European context to which this volume is dedicated.

Some correlations between gun ownership and homicide will be presented in the first part of this chapter. The second part will be devoted to national databases of homicide. Particularly in Europe where nations all have limited numbers of homicide cases in any given year, the possibilities

for more differentiated analyses are limited due to insufficient frequencies unless data on homicides are collected and integrated into databases that cover many details on events, offenders and victims over several years. A few European countries have established such homicide databases, namely England, the Netherlands, Finland and Switzerland. We shall look at the role of guns in homicide and suicide more in detail in these four countries. For the study of the impact of guns on homicide, the database in Switzerland is particularly helpful because guns are far more frequently owned by private households and they are far more often used in fatal events in that country. The case of Switzerland is also interesting because it allows assessing possible effects of changing gun ownership rates, especially given the downsizing of the Swiss army and the reduction of army weapons in the general population between 1995 and 2005.

International Correlations of Gun Ownership and Fatal Events

The International Crime Victimization Surveys (ICVS), conducted for the first time in 1989 in 14 countries (van Dijk, Mayhew, & Killias, 1990), offered for the very first time the opportunity to collect, through appropriate survey questions, data on the availability of guns in private households. Unlike crude and notoriously unreliable estimates on the number of guns in circulation in

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several countries, these estimates measure what actually is the critical variable, namely how many households (and individuals) in any given country have access to at least one gun – one indeed is sufficient to kill. These data turned out to be correlated with homicide and suicide in seven countries for which, at that time, data on homicide and suicide committed with a gun were also available (Killias, 1991). Over the following years, data on gun ownership continued being collected through the waves of the ICVS of 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2005. Over these waves, the number of participating countries increased. Today, data on gun ownership are available for more than 30 countries (van Dijk, van Kesteren, & Smit, 2007). Unfortunately, no further ICVS has been realized since 2005, and attempts at establishing a permanent European Union crime victimization survey have not been successful so far. It is also unfortunate that the WHO database on homicide and suicide by cause of death has not been regularly updated. Therefore, the last efforts at looking at international correlations of homicide with gun ownership date back to data for the 1990s.

Killias, van Kesteren and Rindlisbacher (2001) have correlated data from the 1989 to 1996 ICVS waves on gun ownership in private households with firearm-related and other fatal events (homicide and suicide) according to WHO statistics for the years 1989–1997, as well as with rates of robbery and assault committed with guns (according to ICVS data for the same years). The results for 19–21 countries showed substantial correlations between gun ownership among private households and suicide and homicide of women committed with firearms ($r=0.85$ and $r=0.61$, respectively). Interestingly, the correlations with gun homicide among men were far weaker (0.21), though relatively high and significant were correlations (r) with gun-related assault and robbery (0.72 and 0.48). Further, differentiating handguns from long rifles and other types of guns did not change the correlations substantially. Unfortunately, these data cannot be updated without substantial investment since WHO rates for both sexes are not published for more recent years.

Hemenway, Shinoda-Tagawa and Miller (2002) analyzed correlations with homicide in 25 countries using the percentage of suicide victims killed through gun-shots as an indicator for gun ownership. The data they used were for the years 1994–1999. Using unweighted data they have very strong correlation ($r=0.87$) between their measure of gun ownership and female firearm homicide rates. When the United States (as an extreme outlier) was excluded, the correlation was still very substantial ($r=0.66$). The same was true when they used data weighted for each country's female population ($r=0.84$, without the United States). However, there was no significant correlation between their measure of gun availability and non-gun female homicide rates once the United States was excluded, either using weighted ($r=0.19$) or unweighted data ($r=0.02$). The results did not change either when urbanization and income inequality were introduced as control variables. In sum, the results of Hemenway et al. (2002) are consistent with those found by Killias et al. (2001) in the sense that both studies observed that gun availability is highly correlated with female firearm homicide. However, Hemenway et al. (2002) found that there is no correlation with female homicides committed with other means, whereas according to Killias et al. (2001), there is no such correlation with male homicide. Both studies concur, therefore, that female homicide is far more strongly correlated with the availability of guns than male homicide. The similarity of correlations between gun-related female homicide and suicide (of men or in general) may, as the authors of both studies assume, be explained by the obvious fact that guns are usually kept at home where personal and family crises are more likely to occur. Non-gun female homicide may be unrelated to gun availability since the presence of other potentially lethal means is probably unrelated to the presence of guns. Male homicides are more likely to occur in public places where guns may not be readily available when conflicts escalate. Whether these assumptions hold will be examined in a later section of this study, using data from the available databases on homicide.

Profile of Gun Owners

In a further analysis of ICVS data on guns and several violent offences, van Kesteren (forthcoming) concluded that at the individual level gun ownership is associated with increased rates of victimization through theft and offences against the person (especially robbery). This may be due to the fact that having a gun is correlated with a more risky lifestyle. Using data from the 1997 Swiss Army recruit survey (with more than 21,000 male respondents aged 20), Killias and Haas (2002) found that owners of (private) handguns were far more likely to have experienced violent victimisations and to be involved in (self-reported) violent crime (including use of guns in violent encounters) than non-owners. Handgun owners displayed also far more serious psychiatric symptoms during the interviews. The same was true for owners of other weapons that are frequently used for criminal purposes, such as chains, baseball bats and iron bars. On the contrary, and consistent with what Lizotte, Tesoriero, Thornberry and Krohn (1994) observed for recreational (as opposed to “self-protecting”) gun owners, long rifles are typically used (and owned) by young men who are practicing target shooting or hunting. Their owners are more similar to young men who do not own guns than to handgun owners. Overall, the studies by van Kesteren (forthcoming) and Killias and Haas (2002) leave the impression that owners of handguns are disproportionately involved in violent victimization and have a higher prevalence of psychiatric symptoms and self-reported violence, suggesting that owning handguns (as well as chains and other “criminal” weapons) is more related to risky or even violent lifestyles. To the extent gun ownership is motivated by their needs for “protection” among these respondents, one may reasonably assume that much of these needs are indeed self-induced. Guns in the hands of young men with such profiles may increase the likelihood of fatal outcomes, suggesting that monitoring gun owners’ backgrounds may be a promising strategy to reduce such risks. The finding by Killias and

Haas (2002) that 53% of the seriously violent gun owners had experienced police *and* court contacts during the preceding 12 months before the interview, when compared with only 8% among all other respondents, illustrates the feasibility of more careful screening of gun owners’ backgrounds. Such attempts have been implemented in several European countries over recent years, such as England and Wales and Switzerland, though no evaluations of these policies have been undertaken so far.

Homicide Constellations Across Nations

Studying the role of guns in violent crime can be greatly promoted by large surveillance systems of fatal events that have been set up in several countries. In Europe, such databases are now available for Finland, England and Wales, the Netherlands and Switzerland. They allow comparing homicide patterns cross-nationally in a number of significant ways. Table 16.1 gives an overview of selected characteristics of homicide events, offenders and victims, based on national publications regarding these data collections. The table includes data from the ICVS on gun ownership (in 2000, the more recent data being less complete) and from the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics (2010). As the data reveal, gun ownership rates are very high in Switzerland and extremely low in the Netherlands and in England and Wales. Regarding the reason for keeping one or several guns at home, respondents in Finland indicated mostly hunting and sports (note that the sum exceeds 100% because of the ability to select multiple reasons), whereas the dominant reason among the Swiss is having the gun as part of military equipment. In all four countries, only a small minority of gun owners stated that they keep a gun in the home for self-protection. The general murder rate is also relatively variable across the four countries: the Finnish rate is 2.6 per 100,000 (which is about half the current American rate),

Table 16.1 Homicide constellations across four countries, by role of firearms

Years	Finland		The Netherlands		England and Wales		Switzerland	
	2002–2006	1992–2001	2008/2009		1980–2004		1980–2004	
Households owning one gun at least (source: ICVS 2000)	30	4	5	36				
For hunting	59	11	29	3				
For sports	44	43	46	13				
For protection	1	7	2	4				
Military guns only				63				
Homicide rate (source: ESB 2010, completed homicide 2006)	2.6	0.9	1.4	0.8				
Victim was shot								
Male		48	8	53				
Female		17	2	37				
All	15	39		46				
Type of gun								
Private gun				33				
Military gun				22				
Illegal gun	>54			38				
Unspecified				7				
Handguns	6							
Victim was female (all homicides)	30	29	29	44				
Victim-offender relationship (all homicides, male victims)								
Intimate (ex-)partner	5		7	7			38	
Other family	10		8	15			49	
Stranger	15		37	17			61	
Unknown offender			13	21			50	
Victim-offender relationship (all homicides, female victims)								
Intimate (ex-)partner	63		53	53			44	
Other family	17		15	16			47	
Stranger	4		12	6			46	
Unknown offender			12	10			21	
Victim-offender relationship (all homicides, all victims)								
Intimate (ex-)partner	22	19		27			43	
Other family	13	10		15			48	
Stranger	12			13			51	
Unknown offender		20		16			42	

Type of murder (all homicides)	Intimate (ex)partner	19		27	40
	Other family	10		19	64
	Criminal world	11		9	70
	Robbery murder	7	7	7	43
	Other arguments	20		18	49
	Sexual murder	4		3	6
	Other, unclassified	10		5	
	Unsolved murder	20		12	43
Type of murder (firearm homicides)	Intimate (ex)partner	27		40	
	Other family	39		64	
	Criminal world	68		70	
	Robbery murder	28		43	
	Other arguments	32		49	
	Sexual murder	9		6	
	Other, unclassified				
	Unsolved murder			43	
Offender profile (all homicides, men only)	Convicted of any offence	43	68 ^a	38	38
	Convicted of a criminal code offence	69		29	35
	Previously in prison	37		12	42
	Persistent offender	28			
	Violent tendencies			28	39
	Known to behave aggressively under the influence of alcohol	71			
	Alcoholic	53			
	Drug user	28		21	31

(continued)

Table 16.1 (continued)

Years	Finland 2002–2006	The Netherlands 1992–2001	England and Wales 2008/2009	Switzerland 1980–2004	Switzerland, % of gun involvement 1980–2004
Offender profile (all events, both genders)	7	44		53	38
Event characteristics (all homicides)					
Non-national					
At private home	82 (fem) 67 (men)	47	46.4 ^b	58	39
Victim drunk	71	15		23	33
Offender drunk		19		24	40
Victim was violent to offender prior to act	34				
Offender was violent to victim prior to act	47				
More than one victim	3	5		7	69
Mental health history of offender				22	35
Suicidal tendencies of the offender (all homicides)				4	40
Attempted suicide following act					
Committed suicide after act	7	4 ^c	3	9	79
Multiple murder followed by suicide				2	78

Sources (unless otherwise indicated): Finland: Kivivuori, Lehti, and Aaltonen (2007); The Netherlands: Leistra and Nieuwbeerta (2003); England & Wales: Smith et al. (2010); Switzerland: Swiss Homicide Database

^aData from Soothill, Francis, Ackerley, and Fligelstone (2002)

^bData from Soothill and Francis (2012)

^cIn percent of cases. Source: Liem, Postular, and Nieuwbeerta (2009)

with rates in the Netherlands and Switzerland of 0.9 and 0.8, respectively, and England and Wales it is 1.4. Since the Swiss database contains far more detailed information on cases involving guns and those where the homicide was committed with other means, the last column of the table gives the corresponding rate for the cases where a gun was used only.

As the characteristics of homicide offenders and victims in four European countries reveal, lethal violence has many faces. In Finland, homicide is first of all related to binge-drinking. As a result, homicide is predominantly a matter of people – victims and offenders – who had abusively consumed large quantities of alcohol prior to the act. A large proportion of the offenders (53%) were described as “alcoholic”, and many were previously known to act violently under the influence of alcohol (28%). In many cases (34%), the murder was victim-precipitated, in the sense that the offender was disturbed or attacked by the victim before the homicide. Although the information for the other countries is not directly comparable, the indications given in Table 16.1 show that the role of alcohol is far less prominent in the Netherlands and in Switzerland. Offenders (and victims) in Finland had a criminal record more than in any other country: 69% had been convicted previously, 28% were described as “persistent offenders” and 37% had spent some time in prison. In England and Wales, a high proportion (68%) of murderers is reported having been previously convicted of any crime (Soothill et al., 2002), whereas previous conviction rates among offenders of homicide in Switzerland are closer to the prevalence of criminal records in the general male population (of approximately 30%). In line with these observations, many offenders in Switzerland had a history of mental health problems, including suicidal tendencies. A relatively high percentage of offenders commit suicide immediately after the act (9% of the offenders, but 13% of the victims were killed by an offender who committed suicide afterwards). Another 4% attempted to commit suicide. In the Netherlands and in England and Wales, these rates are far lower, 4% and 3%; closest comes Finland with 7% of offenders committing suicide after the event.

In sum, murder seems to be mostly related to alcohol abuse among generally violent people in Finland and to persons with a criminal history in England and the Netherlands, whereas Swiss offenders tend to have a more “normal” profile in these respects. In the Netherlands, homicide seems to be more frequent in criminal contexts, as the far higher rate of unsolved or unclassifiable cases (30% when combined) indicates. The low prevalence of criminal records and presumably also other obvious pathologies (including alcohol abuse) among Swiss offenders is probably related to the high prevalence of intra-family murder. Indeed, 46% of all homicides in Switzerland have as victims intimate partners or other family members (mostly children), which is substantially more than in the Netherlands (29%) and in Finland (35%). In Finland, most of the victims are known to the offender (presumably, often people they meet at drinking occasions), but do not belong to the offender’s family. In line with these different frameworks of murder, victims were less often women in Finland (30%), in the Netherlands (29%) and in England and Wales (29%) than in Switzerland (44%).

The proportion of victims killed with a firearm is relatively modest in Finland (15%) when assessed in light of a relatively high percentage (30%) of guns (mostly hunting rifles) owned by Finnish households and this country’s comparatively high murder rate (the highest in Western Europe). This low percentage seems even more striking given that many guns used in homicide were, according to police sources, kept illegally (more than 54%). Possible explanations may be that most guns are, according to owners’ indications during interviews, used for hunting (and perhaps being kept in a cottage) and that they may be less available (and less suitable) to be used in alcohol-induced violent encounters. In contrast and compared with its low gun ownership rate in the general population (4%), the percentage of Dutch victims who were killed with a firearm (men 48%, women 17%) seems surprisingly high. In this context, it must be kept in mind that a substantial fraction of homicides in the Netherlands remains unclassified (10%) or even unsolved (20%) and is possibly related to

organized crime. Among firearm homicides, 68% are described as being linked to the “criminal world”, 28% concern robberies with murder and 32% result from “arguments”. It can be speculated, therefore, that many firearms used in homicides in the Netherlands are actually kept illegally. This would explain why particularly the proportion of male firearm victims is out of line with the general (legal) gun ownership rate in that country. It is true, however, that the distribution of firearm homicide constellations is almost identical in Switzerland – obviously guns are more generally used in connection with other crimes. However, given the far higher prevalence of robberies and other street crimes in the Netherlands (compared with other European countries in general including Switzerland), according to police as well as survey measures (European Sourcebook, 2010) it is plausible that such homicide constellations are more frequent there. Among the cases recorded in the Swiss database, illegal guns were used in 30% of domestic homicides and in 86% of robbery homicides. Thus, guns used in street crime were almost always kept illegally. It is likely that the same pattern applies in the Netherlands.

In England and Wales, men and women were far less often killed with firearms. Only 8% of men and 2% of women were shot, though the proportion of homicide committed by a current or former partner is relatively high (53%). The rare use of firearms reflects the fact that, due to strict legislation concerning acquisition and ownership of guns, these devices are rarely kept in British households, and illegal firearms may be less available and less often used in street crime.

The Role of Guns in Fatal Events

Compared with the other three countries, the role of firearms is, in relation to the several homicide constellations, better documented in Switzerland. The first reason for this is that firearms play a far more prominent role in lethal events (including suicide) in that country, so that the number of cases to analyse is far higher. For this reason, we

shall look at the role of firearms more in detail using data from the Swiss homicide database.

Compared with knives and other potentially lethal instruments guns have a few characteristics that make them particularly suitable in certain homicide constellations where it is rare for them to be replaced by other means. Guns allow (1) overcoming resistance from the victim, (2) killing several people simultaneously, (3) killing without blatant brutality, that is inflicting major injuries on the victim swiftly and without leaving the victim the chance to scream and to implore pity, thus (4) making it easy to kill for persons without a history of previous violence or personality disorders and finally (5) guns offer the offender the possibility of committing suicide immediately following the homicide. These characteristics explain why the proportion of firearm homicide greatly varies across constellations of the characteristics of homicide victims, offenders and events. In events with more than one victim followed by the actual or planned suicide of the offender, 80% of the victims who lost their lives under such circumstances were shot. The proportion was 59% of the victims (and 69% of the offenders) if the offender killed more than one victim but without having in mind to end his life immediately afterwards. In cases with one victim only, 38% of the victims were shot (and 30% of offenders used a firearm). In cases of homicide in connection with robbery, the proportion of guns is relatively high, but this obviously reflects the fact that robbers usually do not plan to kill their victims. Whenever they do, the offender’s robbery plan probably failed in some critical respect. According to Swiss police statistics, guns were involved in just 12% of all recorded robberies. If a gun was used in 43% of all homicides with robbery, this certainly can be attributed to the fact that guns are far more lethal than any other weapons. Hospital data offer some interesting results in this respect: among all victims of serious violence that were shot, only 16% actually survived, whereas this proportion was 51% in cases where the assailant used an other weapon. In cases of suicide attempts, only 2% of victims survived gun shots, but 43% of victims using other lethal means survived the suicide attempt (Killias & Haas, 2001).

Do Changing Gun Ownership Rates Affect the Frequency of Fatal Events?

Given the dramatic proportions of gun involvement in certain homicide constellations, the question arises whether or not any change in the availability of guns in private homes could affect the occurrence of family killings and female homicide. In this connection, policies regarding the availability of guns to private citizens have seen a number of significant developments, though more in practice than in law. The largest effect was the downsizing of the Swiss Army. With more than 625,000 men in its ranks, the Swiss Army was the largest army in Western Europe in the early 1990s. Following the end of the cold war, the size of the army was reduced – by lowering the upper age-limit of compulsory service from 50 to 42 (in 1995) and finally to 30 (in 2004) – to some 400,000 after 1996 and to some 220,000 in 2004 (Federal Council, 2010). These changes reduced substantially the number of citizens who kept army weapons in their homes as part of their military equipment – private gun ownership dropped, according to ICVS, from 36 to 28% in 2005. Although former soldiers in good standing are still allowed to keep their guns after completing their service, less and less wish to do so: from nearly 90%, the rate dropped to 43% in 2004 and 23% in 2007 (Defence Ministry, 2008).

The frequency of firearm homicide in Switzerland, with about 55 cases per year (in 2009), is too low to assess trends following these recent changes. However, suicide rates offer a far better chance to monitor such effects, given the far higher frequency of these events that, to a large extent, occur equally in the homes. Reisch (2011) has analyzed, based on data provided by the Swiss Office of Federal Statistics, the effects of the downsizing of the army on gun suicide. Using these same data, we show that the effect was particularly large in the age-group of 20–49 that was mostly affected by the reduction of the maximum-age of military duty from 50 to 30. In 1995, which was shortly before the first reduction started to be implemented, 187 (or 38% of all

suicides by men aged 20–49) committed suicide with a firearm, and 311 (or 62%) did so using some other method. By 2000, the number of firearm suicide had dropped among men aged 20–49 to 170 (36%), whereas other suicide methods remained at 300 (or 64%). In 2004, the year following the second downsizing of the army was enacted, the number of firearm suicides dropped to 116 (or 33%), and other suicides remained at 232 (67%). In 2008 (the last year for which detailed data are available), gun-related suicides had dropped to 76 (or 24%), whereas other suicides remained again fairly stable in this age-group (245, or 76%). Thus and over the entire period, firearm suicides decreased among men aged 20–49 by 59%, whereas other suicide methods decreased by 21%. In other words, there was no switch of suicide methods from firearms to other means in this age-group. The situation is remarkably different with respect to men 50 and older who were not affected by the reduction of the maximum-age of military duty. Among men of 50 or beyond, 175 had committed suicide using a firearm in 1995; in 2008, this number was 151 (or 14% less than in 1995). Thus, the downsizing of the army and the reduced availability of firearms in the general population affected less those who, at the beginning of the series, were already beyond the maximum-age of military duty. Other suicide methods increased from 1995 to 2008 among men older than 50 from 311 to 364 in 2008 (or by 17%). These trends reflect other changes in suicide patterns in Switzerland over this period, namely the better management of serious depressions through medication and other therapeutic approaches (which reduced suicide among younger people in particular) on the one hand, and the increasing acceptance of assisted suicide (through poisoning) among elderly people in Switzerland, on the other hand. Assisted suicide has become increasingly available to elderly persons with serious health problems over recent years.

The impact of the downsizing of the army and the reduced availability of firearms among the general population on suicide patterns is consistent with other studies on suicide prevention through redesigning the environment. The first

and probably most famous example was the British experience with detoxification of domestic gas during the 1960s (Clarke & Mayhew, 1988). This measure eliminated the most prominent way to commit suicide (used by about one suicidal person in two up to that point), with only very partial increase of other suicide methods. It ended with a substantial reduction in overall suicides in a period of generally increasing suicide rates in Europe. Similar effects were observed once balustrades on high bridges that often were the scene of suicides were reconstructed in a way that made it more difficult for people to jump from them (Maire, 2007; Reisch, Schuster, Jenny & Michel, 2006), or following other methods of prevention such as better control of medications (Hawton et al., 2009) or the elimination of carbon monoxide from automobile exhaust gas (Levi et al., 2003). Regarding suicide and gun ownership, a comparative study suggested similar effects as those found here (Ajdacic-Gross et al., 2006). It is unfortunate that no detailed data on homicide are available yet to assess whether the downsizing of the Army had similar effects, particularly on those types of homicide that occur at home and that are intuitively most likely to be affected by the number of firearms kept at home.

Guns and Self-Defence

An often fiercely debated issue concerns the role of firearms in self-defence. Continental laws are usually somewhat more restrictive regarding the admission of self-defence as a legal defence in case of homicide (Killias, Kuhn, Dongois, & Aebi, 2009). In this respect, Swiss criminal law is probably more similar to American than to English legal principles, thus allowing one to draw some conclusions as to the prevalence of self-defence in a comparative perspective.

According to the Swiss national database on homicide, the “reason” of the homicide was recorded in 1,276 out of 1,464 cases. In 23 cases, the offender successfully claimed to have acted (killed the victim) in self-defence or duress

(3 cases). These 23 cases represent 1.6% of all homicide offenders whose “reasons” for killing have been recorded. In 15 of these cases, a fire-arm was used. In 8 cases, the homicide was committed with a knife. In 9 out of the 15 cases of legitimate firearm use, a police gun was used by a police officer on duty. In the remaining six cases, three were legally owned by the person who claimed having acted in self-defence – these were the only cases of legitimate gun use by a private citizen. In other words, and considering that the database includes cases from over 20 years, it can fairly be said that guns kept in Swiss households were virtually never legitimately used to kill an assailant. During the Swiss crime victimization surveys of 1998 and 2000, owners of firearms were asked whether they ever experienced, during their lifetime (1998) or over the last 5 years (2000), a situation where they used (although not necessarily shot) their gun in self-defence. Only 18 (in 1998 and out of a sample of 3,041 or 926 gun owners) and 15 (in 2000, out of which 6 at home and 6 out of home in a sample of 4,234 or 902 owners) admitted having used their gun. In this connection, it must be kept in mind that many of these instances likely concerned cases of illegitimate use of or threat with a firearm, as violent offenders regularly claim and self-report surveys confirm (Killias & Haas, 2002; Lizotte et al., 1994) that they “need” (and occasionally use) their weapons in self-defence. In other words, legitimate self-defence with a firearm is extremely rare in Switzerland and presumably in continental Europe in general. The main reason may be that burglars almost never enter private premises without having ascertained that the occupants are not at home. Given the far lower rates of (lethal and non-lethal) violence in Europe, it is plausible that self-defence situations are not as widespread in the general population as in America. In line with this state of affairs, a large majority of gun owners regularly respond, during crime victimization surveys, keeping one or several guns in their homes for reasons unrelated to self-protection, such as hunting, military duty, target shooting or other recreational activities (see Table 16.1).

Conclusions

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, private gun ownership is strongly correlated with female firearm homicide and firearm suicide (of both genders), but not of male firearm homicide. It has been argued that this pattern is largely explainable by the fact that guns are usually kept at home and that, unlike male homicide, suicide and female homicide predominantly occur in a private home. The data collected on large numbers of homicide events in four European countries largely confirm that the characteristics of homicide victims, offenders and events differ across nations and that the role played by guns widely varies across these constellations. The data suggest that guns are not equally dangerous in all homicide constellations, but that they are so in fatal conflicts that occur at home, where multiple victims are involved and where the offender plans, from the onset, to commit suicide after the killing. In such types of homicide, there is obviously little room for possible displacement effects given the specific characteristics of guns that allow to kill several persons at once and to commit suicide immediately following the act. The effects of changing gun ownership rates cannot be assessed, for the time being, on various types of homicide, but suicide data strongly suggest that reduced availability of guns has a substantial effect on firearm suicide without producing major shifts to other methods. This result is largely in line with research on suicide prevention. Finally, guns do not play a major role in self-defence, according to data from Switzerland (which is the only country to have relevant information on this issue at this moment). Whether Switzerland's high prevalence of guns in private homes is a "cause" of frequent homicides of women, children and generally of events related to domestic conflicts, is hard to assess on the basis of four countries. However, it is obvious from the analyses of several constellations that guns are disproportionately involved in such events, especially if the offender plans to commit suicide. The least one can say is that the data do not contradict the assumption that the widespread availability of

guns favours lethal outcomes of such conflicts. Contrary to other countries, Switzerland's homicide offenders have a relatively "normal" profile and may, thus, be induced into deadly force by the easy availability of deadly weapons. Again in comparison to other (including Nordic) countries, Switzerland has one of the lowest rates of domestic violence in the Western World (Johnson, Ollus, & Nevala, 2008). In sum, nothing would predispose the country to have, among all countries with comparable data, the highest percentage of domestic murder and suicide-homicide¹ – if not the availability of guns in so many private homes.

Given the empirical evidence, the major conclusion is that comprehensive surveillance systems with standardized data should be further developed and extended to other countries. Given the high heterogeneity of homicide and the variable role of firearms in these crimes, it is critical that detailed information beyond crude general rates becomes available to the scientific community and the public at large.

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¹See the chapter on homicide in Switzerland, Table 16.1.

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Background

This chapter aims to provide an overview of punishment for homicide in European nations, relying heavily on the few reliable data sources on punishment in Europe, and on the growing body of case studies on specific nations. Homicide is a crime that almost all nations have historically punished severely, and until recently qualified certain offenders for execution. But since the end of the Second World War, European nations gradually moved away from capital punishment, and now primarily rely on incarceration as punishment for homicide. The proportion of homicide offenders that various nations sentence to prison for homicide, and the average length of their sentences, help provide an empirical base for understanding various approaches to punishment across the continent. Some European nations are among the least punitive in the world in dealing with the most serious offenders, while others continue to impose long sentences that punish homicide offenders severely. By studying variations in punishment for homicide in Europe, we can identify some important trends that reveal ongoing regional differences in the nature of state power across the European landscape. These variations speak to fundamental aspects of the relationship

between socioeconomic change, political and legal structures, and the historical forces that have shaped them.

Debates persist around issues associated with crime and punishment in modern societies, especially regarding the relationship between higher crime rates, political culture, and social control. The way that nations punish homicide offenders reflects broader norms about punishment; it is no accident that the United States (US), which sustains the highest imprisonment rates in the world, is also the only advanced capitalist democracy that consistently executes homicide offenders. Garland (2001, 2007) has argued that advanced capitalist, or late-modern societies, have undergone important socioeconomic and cultural changes that are characterized by higher crime rates and these societies increasingly adapt stringent criminal justice policies. Others (Beckett & Sasson, 2000; Simon, 2007) have argued that harsher punishments are not rooted in fundamental aspects of modernity, but in crime and punishment's political value in attacking progressive social welfare policies. Whitman (2005) compared the extensive use of mass incarceration and the death penalty in the US to France and Germany, and argued that the two European nations' histories of more moderate and dignified aristocratic forms of punishment for upper-class citizens became dominant after the Second World War, when European societies became cautious about excessive state power. Tonry's (2007) extensive cross-national research on the use of

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incarceration and official criminal sanctions points to the importance of specific institutional circumstances within particular nations; he argues that nations that emphasize power sharing and consensus over conflict are less punitive, and that those governments with decentralized power are also less likely to impose harsher crime policies. These explanations of cross-national variation in how governments sanction criminal offenders raise more questions than they answer, and by examining how European nations punish homicide offenders, we can speculate as to how well these explanations stand up to a diverse and complex collection of nations.

This chapter examining how governments sanction homicide offenders seeks to address questions that are embedded within broader theoretical matters associated with punishment. We must first assess what data exists to examine what sanctions homicide offenders face punishment, and ask generally, what do we know about variations in how homicide offenders are punished? And, do the ways that European nations punish these serious offenders vary? If so, what might these patterns suggest about how and why certain nations punish homicide offenders the way they do? These findings might then help inform broader explanations of the degree and nature of sanctions criminal offenders face, which should, of course, effectively explain how nations punish some of their most serious offenders.

Aim

The aim of this chapter is to survey available data related to state sanctions punishment for homicide in an effort to identify national level variations, to raise questions about what type of data and research might be most important moving forward, and to speculate about what these findings might illuminate regarding cross-national comparisons of punishment. Given the breadth of examination, this chapter focuses more on contemporary institutional responses to homicide than on the socioeconomic and historical forces that have shaped them. Punishment for homicide is obviously embedded within a broader constellation of

punishments that nations impose for serious offenses. Homicide lies at the most extreme end of offending, along with rape, robbery, and assault; generally speaking, punishment for homicide coincides with broader approaches to serious criminal offending within given nations (Tonry, 2007). Nations that more readily incarcerate offenders for serious crimes also tend to impose harsher sentences for homicide (Tonry). As one of the society's most serious legal transgressions, homicide provides a unique angle for examining how governments sanction serious criminal offenders. Though European societies differ considerably in how they manage minor offenses, such as petty theft and traffic offenses, all societies tend to impose their most serious sanctions on homicide offenders (Tonry). The vast majority of convictions result in incarceration in most nations, and it is by examining the length of those punishments that we can study punishment patterns across nations (Tonry).

Providing a singular overview of all European nations on an issue as complex as punishment might be a futile exercise given the immense complexity of socioeconomic and institutional variation across the continent's polities. To speak singularly of Europe may radically oversimplify any serious social analysis; the histories and composition of nations as different as England and Wales, Russia, Turkey, Denmark, and Slovakia, just to name a few, make comparisons risky. As Chap. 1 demonstrates, sorting through the thicket of legal definitions associated with homicide poses a serious challenge to homicide research. But enough continuity exists across certain regions to at least begin to make some observations about trends in punishment for homicide offenders.

Methodology

This chapter relies on two compilations of statistical data on how European governments sanction homicide offenders' punishment, and on data derived from academic articles that have focused on crime and punishment in Europe, to provide a general picture of how European nations punish

homicide offenders. Statistical data tracking the actual sentences served and completed punishments imposed by various European nations are rare and much of it is unreliable. However, the Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics SPACE I data provides the most comprehensive and reliable set of data for analyzing punishment in Europe. These data were analyzed from the 2010 report, which provides information on a 2008 survey of European nations that included data from all but 4 of the 47 member states of the European Union -Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Russia (Aebi & Delgrande, 2010). The SPACE I data provide some information useful for studying punishment for homicide, including lengths of final sentences imposed by offense for people incarcerated in 2008, average time sentenced by offense, and the percentage of prisoners serving certain lengths of terms (Aebi & Delgrande). Unfortunately, the data does not include information on actual time served by offense, does not have comprehensive information for every nation, and the lack of data on Russia is disappointing due to its size and tendency to impose harsher sanctions on convicts.

The European Sourcebook of Crime 2010 also provides data on crime and punishment in Europe from 2003 to 2007, which relies on international data collected by INTERPOL, UNODC, and Eurostat, as well as nation-specific investigation by various criminological experts (Council of Europe, 2010). The European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice provides information on incarceration rates by offense, including those for intentional homicide attempted, and intentional homicide completed, for most European (Council of Europe) nations. It also includes information on the total number of prisoners incarcerated for these two types of homicide over several years, which was analyzed to identify variation and regional trends (Council of Europe). Lastly, data for this chapter were extracted from a broad survey of scholarship on punishment in European nations, including several books and European and internationally focused journals, including, but not limited to, the *European Journal of Criminology*, the *British Journal of Criminology*, and *Punishment and Society*. These

journals provided important contributions from recent scholarship that include several country-level case studies that help illuminate the legal and institutional complexities that complicate cross-national comparisons.

Data were collected on punishment for homicide offenders and were then analyzed for regional and historical patterns by formulating tables with available data from these various sources that provided as clear of a picture as possible of punishment for homicide. Then, these data were analyzed in an effort to identify variation and geographical patterns, particularly by comparing English speaking (England & Wales, Scotland, and Ireland), Central and Western (Germany, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, etc.), Southern European (Italy, Greece, Spain, the Balkan nations, Turkey, etc.), and Eastern European nations (Russia, Poland, the Ukraine, etc.). The key findings are revisited in the discussion section, where the chapter returns to some of the broader theories of how and why nations sanction homicide offenders' punishment, and offers some insights from this survey and analysis of European cases.

Results

National Variations in Legal Systems and Punishment: Key Contextual Factors and the Challenge of Comparisons

As Chap. 1 outlines, the complexity of national legal and political frameworks makes the study of punishment for homicide or any other specific crime a difficult endeavor. Precise definitions of homicide are not agreed upon; some nations combine incomplete homicides with completed homicides as a singular legal category, while others offer a variety of distinctions based on the severity of the crime, age of the offender, mental state, and other mitigating factors (Aebi & Delgrande, 2010; Europe, 2010). Some nations include infanticide and aggravated assaults, while others do not (Aebi & Delgrande, 2010). These difficulties of definition are then compounded by the complexity of differing legal and penal

institutional arrangements, which might handle homicide differently based on circumstance, a point addressed further in the next section.

However, sufficient data exists to begin sketching a clearer picture of the criminological dynamics of homicide and of the various ways that these offenders are punished across Europe. Homicide offense rates are an important contextual factor in understanding how states choose to sanction offenders and as this book shows, homicide offense rates vary considerably across the broad expanse of what is now considered Europe. Western European nations have experienced relatively stable and comparatively low homicide rates compared with other nations over the last few decades (Aebi, 2004; Aebi & Linde, 2012; UN, 2009). In 2007, England and Wales, Italy, France, and Germany, some of Europe's largest nations had homicide rates between 2.6 and 3.6 per 100,000 (Council of Europe, 2010). In 2006, the latest year with available data, only the Netherlands and Denmark, with rates of 9.0 and 8.3, respectively, and Scotland, with a rate of 16.1, deviated markedly from these rates among Europe's larger nations (Europe, 2010). Overall, homicide is far less common in much of Europe than most of the world, and much of Scandinavia and some of Europe's smaller nations have extremely low rates below 2 per 100,000 people (Aebi & Delgrande, 2010; Europe, 2010).

The story in Eastern Europe is not as sanguine, with the Russian Federation exhibiting extremely high homicide rates, and the Ukraine well above those of any of the larger Western and Central European nations. Russia's rate of 15.7 homicides per 100,000 is by far the highest in the region, while Ukraine 6.3, Albania 10.1, Finland 10.3, Lithuania 7.8, and Croatia 5.0 all had homicide rates per 100,000 that were much higher than the majority of large nations in the west (Europe, 2010). Other near eastern nations such as Romania, Poland, and Hungary now have rates that more closely reflect those of their western neighbors (Aebi & Delgrande, 2010; Europe, 2010). Homicide offense rates help shape the context in which punishment decisions regarding homicide offenders are made, and, as we shall

see, most nations with higher offense rates tend to respond more forcefully to homicide, with some important exceptions.

Punishment for homicide is embedded within broader social, legal, and administrative punishment norms, and considering overall incarceration rates helps illuminate these patterns. Incarceration rates for some of Europe's largest nations demonstrate considerable variation. Clearly, Russia's incarceration rate of 631 per 100,000 is an outlier, constituting the world's second highest imprisonment rate behind the US (Walmsley, 2010). Similarly the Ukraine, also a former member of the former Soviet Union that is now incorporated into the European community, has high levels of incarceration compared with much of Europe at 323 per 100,000 (European Sourcebook, 2010). Poland also has incarceration rates more than double that of Germany, conforming to a trend of higher incarceration rates in larger Eastern European nations (Council of Europe).

At the other end of the incarceration spectrum, several of Europe's largest nations have some of the globe's lowest incarceration rates for large advanced nations. France, Germany, and Italy, with a combined population of over 200 million, maintain relatively stable incarceration rates around 100 per 100,000, similar to several smaller nations such as Belgium, Austria, Netherlands, and Portugal (Aebi & Delgrande, 2010). The Scandinavian nations tend to have even lower rates that are among the world's lowest at around 70 per 100,000; it is only as one moves further west to England & Wales, Scotland, and Spain, that rates increase again to rates higher than central Europe, but not as high as many larger former Soviet bloc nations (Aebi & Delgrande). Heavier reliance on imprisonment does not correlate strongly with homicide rates; although some central European nations have homicide rates similar to England & Wales and Scotland, they imprison at much lower rates, and even though Spain's homicide rates are nearly as low as Germany's, Spain incarcerates at much higher rates.

Punishment for Homicide: What We Do Know

Not surprisingly, homicide offenders generally draw law's harshest sanctions, which in Europe no longer include capital punishment. Unlike the US, Japan, and a handful of other advanced capitalist nations, no nation in Europe actively imposes the death penalty (Amnesty International, 2010). This might be the most striking similarity across all European nations in terms of the nature of punishment for homicide. Article 2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights for the European Union bans executions for member nations, establishing unique uniformity for such a large and diverse political body (Council of Europe, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000). Instead, all European nations have laws that stipulate harsh penalties that include long periods of incarceration for people convicted of intentional homicide, especially those involving aggravating factors, such as multiple killings or homicides against vulnerable populations (OSCE, 2010). But as we shall see, the law on the books does not necessarily translate into long periods of incarceration in many of Europe's nations; instead, most provide multiple administrative and adjudicative processes that ultimately mitigate punishment in homicide cases (Tonry, 2007).

Though capital punishment is not currently used in Europe, almost all European nations retain possible life sentences for homicide offenders. Only Croatia, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain do not have legal provisions for life imprisonment, and most European nations provide ample opportunities to appeal for pardons and leniency (Hodgkinson, 2004). The important exceptions are England and Wales, Scotland, and Russia, which impose some of the longest sentences for homicide in all of Europe, including life imprisonment without the possibility of parole (Appleton & Grover, 2007). Other nations retain life sentences in fact but rarely impose the maximum penalty (Hodgkinson, 2004). For example, German and Swedish criminal codes impose up to life imprisonment, the French stipulates 30 years imprisonment, and Poland requires a minimum of 25 years

Table 17.1 Years served before consideration for release

Nation	Years served before consideration for release is possible
Austria	22
Croatia	20–40
Denmark	Maximum 20
Estonia	Minimum 30
Finland	10–15
Hungary	20–30
Latvia	15 but exceptions to 20
Germany	15 Maximum
Luxembourg	Minimum 15
Poland	Minimum 25
Sweden	Full term
Bulgaria	Full term
Ukraine	Full term but petition after 15

Source: "Alternatives to the death penalty – The United Kingdom experience" by Peter Hodgkinson, Director, Centre for Capital Punishment Studies

imprisonment before consideration for release if convicted for the highest level offense (Code, 2004; Tonry, 2007). Like the world's other advanced capitalist societies with democratic forms of government, European nations rely on imprisonment as the primary method of punishment for the most serious offenders, including those who kill.

But legal codes alone provide little guidance for understanding punishments actually meted out for homicide due to the many institutional mechanisms that alter the actual period for which prisoners are punished in most nations (Tonry, 2007). Even life sentences in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and France rarely result in excessively long periods of detention due to various postconviction mechanisms that afford judges and other criminal justice practitioners considerable leeway in releasing prisoners (Daems, 2007; Maffei & Betsos, 2007; Tonry, 2007) Table 17.1 shows some of the legal stipulations associated with consideration for early release for offenders sentenced to life sentences in certain European nations (Hodgkinson, 2004). As the table shows, some nations, such as Poland and the Ukraine, stipulate long mandatory minimum sentences, while others, such as Denmark and Germany, cap maximum sentences at periods lower than many national minimums (Hodgkinson, 2004).

Table 17.2 Prisoners convicted for homicide including attempts 2007

Nation	Convicted prison population per 100,000 for intentional homicide	Number of prisoners sentenced for homicide (including attempts)	Percent of total sentenced prisoners for homicide
Austria	N/A	N/A	N/A
Belgium	9	740	4.7
Bulgaria	14	1,101	12.1
Czech Republic	13	114	0.6
Denmark	N/A	174	7.9
Finland	N/A	576	20.1
France	6	3,546	7.1
Germany	6	4,546	7.3
Greece	6	NA	NA
Hungary	2	1,231	11.8
Ireland	8	318	10.9
Italy	N/A	5,520	22.7
Netherlands	N/A	845	14
Norway	4	161	6.7
Poland	13	4,963	6.7
Portugal	N/A	1,102	12.7
Romania	31	5,971	24.6
Russia	71	NA	20.0 ^a
Spain	6 ^a	2,973 ^a	5.3 ^a
Sweden	6	545	10.1
Turkey	3	8,480	20.2
Ukraine	44	19,367	17.1
England and Wales	12	6,940	10.2
Scotland	17	997	16

European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics – 2010

^aSource: See the contribution by Lysova, Shchitov, and Pridemore in this Handbook

^aIncludes only administrative regions of Spain

Although they do occasionally impose life sentences, judges in The Netherlands are not given specific sentencing guidelines in homicide cases and enjoy considerable discretion and have no mandatory minimum sentence for offenders (Gapat & Liem, 2012). In Finland, homicide offenders can be sentenced to life imprisonment, but are eligible for parole after 12–20 years of incarceration (Lehti & Kivivuori, 2012). And in Sweden, life imprisonment is imposed on less than 20% of all homicide offenders, and the most common sentence is between 10 and 14 years imprisonment (Granath, 2012). All of the mandatory minimums and maximum sentences must be understood against the complex network of judicial and administrative processes that essentially render the sentences imposed upon conviction

for homicide as an unreliable predictor of the punishment actually imposed (Tonry, 2007).

Accurate cross-national data regarding the actual periods of imprisonment served for homicide offenders across the continent does not exist. However, the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice provides data on the total number of inmates incarcerated for homicide, which can be used to establish an incarceration rate per 100,000. Table 17.2 demonstrates exceptionally low incarceration rates for intentional homicide in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey, which all fall below 6 per 100,000 people (Europe, 2010). Belgium, Italy, and Ireland are somewhat higher, falling between 8 and 9 per 100,000, while Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, England

Table 17.3 2008 percentages of sentenced prisoners for select nations

Nation	Under 1 year	1–3 years	3–5 years	5–10 years	10–20 years	20 years and over	Life
Austria ^a	17.8	35.4	18.9	15.8	7.1	0.6	2.3
Belgium	3.1	13.3	26.5	33.7	12	7.6	3.9
Bulgaria	19.8	31.3	18.4	14.3	12.2	2.3	1.6
Czech Republic	26.1	35.2	15.2	15	6.6	1.7	0.2
Denmark ^a	35.1	28.1	10.9	14.1	9.1	0.1	0.9
Finland ^a	35.4	35.6	12.3	9.4	0.6	0	5.2
France	35.7	26.4	10	10.3	13.2	3.2	1.1
Germany	41.7	19.3	26	8.4	1.5	N/A	3.2
Greece ^a	7.1	4.4	14.1	31.7	18.6	12.7	9.1
Hungary	16.1	34.6	18.3	20.7	8	0.2	2.2
Ireland	15.2	23.8	20.6	23.7	7.4	0.6	8.7
Italy	10.5	25.6	19.6	18.3	13.5	6.7	5.7
Netherlands ^a	41.4	26.5	9.8	11.9	6.5	0.4	0.4
Norway	42.8	26.2	12.1	10.3	8	0.8	N/A
Poland ^a	25.8	42.4	12.2	8.5	4.2	1.9	0.3
Portugal ^a	7	12.7	19.1	36.4	16	3.1	N/A
Romania	3.5	6.1	36.4	29.9	20.2	3.4	0.5
Russia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Spain	36.3	^b	37.2	17.4	5	3.1	N/A
Sweden	22.6	34	16	16.8	7.3	0.4	2.9
Turkey	3.7	8.3	14.2	26.9	22.5	17.2	7.1
Ukraine	1	16.4	33.9	36.4	10.8	0.3	1.1
England and Wales	12.8	29.3	18.4	17.5	4.8	0.4	16.7
Scotland ^a	23.1	22.1	15.7	14.8	3.7	0	11.6

Source: Space I Statistics, 2008 Survey

^aThese nations reported small percentages as unknown or unavailable

^bSpain's figures exclude Catalonia and 1–3 year terms are included in the under 1 year category

and Whales, and Scotland all have rates over double those in the first group (Council of Europe, 2010). Finally, Romania and the Ukraine have rates more than double those of the higher incarcerating second group and over about 5 times the rate of the lower incarcerating group; Russia stands alone with rates that are over 10 times the lowest group, and nearly double those of the Ukraine, the next highest nation (Council of Europe, 2010). These data reflect the combined effects of higher offense rates, higher incarceration rates, and the propensity to punish homicide offenders with longer prison terms. The pattern is obvious; Russia and its Eastern European neighbors are much more likely to incarcerate homicide offenders specifically, and criminal offenders generally.

Table 17.3 provides a rougher snapshot of the sentencing and punishment patterns that shape the prison populations of European nations. These data illustrate the percentage of prisoners sentenced for various lengths, including those sentenced to the longest periods of incarceration, which are most likely to include those convicted of homicide. Clearly, England and Wales (16.7%) and Scotland (11.6%) vastly outpace all other European nations in meting out life sentences; even though official Russian figures are unavailable, the proportion of prisoners serving long sentences for homicide seems to be very high, and life sentences have increased dramatically since 1997 (Pridemore, Lysova, & Shchitov, 2012). These figures are the product of sentencing

reforms that the United Kingdom and Russia established that impose increasingly stringent sentences for serious and repeat offenders that curtail judicial discretion and other procedural means of limiting the most severe punishments (Appleton & Grover, 2007). In the United Kingdom, The Criminal Justice Act 2003 imposed strict limitations on judges and established long minimum sentences for a variety of types of homicide, including those involving premeditation, sexual intent, children, law enforcement officers, and a variety of other factors (Appleton & Grover, 2007). However, unlike the US, life imprisonment in the United Kingdom rarely equates to incarceration until death; only 22 prisoners in the United Kingdom were punished under this harsh sentence in 2006 (Appleton & Grover, 2007). Similarly, the Russian Federation passed criminal law reforms in 1996 that are more punitive than those under Stalin, and these reforms have abetted an increase of 6.5 times in the number of inmates sentenced to life in prison from 1997 to 2003 (Pridemore et al., 2012). Life sentences in the United Kingdom, Scotland, and Russia for homicide offenders helps explain why these nations have such higher incarceration rates for homicide offenders, and also reflect, to varying degrees, broader trends in the use of incarceration to punish criminal offenders.

In sharp contrast, Germany, a nation similar in size to the United Kingdom, has only 3.2% of inmates sentenced to life, and only 4.7% sentenced to more than 10 years imprisonment (Aebi & Delgrande, 2010). Of Europe's largest nations, Germany tends to impose some of the shortest sentences for homicide, turns to incarceration rarely, and imposes very few long-term sanctions (Oberwittler & Hofer, 2005). This conforms to Germany's broader trend of less incarceration and greater reliance on fines and alternative sanctions (Oberwittler & Hofer, 2005). Germany, as well as Norway, Finland, and Denmark also have actually established maximum limits on punishment for the most serious crimes at 10–15 years, and administrative processes ensure few ever remain incarcerated for that long (Tonry, 2009). The stark contrast in sentencing for homicide in the United Kingdom vs. Germany and

Scandinavian countries provides one of the most striking differences in punishment in Europe, a point that will be developed further in the final section of the chapter.

The nations in Table 17.3 might be viewed along a spectrum in which those nations with the highest proportion of prisoners sentenced to long terms lie at one end, and those with the fewest on the other. Belgium, Greece, Romania, and Turkey all have over 50% of their total prisoners sentenced to 5 years or more, while the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Poland, and Spain, all have less than 25% of their inmates sentenced to these long terms (Aebi & Delgrande, 2010). This provides some insight into the relative distribution of sentence lengths that these nations impose on offenders, but it is too problematic because nations that incarcerate more people for minor crimes will report a much lower percentage of inmates serving longer sentences. For nations that use imprisonment more frequently, such as Poland and Spain, the larger prison populations dilute the percentage of offenders actually serving long sentences. Given the relative rarity of the most serious crimes, we can expect nations with higher incarceration rates to have smaller percentages of people sentenced to extremely long periods of imprisonment. Similarly, Belgium's relatively high rate of long-term sentences reflects the nation's relatively low levels of incarceration, but tough sentences for the most serious crimes.

Discussion

Three general themes can be drawn from this survey of available data on punishment for homicide in Europe. First, this chapter highlights some of the serious data limitations that make any thorough analysis of trends and tendencies in punishment for homicide at the national level a serious challenge. Second, this analysis shows that Russia and, to a lesser extent, its Eastern European neighbors differ markedly in the propensity of homicide and in the ways that they punish offenders, who are highly likely to be incarcerated for

long periods of time. And lastly, there is something that distinguishes English speaking nations from their continental neighbors in their willingness to impose long sentences that offer little hope for release or reform. Below, I outline these three themes in detail, and then consider their relevance for some of the existing explanations of cross-national variation in punishment.

Much research remains to be done examining how various nations alter the trajectory of punishment once an offender has been sentenced for homicide. No reliable cross-national data exist that can provide a clear picture of the final punishments offenders receive, forcing us to infer what we can from a variety of statistics that can only suggest what unfolds across various national penal fields. Few convicts ever serve terms of more than 15 years in Europe because many countries provide various means for homicide offenders to leave prison long before they have reached the upper limits of their sentence, with the important exception of England & Wales and Scotland (Appleton & Grover, 2007). The postconviction discretion afforded criminal justice actors in nations such as Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, for example, provide considerable leeway to judges during the punishment phase to alter time spent in prison, and little is known about how these processes and decisions unfold (Maffei & Betsos, 2007; Tonry, 2009).

In-depth case studies that track not just the number of prisoners sentenced to various lengths of incarceration, but also examine how these offenders sort through the system, are a vital next step in understanding punishment and penology in Europe. The many means for shifting offenders into various degrees of social reintegration and away from deep institutional commitments would require extensive knowledge of specific systems in each nation. Further complicating this process is the decentralized, local character of punishment in many governments; French figures on homicide and incarceration, for example, reflect a lack of coordinated information regarding questions that many criminologists find interesting (Maillard & Roche, 2004). Similarly, though Greece has attempted to establish a more

centralized criminal justice system, researchers still struggle to gather reliable information across various state agencies and political units within the nation (Lambropoulou, 2005).

Researchers will have to know much more about how various components of each nation's justice system influence the final treatment of offenders. This will involve a careful look at how various levels of government in different nations manage penal institutions, and how these processes are affected by subnational variations within specific countries. This, of course, involves a much more penetrating study of where crime policy comes from in various nations, and of how policies are shaped by specific political and institutional arrangements involving political policies, the courts, penal institutions, and the various bureaucratic branches that influence the treatment of offenders.

It is also important to note that simply calculating the total time served in prison for people convicted of homicide does not provide a complete or even telling picture of the total state sanctions imposed on convicts. Little is known about how variations in prison conditions can result in more or less punitive experiences while incarcerated; violent conditions and insufficient medical care, for example, might make much shorter prison terms in some prisons much more punitive than longer stints in more humane conditions. More serious offenders might face greater levels of isolation and be imprisoned with more dangerous inmates, and any comprehensive assessment of punishment for homicide would certainly account for these variations. For example, prisoners held for long periods in Switzerland's prisons are usually confined in facilities with fewer than 100 other inmates, conditions much less likely to be plagued by inhumane treatment and violence (Eisner & Killias, 2004). French prisons, conversely, have been chronically overcrowded in recent decades, and human rights groups have protested the conditions inmates endure in addition to deprivation of freedom (Daems, 2007). Future researchers should aim to shed light on the shadowy conditions within prisons, and should begin to ask how the nature of prison conditions reflect or

contradict broader norms and values about the relationship between citizens and the state.

Similarly, differences in severity or harshness should also incorporate an accounting of what sanctions inmates face once they are released from prison. Some nations continue to subject ex-convicts to additional surveillance, or strip them of certain rights and privileges afforded other citizens. The US, for example, permanently excludes some offenders from voting and certain welfare benefits for life, even after the completion of all formal sanctions (Campbell, 2007; Manza & Uggen, 2006; Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002). No accurate account of these additional components of severity exists for most European nations, and no comprehensive accounting of the official sanctions homicide offenders face is possible without such data.

Despite the shortcomings in the data on punishment for homicide in Europe, it is quite clear that serious differences separate Eastern European nations, especially Russia, from their central and western European neighbors in terms of homicide rates and punishment. Though Poland, Hungary, and Romania have incarceration rates higher than their western neighbors, they are much closer to Germany than they are to Russia and the Ukraine (Europe, 2010). Russia and the Ukraine's high homicide rates and long sentences for homicide offenders suggest that something very powerful persists within these nations' political cultures that allow government to exercise its power well beyond thresholds acceptable in Central and Western European nations. Exploring the links between the persistence of violence, political culture, and punishment in these nations promises to shed some light on the relationship between political culture and government. Their sheer size and histories of authoritarian rule might help explain the continuing high levels of violence and concomitant punishment characteristic of many former Soviet Bloc nations.

The moderate and low levels of overall incarceration rates in most continental European and Scandinavian countries present another challenge. It remains unclear how and why these nations sustained such moderate punishments in light of increases in homicide and serious criminal

offending in the 1980s and 1990s, when the United Kingdom and Russia turned sharply to much harsher penalties. Despite diverse historical trajectories and political cultures, many European nations have not adapted harsh life sentences and mandatory minimum sentences, and many set limits on the length of imprisonment homicide offenders can receive. Even though they technically require harsh penalties for people convicted of homicide, many of these nations employ various means for diverting and altering sentences after the penalty phase of the legal process. Despite these punishment policies, popular demands for harsher measures have not gained sufficient momentum to generate the types of strict limits for punishing homicide offenders that are now the norm in the United Kingdom and Russia.

These nations' moderate approaches to punishing serious offenders challenge existing theories of punishment, and suggest that harsh crime control policies are not necessarily a byproduct of late-modern social arrangements, as David Garland has suggested (Garland, 2004). These nations' punishment practices also call into question theories grounded in political opportunism (Beckett & Sasson, 2000; Simon, 2007); despite occasional spikes in political focus, efforts to utilize crime as a political issue to attack left-leaning governments as "soft" on crime have not been particularly successful in Greece, Italy, Germany, and France (Daems, 2007; Lambropoulou, 2005; Maffei & Betsos, 2007; Oberwittler & Hofer, 2005). Efforts to enact harsher anticrime policies were successful in Hungary, but were followed by a shift back to more discretion for judges, and even decriminalization of some minor crimes (Kerezi & Levay, 2008). Until we know more about how legislative and executive processes influence the institutional policies and arrangements that shape punishment in various nations, we can only speculate as to how and why these nations sustain moderate punishment for those who kill.

In the case of English speaking nations, a clear pattern of harsher punishment for homicide offenders clearly emerges. England & Wales and Scotland impose some of the harshest sanctions

in all of Europe on serious offenders (Aebi & Delgrande, 2010; Appleton & Grover, 2007). Though homicide rates in these units of the United Kingdom are slightly higher than some comparable European neighbors, they are not high enough to suggest that homicide rates are the primary explanation for these harsher punishments. If considered on a global scale, the historical and cultural links between the United Kingdom and the US, with its continuing use of capital punishment and life sentences without the possibility for parole for homicide offenders, also suggest that something about the nature of common law traditions, Anglo-Saxon political economies, and institutional arrangements likely contribute to the willingness to impose more life sentences, and limit judicial discretion.

As Tonry (2009) has suggested, key risk factors for explaining these harsher approaches to justice are rooted in fundamental aspects of political culture. Unlike Garland (2007), who argues that the high crime cultures of late modern capitalist democracies generate conditions that favor harsh crime control measures and security, Tonry attributes considerable importance to the political and institutional arrangements that emphasize consensus over conflict. He notes that nations such as Germany, France, and Italy, which provide measures to integrate minority factions into the governing process, are less likely to employ harsher means for managing crime (Tonry, 2007). The United Kingdom and Russia, the only nations in Europe that frequently impose life sentences on homicide offenders, would certainly fit Tonry's model, with political systems that exclude and marginalize political factions not in power.

But a more comprehensive explanation might be rooted even deeper into the specific historical and institutional conditions that shape the political cultures of various nations. The very forces that created institutional conditions that exclude those outside of power might offer the better explanation of the long-term causes of harsh punishment. Differences in political culture rooted in post-Second World War conditions might help explain why the political systems of certain continental European nations are less punitive, and, in some ways, more inclined to compromise and

social integration. Unlike the United Kingdom and (then USSR) Russia (and the US), most continental European nations were utterly defeated in the Second World War, and faced a bleak economic and political context in the Cold War politics that again threatened their existence and prosperity. Within these conditions, many European nations might have forged a deeper suspicion of state power, and may have established political cultures more characterized by healthy disagreement than exclusion and suspicion of competing groups. As Whitman (2005) has argued, those nations seem to have embraced quite different strands of their penal cultures. However, too little is known about the relationship between institutional arrangements, historical context, political culture, and the use of state power to punish in Europe, to make any definitive assessment of these differences. Outlining how these forces have operated within the criminological context of various nations and European regions promises to be a fertile field for research for some time to come.

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Part II

Introduction

Background

In a celebrated essay, “Decline of the English murder”, George Orwell (1946) argued that “one finds a fairly strong resemblance running through the greater number” (p.345) of murders which have become best known to the British public. He comments that those which have given most pleasure are well known in outline and “have been made into novels and rehashed over and over again by the Sunday newspapers” (p.345). Of the nine famous cases he considered, six were poisoning cases and eight had a middle class murderer. Through Orwell, we can recognise a hierarchy in public knowledge and that particular murders gain prominence while others may be overlooked in the public sphere. Elsewhere (Peelo, Francis, Soothill, Pearson, & Ackerley, 2004), we have indicated the distorted nature of newspaper reporting of English and Welsh homicides. In short, these public narratives construct homicide differently to the reality of illegal killing, highlighting particular versions of “otherness” and danger.

The task in this chapter is rather different, for we wish to probe the routine recording of homicides in England & Wales – in other words, the

reality of homicide. Homicide is often regarded as the barometer of the state of the nation in terms of a measure of civilisation. The killing of 2-year-old James Bulger by two youngsters aged 10 after being snatched from a busy shopping area in Merseyside, England was associated in the ensuing public outrage with a serious decline in public morals in Britain. Currently, the newspaper headlines proclaim *Crime in England and Wales at its lowest since 1981, says survey* (Travis, 2010) which contrasts with the Conservatives putting claims of rising crime at the centre of their Broken Britain pre-2010 election campaign. The newspaper report goes on:

The detailed police figures show that the murder rate in England and Wales fell in 2009–2010 by 6% to 615, the lowest level since 1997, although still above that of the 1960s, when there were fewer than 400 murders a year.

While usefully taking a more historical perspective than most commentaries, this informative report, however, highlights some issues which certainly need to be addressed in this chapter. First, the focus is on “the murder rate” while this chapter is concerned with homicide. Is there a difference? Second, the meaning of “the murder rate” is not clear. Are these the number of murders reported to the police and so including cases where there is no suspect? If so, how is it known that it is a murder without the imprint of a court, either a coroner’s court or a high court, to decide whether the death is a murder or perhaps manslaughter or just an accident? In short, definitions are crucial in identifying exactly what one is talking about.

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Focusing on the legal framework is probably the most appropriate starting point. Brookman (2005) usefully reminds that it is not possible to discuss the law surrounding homicide in the United Kingdom as a whole as there are some differences in definition even across the countries that make up the United Kingdom. England and Wales share a common legal system, while Scotland has a very different legal system based on Roman law and Northern Ireland has a separate Criminal Justice System that has been profoundly affected by terrorist troubles. Our concern here, however, is unambiguously concerned with homicide in England and Wales.

Interestingly, as Brookman emphasises, the term “homicide” refers to the killing of a human being, whether the killing is lawful or unlawful, identifying the killing of another human being during wartime combat or the accidental killing of a boxer by his opponent as examples of lawful homicide. In contrast, unlawful homicide, in England and Wales, may be classified as murder, manslaughter or infanticide. However, causing death by dangerous or careless driving is generally regarded as a separate category and not included as unlawful homicide. Murder, manslaughter and infanticide share a common *actus reus* (guilty act), but deciding to what extent the act or its consequences were actually intended is routine but often complex fodder for the criminal court.

Box 1 provides a summary of the definition of unlawful homicide in England and Wales. Brookman (2005) helpfully discusses the issues surrounding the defining of homicide (pp.3–11) as well as assessing the current legal framework of unlawful homicide (pp.11–19). It is important to note that in England and Wales, unlawful homicide figures *include killings where there was no intent to kill* – the “involuntary manslaughter” category. This is in contrast to many other European countries which exclude such killings.

The second major issue of “Counting homicide” is pivotal to this chapter and will be introduced in the section on “Data Sources”. Meanwhile, one needs to move from the legal context to the social context of homicide in England and Wales.

Box 1 Summary of the Definition of Unlawful Homicide in England Wales

A person is liable for murder through causing a person’s death, whether by act or omission, either with intent to kill or with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. That liability to conviction for murder may be reduced to manslaughter, if the killing stemmed from provocation, diminished responsibility, or a suicide pact. These are commonly referred to as forms of “voluntary manslaughter”. Alternatively, where there is no apparent intent to murder, an individual may be liable to conviction for “involuntary manslaughter” if it is shown that they acted in a reckless or grossly negligent manner or that death resulted from an unlawful and dangerous act.

Adapted by Brookman (2005, p.7) from Ashworth and Mitchell (2000).

Country-Specific Details

The legal and governing systems in the United Kingdom are complex, with a completely different legal and justice system in Scotland, and a devolved government in Northern Ireland. For homicide, figures are compiled separately for England and Wales, for Scotland and for Northern Ireland. This chapter is concerned solely with part of the United Kingdom – England and Wales. However, we will discuss the United Kingdom where data on England and Wales is not available.

In 2008, the last year of our study, England and Wales was estimated to have a resident population of 54.5 million, which had risen by just over 5% over the last 11 years from 51.6 million. In 2008, there were nearly 900,000 more females than males (26.8 million males and 27.6 million females).

The population structure by age is complex (see Appendix, pg. 478 or online at extras.springer.com). Three population peaks emerge for both males and females – one at age 23, a slightly higher peak at age 41 and a smaller but prominent peak at age 61 (Office of National Statistics, 2010). The main population bulge occurs for 35–45 year olds; England and Wales, in common with many other European countries, is to some extent an ageing society. In recent years, however, fertility of the

population has increased, rising from an estimated 1.63 children per woman in 1999, to 1.97 children in 2008. Life expectancy at birth has also increased – from 74.5 years in 1997 to 77.5 years in 2008 for males, and from 79.6 to 81.7 for females.

England and Wales is a mixed multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Office of National Statistics estimates for 2007 identify 84% of the population as white British and around another 5% of the population as white (other), including white Europeans, Australians and South Africans. Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis together make around 5% of the population, with Black Caribbean and Black African another 2.5%. The population is predominantly Christian, but, of those responding, just over 16% identify themselves as having no religion in the 2001 census. Just over 3% of the population identify themselves as Muslim.

In terms of life skills, the CIA factbook (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009) identifies 99% of the UK population as literate. However, the definition used (completed five or more years of schooling) is different from that used for most other countries (left school able to read or write). In contrast, Leitch (2006) identified that 85% of UK adults have functional literacy and 79% have functional numeracy in 2005 – the levels needed for day-to-day functioning.

Guns of all types need to be licenced in England and Wales. Individuals are required to hold certificates – in 2008/2009 there were around 575,000 shotgun certificates and 139,000 firearms certificates. Licences cannot in general be held by those under 18, although there are exceptions. On the (perhaps unrealistic) assumption that individuals are all aged 18 or over and do not carry both forms of certificate, the percentage of adults aged 18 or over holding licences is 1.7%. The 2004/2005 EU International Crime Survey, in contrast, estimates that a rather high 6% of households in England & Wales own a firearm – compared to the International Crime Victimization Survey figure of 3% for the period 1999–2003 (van Dijk, van Kesteren, & Smit, 2007, Table 18).

In terms of alcohol use, WHO figures for European countries only give annual consumption for the United Kingdom as a whole. Country level figures within the United Kingdom are available from local surveys of alcohol sales and suggest

that average average consumption in England and consumption in England and Wales is 9.6 L per person aged 16 or over; this compares with 11.9 L per person in Scotland (Robinson, Catto, & Beeston, 2010). Both Scotland and England and Wales are high compared to other European countries. Drug use annual prevalence for opiates is estimated by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and is 1% of the population aged 15–64 (United Nations Office of Drugs Control, 2010). The annual prevalence estimate for cocaine is 3% and for cannabis 8% (both 2009 figures using national surveys). As with alcohol, opiate and cocaine prevalence is high compared to the rest of Europe but prevalence estimates for Scotland for the same age group are even higher (2% for opiates and 4% for cocaine).

This short analysis provides the social context for homicide, but what is the existing knowledge about homicide in England & Wales?

Previous Studies on Homicide

Several commentators have noted the paradox of the widespread media attention on homicide, including numerous books and films, and the fact that “homicide has undergone relatively little rigorous study by criminologists in the UK for some significant time” (Brookman, 2005, p.1). However, Brookman and colleagues (e.g. Brookman & Maguire, 2004; Brookman, 2005) and the Dobashes and colleagues (e.g. Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Dobash, Dobash, Cavenagh, Smith, & Medina-Ariza, 2007) have helped to re-establish academic interest in this most serious form of violent crime. Soothill, Francis, Ackerley and Collett (1999) have developed a comparative study of homicide rates in Scotland and England & Wales, while May’s (2003) paper provides a useful focus on the social construction of homicide. Epidemiologists have also examined homicide, with Shaw, Tunstall and Dorling (2005) and Dorling (2006) showing a strong relationship between homicide and inequality, with increases in homicide focused in the poorest areas. Psychiatrists have focused their attention on specific forms of homicide, such as murder followed by suicide cases (e.g. Flynn et al., 2009) and homi-

cides by those with mental health problems (e.g. Large, Smith, Swinson, Shaw, & Nielssen, 2008). Finally, lawyers have been active in the past decade in challenging aspects of the current law on homicide. Ashworth and Mitchell's (2000) text provides a useful critical overview of the law on homicide in England and Wales, while Blom-Cooper and Morris (2004) provide a more sustained challenge to retaining the current distinctions between murder, manslaughter and other specific categories of homicide arguing that these distinctions should be abolished and subsumed within a single crime of criminal homicide.

Data Sources

Data

Our data source comes from the England and Wales Homicide Index (see Soothill et al., 1999), which is a computer-based system in operation since 1976 covering all homicides (murder, manslaughter and infanticide) which were initially recorded by the police. Records are updated when suspect information becomes available and also when court proceedings are concluded. Cases are later labelled as "currently recorded" or "not currently recorded" based on case information. Information on *all* victims and *all* suspects¹ are recorded.

The Homicide Index has changed over time, with a new coding scheme being introduced in 1995 and additional modification since that date with the introduction of additional categories for motive and relationship.

Time Line

The time line of our study covers 11 years of homicide, from 1998 to 2008. Over this period, there were four special cases which had more than ten victims. These were:

- (a) The Harold Shipman murders.

Harold Shipman was a family doctor who killed many of his elderly patients, mostly by lethal injection. Over the 11-year period of this study, the Smith enquiry estimated that he killed 215 patients, with another three in the early 1990s. He was prosecuted for 15 of the murders and found guilty.

- (b) The Dover immigrants.

58 Chinese immigrants were found dead in the back of a lorry at Dover docks in June 2000. The lorry driver was found guilty of 58 counts of manslaughter.

- (c) The London terrorist bombings (7/7).

Four Islamic terrorists launched suicide bombing attacks against the public transport system of London on the 7th July, 2005. Fifty-five victims were killed at four separate locations on the Underground rail system and a London bus.

- (d) The Morecambe cockle pickers.

Twenty-three Chinese people drowned at night while harvesting cockles in the sands of Morecambe Bay. The gangmaster was successfully prosecuted for manslaughter for 21 deaths.

These special cases have been excluded from further discussion of homicide in this chapter, as to include them would distort trends.

The focus of our study is on currently recorded homicides rather than initially recorded homicides. This may mean that counts are artificially inflated towards the end of the series, as there may not have been sufficient time to determine whether some of the more recent cases were or were not homicide. However, as the dataset was downloaded in November 2009, and we end our series in 2008, there is at least a 10-month follow up on all cases, and such effects are likely to be small.

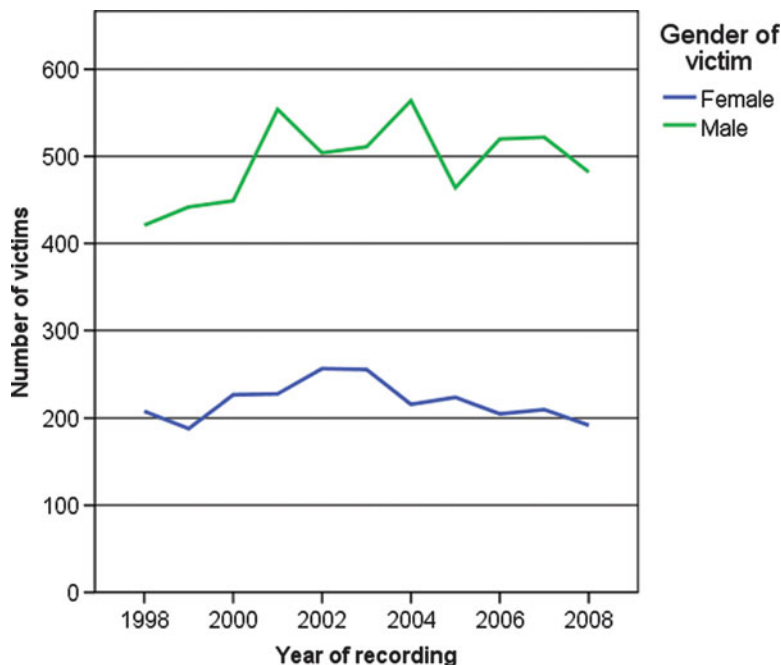
Epidemiology of Homicide

Recent Trends in Homicide

Summarising historical trends is a complex matter. There are usually important methodological and data issues to confront. Homicide figures are no exception. However, about 50 years ago in the

¹The term "suspects" covers all aspects of the criminal justice process. Mainly these will be offenders found guilty but the term also includes those awaiting trial, those who committed suicide before trial and those suspected by the police but not charged.

Fig. 18.1 Currently recorded homicides by year of recording and gender 1998–2008



early 1960s, there were around 300 victims a year with no consistent trend upwards or downwards – an incidence rate of 0.7 per 100,000 population. From the mid-1960s, there has been a gradual increase in the number of victims per year which has continued into the twenty-first century with the incidence rate doubling to its current level.

Focusing on more recent trends within our study “window” of 1998–2008, we examine the number of homicide victims separately for males and females in Fig. 18.1. While male victims in terms of “currently recorded homicides” fluctuate between 421 and 564 homicides, there tend to be less than half the number of female victims ranging between 188 and 257 females each year. The peaks, however, do not coincide with 2002 and 2003 being the peak years for female victims and 2001 and 2004 being the peak years for male victims. If the peaks do mean anything, then it must be a different story for males and females.

We can also examine the incidence rate of female and male victims each year (see Appendix, pg. 479 or online at extras.springer.com). Over the 11-year period, the incidence rate for males has increased from 1.67 per 100,000 male population

to 2.17, before dropping to 1.80. The incidence rate for females shows less variability, starting at 0.78 per 100,000 female population, rising to 0.96 in 2004 and dropping again to 0.69 in 2008.

Appendix B (see Appendix, pg. 479 or online at extras.springer.com) also includes the yearly proportions of male and female victims, and perhaps is more telling in terms of the overall consistency in terms of gender. In each year, there are never fewer than two male victims to every female victim. However, in some years the proportion rises to seven male victims to every three female victims. Whether such yearly shifts can be interpreted as representing underlying consistency or being indicative of change probably needs a longer time span than 11 years.

Regional Distribution of Homicide Rates

In order to understand similarities and differences in homicide rates *within* a country, a regional analysis is potentially helpful. However, it needs to be recognised that, in describing differences, the unit of analysis may be pivotal. There are likely to be differences in homicide rates, for instance, within a town which a regional analysis

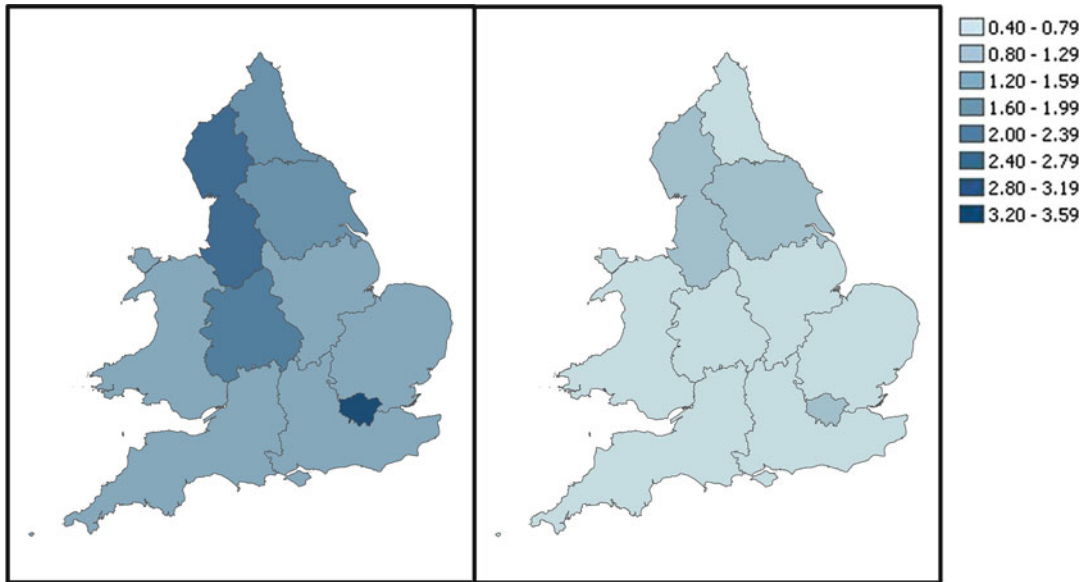


Fig. 18.2 Regional homicide victim incidence rates per 100,000 population 1998–2008. *Left panel:* Males; *Right panel:* females

will obscure. In short, similarities in rates at one level of analysis may mask differences at another level. Interestingly, however, using standard regions as a basic measure, there are differences within England & Wales.

In earlier work (Soothill et al., 1999), which was a comparative study of homicide rates in Scotland and England & Wales, we found that “Greater London has the highest rates, Scotland has the next highest, the northern regions and Wales the next, while the rest of England which includes the midlands and the south and south-west of England has the lowest set of rates” (p.72). In fact, a pattern of homicides rates gradually getting lower as one moves southwards was found to be fairly consistent for various kinds of homicide. However, Greater London was always among the higher rates.

Over the past 10 years, the pattern has remained broadly the same. Greater London has the highest rate (3.39 per 100,000 population for males; 1.17 for females; 2.26 overall) with the rest of the south of England having substantially lower rates – around 0.62 for females and 1.24 for males. The next highest rate for males is in the northwest of England (2.46 per 100,000); for females the next highest rate is in Yorkshire (0.99 per 100,000) (Fig. 18.2).

Of course, describing a pattern is easier to do than explaining it. There are likely to be a multitude of factors involved, including economic and social inequalities, mix between urban and rural areas, racial mixes and so on in various parts of the country. What is quite clear, however, is that there are certainly regional differences in England & Wales.

Incident Characteristics

We now turn our focus to homicide incidents, which may be considered to be distinct homicide events, with potentially more than one victim involved. In the 11 years of our study, 7,323 (97%) of the 7,542 homicide incidents had a single victim, with 160 (2%) having two victims and less than 1% having more than two victims. In the analysis in this section, we focus on specific variables which might be thought to define the incident, such as the circumstances or motivation of the offence and the relationship between the victim and the suspect. However, where there is more than one suspect or more than one victim we have taken the characteristics of the *principal* victim and *principal* suspect, and the location, method, motivation and relationship between them.

Table 18.1 Homicide incidents in England and Wales 1998–2008 by motive/relationship and gender of principal victim

Motive/relationship	Males	Females	Total
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Domestic homicide	834 (15.8)	1,397 (61.5)	2,231 (29.6)
Criminal homicide	97 (1.8)	33 (1.5)	130 (1.7)
Homicides resulting from arguments/altercation	1,888 (35.8)	120 (5.3)	2,008 (26.6)
Financial gain homicide	326 (6.2)	115 (5.1)	441 (5.8)
Sexual homicide	25 (0.5)	88 (3.9)	113 (1.5)
Mental health homicide	84 (1.6)	32 (1.4)	116 (1.5)
Other homicide	2,017 (38.3)	486 (21.4)	2,503 (33.2)
<i>Total</i>	<i>5,271</i>	<i>2,271</i>	<i>7,542</i>

Type of Incidents According to Motive and Victim–Offender Relationship

The Home Office labels each homicide in terms of the *circumstances* of the crime, which may be considered as akin to the concept of motive in other jurisdictions. In the 11-year period there are 28 categories. Similarly, there are 24 categories for offender–victim relationship.

Table 18.1 follows other country-specific chapters in combining the circumstances of the crime with the offender–victim relationship, and reports the numbers and percentages for each type of homicide by gender of principal victim. Combining the two variables is a complex procedure. For example, the category of “domestic homicide” can be defined either by the relationship between the victim and suspect, or by the circumstances of the crime. We have created this category by including all homicides with relationship classified as “current or ex-partners”, “relative” or “emotional rival” augmented by further homicides classified with circumstances as being “accusations of infidelity”, “issues relating to separation” or “other domestic dispute”. Similarly, we have created the category of “sexual homicide” by taking either a homicide circumstance of “sexual” or a relationship of “prostitute or client”.

The largest categories are for domestic homicides (30%) and homicides arising from arguments and altercations (27%). There are substantial gender differences in these two categories with approaching 62% of all female homicide incidents being classified as domestic,

compared to only 16% of male homicides. In contrast, 36% of male homicide incidents are classified as arising from an argument, compared with only 5% of female homicide incidents. Sexual homicides also show strong gender differences, accounting for 4% of female homicides but less than 1% of male homicides. Financial gain (6% of all homicide incidents), criminal homicides (2%) and mental health homicides (2%) show no strong gender differences.

It is important to notice the large percentage of 33% of “other homicides” for both male and female victims. A very large proportion of these cases are unknown, with proportionally more unknowns for males. Without a current suspect, neither the victim–offender relationship nor the motivation can be examined, and there were 949 incidents (or 13%) that have no current suspect associated with the case. Proportionally, more male homicides (14%) than female homicides (9%) had no current suspect, possibly reflecting the higher likelihood of domestic homicides among females.

Sadly, even when the suspect is known, 1,848 further cases (or 20%) of the series are classified as “unknown circumstance” (with 1,134 additional incidents (or 15%) classified as “unknown relationship”). This lack of information in the database is surprising.

Change or consistency is an important refrain in considering the 11 years in the series. In short, are there changes in motivation and relationship over time? Appendix C (see Appendix, pg. 480 or online at extras.springer.com) displays a graph indicating the broad changes over the study period.

Some categories show considerable volatility. Thus, the percentage of homicide incidents motivated by an argument vary from 33% in 1998 to 22% in 2000, and finishing around 30% in 2008. Interestingly, the 11 year trend line appears to be the mirror image of the trend line for the “other homicide” category. This perhaps indicates that a proportion of the motivation unknown category are in some years coded as “argument homicides”, with the variation dependent on the vagaries of coding within individual police forces. Thus, care should be taken in reading too much into this apparent volatility over time.

The percentage of homicides which are criminal appear to have risen over the 11 year period, moving from an average of just over 1% in the first 6 years to an average of over 2% in the last 5 years and hitting a peak of 4% in 2007. In contrast, the percentages of all homicide incidents in the category of “irrational act (carried out by insane or disturbed individual)” seem remarkably constant with chance fluctuations over the years. Despite periodic media concerns, the message seems clear and endorses the Taylor and Gunn (1999) position expressed in relation to an earlier period that there has not been a significant rise of homicides by persons deemed to be insane. Sexual homicides as well have shown consistency, with no great fluctuation over time.

It is also worthwhile focusing on the relationship between victim and suspect in more detail. Over the 11 years of our study, 18% of homicides are committed by partners, or ex-partners, with another 11% committed by relatives.

While the category of “acquaintance” provides the highest proportion of homicides (28%), the two main relative categories (i.e. “current and ex-partners” together with “relative”) combined together (29%) marginally outstrips the “acquaintance” category. Perhaps the most important and noteworthy feature is the fact that around one in seven homicide incidents are labelled as “stranger” killings. The latter is somewhat lower than one might have expected if one’s knowledge of homicide was totally derived from reading media reports. The Home Office, in fact, includes “unknown relationship with suspect known” in the stranger category, and thus the Home Office

figures are substantially larger. However, in this chapter we treat such incidents more correctly as missing.

Is there any evidence of changes over time in terms of relationships involved in homicide? A graph of the relationship percentages plotted against recorded year is informative Appendix D (see Appendix, pg. 480 or online at extras.springer.com). The striking point is the consistency of most of the percentages over time – there are similar proportions of spouses and partner homicides, and friend and social acquaintance homicides over the study period. Quite simply there are no changes of note. The one major exception is the category of “strangers” where in the first 3 years of the series, the proportion dips to below 10%, before stabilising at about 17% in the ensuing years. However, as with the motivation discussion earlier, the pattern of stranger homicide is the inverse of the pattern for relationship not known – when the not knowns are high, the stranger homicides are low and vice-versa.

Location

From our data source, location of homicide is only available consistently for the years 2007 and 2008 and, thus, there is no scope for considering any change or consistency over the 11 years. We have considered a categorisation which divides into public and private space, and whether the homicide was inside or outside. Not unexpectedly, nearly one-half (48%) of homicide victims are located in a private house. The next most frequent location is “outside close to buildings” which includes streets, footpaths, alleyways and car parks where the figure is just over one-fifth of victims (23%). Inside public buildings account for just less than 12% of incidents, and open outdoor areas around 8% of incidents. Interestingly, 71% of homicide incidents where a female was the primary victim were committed inside a private house, compared to only 39% for male victims.

Modus Operandi/Method

Method is an important and interesting variable. The Homicide Index provides scope for considering 19 different methods and there is an additional category for “Not known”. We have

focused here on the method used for the prime victim. “Method” will in most cases be quite evident at the scene of the crime and, hence, there is a comparatively low number of “Not knowns” – 421 (or 6%) of the total. We have reduced the 19 methods to 11 broader categories in this chapter. Over the 11 years, a “sharp instrument” (35%) seems the preferred option. This method is followed – with much lower proportions – by “kicking or hitting etc. without a weapon” (14%) and then using a “blunt instrument” (9%). “Shooting and explosions” account for 8% of incidents, while both “strangulation” and “causing to fall against a hard surface/struck by motor vehicle” each account for 6% of incidents. While a considerable range of methods remain – e.g. arson, drowning/suffocation, negligence or neglect or poisoning – none of these methods captures more than one in twenty of victims. While some of the latter cases using unusual methods may gain much media coverage, they are, in fact, far removed from being routine homicides – indeed, it is sometimes the novelty of the method that captures media interest.

Considerable variability can be observed in the relationship between the method used and the gender of the primary victim Appendix E (see Appendix, pg. 481 or online at extras.springer.com). Thus, kicking and hitting, shooting and causing to fall are more popular methods against male victims, whereas strangulation, drowning/suffocation and arson are proportionally more used against female victims.

Victim Characteristics

The total of those identified as “currently recorded homicides 1998–2008 by age of victim in 2-year periods is shown in Appendix F (see Appendix, pg. 482 or online at extras.springer.com). The overall pattern is a curve with a peak of victims between the early-20s and late-30s: there are three other notable features. First, the most frequent age for recorded homicides is between birth and 2 years of age; second, there is a notable dip of victims between the ages of 2 and 17 years inclusive; and, finally, there are recorded homicide victims right

through to the age of 100. The homicides between birth and 2 years of age consist of a large number of involuntary manslaughter cases (that is, cases where there was no intent to kill but where there was recklessness or criminal negligence), and this may explain the difference in age profile between England and Wales and other European countries.

It is also useful to consider the totals by gender Appendix G (see Appendix, pg. 482 or online at extras.springer.com). The pattern of the overall curves and the comparative heights of the individual bars are very different. For female victims, the riskiest age is clearly the first 2 years of life, while for males – while sharing a similar risk to females in their first 2 years of life – the time between 18 and 48 years are also of high risk. While female victims between the ages of 18 and 48 (particularly when killed by strangers) may more readily attract media coverage, males have, in fact, a much greater risk of death by homicide during these ages.

Suspect Characteristics

Smith, Coleman, Eder and Hall (2011), in describing the England and Wales Homicide Index, defines a suspect as

- (i) a person who has been arrested in respect of an offence initially classified as homicide and charged with homicide or (ii) a person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or committed suicide prior to arrest/being charged

We use this definition, which means that there is no formal proof of guilt. Smith et al. (2011) also point out that “More than one suspect may be tried for an offence and sometimes no suspect is ever brought to trial. Hence the number of suspects is not the same as the number of offences”.

Over the 11-year period, there were 8,969 distinct suspects, of whom 930, or just less than 10%, were female. In terms of ethnicity, just over 8% were Asian, nearly 17% black and close to 69% white, with the remainder either classified as not known or other. Smith et al. (2011) discuss the ethnic dimension of homicide, and make the point that neighbourhood characteristics may play more of a part in homicide than ethnicity.

The age distribution of suspects over the 11 year period in 2 year periods is given in Appendix H (see Appendix, pg. 483 or online at extras.springer.com). Although the age of criminal responsibility is 10 in England and Wales, only 27 suspects were aged less than 14. The peak age of being a suspect is 18, with the risk halving by age 30, halving again by age 40 and halving again by age 50. Beyond age 60, the decline becomes less steep and there are over 30 suspects aged 80 or more, with the oldest aged 99.

Explanations for Homicide Specific to the Nation

Conventionally, explanations for homicide are divided between biological, psychological and sociological approaches (see, e.g. Brookman, 2005). However, such analytical distinctions may mask the overlap and there are – probably usually – multiple influences of causation. However, in probing explanations specific to a nation, it is tempting to move more readily to sociological approaches which tend to stress the importance of social, cultural, structural and situational factors in facilitating violence. But this emphasis may underplay the interaction between social factors and the development of certain personality types who are more likely to commit murder. After all, it is persons, not places, who commit homicide. Certainly, Brookman's (p.98) cautionary plea that "there are no simple explanations (or direct pathways) to account for homicide specifically or other forms of violence more generally" needs to be heeded.

However, as Brookman (2005, p.100) vividly puts it, "Put crudely, rather than probing the defects of individuals, sociological criminologists probe the defects of society". Within this tradition, there is the major distinction between structural and cultural theories of homicide. While the former theorists focus upon the social conditions (e.g. poverty or lack of opportunities) that can encourage involvement in crime, cultural researchers focus more on the values, ideas and norms of particular cultures or sub-cultures that can foster an involvement in crime.

There is considerable evidence, mainly from the United States, that links structural factors to homicide. In other words, there is undoubtedly some form of association between poverty, inequality, deprivation and homicide rates. However, as commentators (e.g. Brookman, 2005; Vold, Bernard, & Snipes, 1998) stress, the problem is determining which factors, among many possibilities, actually cause crime.

The appeal to structural factors, however, has been given further impetus over the past decade or so by the work of Richard Wilkinson who has focused upon the impact of income inequalities on population health and mortality. Using international comparisons, Wilkinson claims income inequality is associated with lower life expectancy. His general argument about equality has reached wide coverage with the publication of his book, *The Spirit Level* (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). In relation to homicide, the claim is that homicides are more common in more unequal countries and, more specifically, homicides are more common in more unequal US states. The former assertion is of more interest than the latter and has recently been vigorously challenged by Snowden (2010). Snowden's challenge is on the empirical basis that – dismissing Wilkinson and Pickett's work – there is no evidence that "egalitarian countries experience less crime, including homicide, than less equal countries" (p.83). In fact, Snowden points to a steady decline in the United States homicide rate, while United Nations data show that inequality has steadily increased in Americas for many years (Snowden, 2010, p.80). In brief, therefore, one can confidently say that the jury is still out on this issue.

The focus on regional differences (see Soothill et al., 1999 and earlier) can be interpreted as providing some support to the structural approach. Broadly, the more deprived northerly and Welsh standard regions have higher homicide rates than the rest of England which includes the midlands, and the south and southwest of England has the lowest set of rates. The major exception is Greater London which has clearly the highest set of homicide rates. While there are certainly pockets of deprivation in the capital city, there are generally

more employment opportunities etc. However, it is complex. Dorling and colleagues, largely embracing the “spirit level” approach, have produced some powerful analyses indicating that the quality of the social environment and the fabric of social relations are pivotal in understanding homicide rates (e.g. Dorling, 2006; Shaw et al., 2005).

Structural accounts are likely to be just a partial explanation. So, for example, Brookman argues that the “most recent research suggests that there may be important differences in the way that certain structural factors, such as poverty, impact upon the homicide rates for white and black citizens in the US, as well as different age and gender groups” (p.106). This type of analysis has not been attempted in England & Wales and, until the Homicide Index produces more sophisticated information in terms of ethnicity and social class, then the jury must also remain out on whether this type of interpretation garnered from the United States can be transposed to England & Wales.

While a focus on structure has had a recent renaissance, Brookman has noted that few British studies have considered cultural explanations in relation to homicide. Interestingly, however, one of the few studies that does has an interesting starting point. Leyton (2005) argues that “By all the conventional criminological criteria of collapsing industries, economic disparities, dysfunctional families and racial tensions, England *should have* a very high homicide rate and a production of ‘psychopathic killers comparable to America’s’. But it has neither” (dust-cover of *Men of Blood: Murder in Modern England*). Leyton’s analysis attempts to unpick this conundrum. He adds to the puzzle by acknowledging that the vast majority of those who kill in England & Wales are from the lowest social spectrum. Essentially he is concerned with a particular sub-culture that comprises part of this lowest social spectrum which, in turn, produces a disproportionate number of persons who do kill. In short, this lower-working-class sub-culture holds values that are conducive to violence. All this, Leyton argues, is in direct contrast to the mainstream of English culture where there is “an ethical atmosphere, a sensibility ... created in which

government and people are parsimonious in the use of violence” (Leyton, 2005, p.227). Heavily influenced by Norbert Elias’s notion of a “civilising process”, Leyton maintains that the “English achievement” has been to extend the civilisation process, and, in particular, self-control, to most of its citizens, including large sections of the working-classes (Brookman, 2005, p.109). Broadly, he can point to a reticence about the use of violence since the English Civil War, while noting that “feudal notions of manly vengeance still survive in remnant form in England in the confrontational norms which govern certain segments of the working class” (Leyton, 2005, p.243).

There is not scope here to consider the serious criticisms of the sub-culture of violence theories (see, e.g. Brookman, 2005, p.109–110), but a crucial point is that, however good such explanations may turn out to be, the focus is only on a certain proportion of homicides. There are, indeed, many homicides which are not “captured” by any one particular approach. As Brookman sums up, “homicide is a complex phenomenon that cannot readily be explained without attention to the diverse forms which it takes” (p.118). Her example is that the factors that contribute to homicide between sexual intimates are undoubtedly different from the chain of events that culminate in homicide among criminal associates. Essentially, this means that to move from arguing that every homicide is different, one needs some rationale how to group various types of homicide. Sadly, this has often meant that grouping has been rather pragmatic, that is, being governed by the paucity of the data. In other words, more intricate groupings will mean a paucity of numbers for analysis.

Our own work (e.g. Soothill et al., 1999) has tended to produce groupings based on victimisation analysed by gender and type of perpetrator. Box 2 indicates the eight possibilities in this analysis and the numbers of victims per 100,000 population. In summary, it seems unlikely that any explanation – whether influenced by biological, psychological or sociological approaches – will have a similar impact on each of the eight cells. Different theoretical explanations may be needed for different types of homicide. This leads to a consideration of policies in relation to homicide.

Box 2 Major Groupings: Victimization Rates Per 100,000 by Gender and Type of Perpetrator

	Male victims	Female victims
By partner/lover	0.11	0.36
By other relatives	0.20	0.13
By acquaintance	0.64	0.11
By stranger	0.33	0.06

Policies Specific to the Nation

Theoretical explanations rarely inform policies. In fact, research tends to follow policies in the sense that research tends to be evaluative of different policies. However, current practice may not be a useful model. There needs to be more thinking about where and how to put resources into homicide prevention. However, before theorists proclaim the attractions of their approach, it needs to be recognised that something has been going right in England & Wales over the past decade or so. We noted how the murder rate is currently the lowest since 1997. Is this the outcome of policies or extraneous factors which are outside the policy gaze?

Crime rates in general and homicide rates in particular seem to have fallen over the past couple of decades in most Western nations. So, for example, Barclay, Tavares and Siddique (2001) report that homicide rates fell 4% on average in European Union (EU) member states between 1995 and 1999, a period over which US homicide rates fell 28%. These declines have continued in many countries in the twenty-first century. The reasons for these declines have been vigorously debated, particularly in the United States (e.g. McCall, Land, & Parker, 2010). However, the main point to note is that there has been a variety of policies enacted in the various countries that have experienced a decline in crime (including homicide) rates. While some extraneous factors, such as economic buoyancy, may have been shared by most of these nations, it remains difficult to pronounce confidently why there has been a fall in homicide rates. Not surprisingly, government officials and politicians tend to point to the

policies that they have put into place as the key to the decline. In fact, policies tend to be lauded by politicians when rates fall, while extraneous factors are blamed if rates rise! So what are the policies that have been embraced in the past decade or so in the context of England and Wales?

In short, what has been happening has been a greater focus on particular types of homicide rather than appealing to an approach which purports to lower the homicide rate across the board. In some respects, this follows the developing approach of homicide researchers. So, for example, Brookman identifies Part Three of her excellent text as “Making sense of particular forms of homicide” where the constituent chapters are “When Men Kill”, “When Women Kill”, “The Killing of Children and Infants” and “Multiple Homicide: ‘Serial Killers’, ‘Terrorists and Corporations’”. In separating out the different kinds of homicide in this way, there is scope for spawning very different policies about how to deal with homicide. Trying to prevent killings in a domestic context is likely to generate different policies than preventing killings between persons who have previously never known each other. Similarly, killings among acquaintances may well be associated with another set of factors. To take the latter as an example, it is increasingly being recognised that limited access to knives may be as important as ensuring only limited access to firearms. Certainly, as Shaw et al. (2005, p.53) insist, “carrying knives has to be made less socially acceptable for young men”. In fact, there are a plethora of suggestions of “practical responses” to homicide contained in the Home Office document, *Reducing homicide: a review of the possibilities* (Brookman & Maguire, 2004), while Shaw et al. (2005, p.53) similarly suggest that “it is important that practical interventions are focused upon young men, deprived areas, and knife and bottle injuries”. The Home Office has also developed interventions likely to assist in preventing violence against women and girls (Home Office, 2010)

While such initiatives are potentially important, they also have the advantage of being politically acceptable to embrace and comparatively cheap to administer. However, they do not address the more fundamental question of whether one

can usefully tackle the problem of homicide at a more structural level. In their work for the Home Office, Brookman and Maguire (2004, p.327) state that “there is evidence of a strong correlation between homicide rates and levels of poverty and social inequality, and it may be that, in the long-run, significant and lasting reductions in homicide can best be achieved by strategies which take this fully into account”. In a similar manner, Shaw et al. (2005, p.53) insist that “policies aimed at tackling inequality and poverty are of paramount importance”.

The distinction between the more immediate “practical responses” to homicide which can sometimes appease the tabloid newspapers as well as being useful, on the one hand, and longer term measures to tackle inequality and poverty which are less popular, on the other hand, will become increasingly important in a world which is economically more fragile than in the recent past.

With a change of government there has, to date, been no specific initiatives about homicide that distinguishes the present Coalition government from its predecessor. However, there is scope here to note where such focus might usefully be placed. Here, it is important to stress that comparative research is crucial. One can call upon the Durkheimian notion of “normal crime”. In short, which types of homicide are more or less average compared with other national comparators and which types of homicide are markedly different in England & Wales. Just over 10 years ago (Soothill et al., 1999, pp.73–88), we stressed the importance of probing the relationship of homicide to other forms of violence. Comparing with Scotland we dichotomised the homicide and violence victimisation rates into low and high rates and demonstrated that differences are not “across the board”. In brief, with this particular country comparison the victim’s gender proved to be crucial. So, for example, the rates for Scotland were always higher whenever a male victim was involved, but the rates tended to be similar whenever a female victim was involved.

We argued that in Scotland, more violent incidents involving males – in a wide variety of contexts – become lethal. This seemed likely to be related to violence erupting in fairly limited contexts, for otherwise the figures of concern would

also involve females in the *public* sphere. We argued that identifying these types of factors is important for policy development. Focusing on the conversion of violence into homicide, we pointed to a danger of complacency in England & Wales. While England & Wales still enjoyed a comparatively low homicide rate in the late 1990s, we pointed out that if the conversion rate markedly changed (and was, for instance, more in line with the conversion rate for Scotland) with, many more of the assault incidents ending in homicide, then, owing to the underlying unfavourable violence victimisation rates, England & Wales could come to be regarded as a dangerous place to live. However, in terms of homicide, we have seen a remarkable decline over the last few years, which has continued with recently released figures for 2009/2010 (Smith et al., 2011).

It is tempting to conclude that homicide in England & Wales is not a major problem compared with some other countries. However, it remains important to echo the words of Shaw et al. (2005, p.53) that, “murder remains rare in Britain but the increasing risk of violent death among some population groups is a cause for concern and a neglected issue within British health research”. How one deals with this trend is the major policy issue to confront.

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Introduction

Background and Country-Specific Details

In 2010, according to the official census (INSEE – Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, the great French statistical institute, <http://www.insee.fr>), the population of France was 65 million. People aged under 20 represent approximately 25% of the total population, people between 20 and 64 represent 59%, and people above 65 represent roughly 17%. Further, 82% of the total population lives in urban areas (27% in city centers, 32% in suburbs, and 23% in “peri-urban” areas) and 18% in the countryside.

Social and geographical inequalities have increased in France since the end of the 1980s. Officially (INSEE, 2010), around 4.3 million (around 7% of the total population) are considered poor (after they have been given welfare benefits), but youth under 30 and single parent families are much more affected by poverty. The rate of unemployment is around 10% for the total population, but around 25% for people under 25. It is above 50% for youth without qualifications,

especially when they live in poor urban areas and when they are born to immigrants.

Even if it is decreasing, alcohol consumption in France is one of the highest in Europe. According to the Ministry of Health, “excessive alcohol use with localized risk” (i.e., to drink more than six drinks on one occasion) concerns 34% of men and 15% of women, especially young people. “Excessive alcohol use with chronic risk” (i.e., to drink more than six drinks on a regular basis) concerns 14% of men and 2% of women, especially people aged above 55 (Beck, Guilbert, & Gautier, 2006).

It is impossible to know exactly the prevalence of private gun ownership. The police file “Agrippa” lists, since 2004, people who are allowed to own guns. There are almost three million owners, but gunsmith trade unions estimate this number to be three times higher, calculating from their sales (<http://www.syndicat-armuriers.com>). France is a country of hunters (1.4 million hunters, the highest number in Europe, <http://www.chasseurdefrance.com>) and most of them have several guns. Of course, we do not know anything about gun circulation on the black market. Anyway, the use of guns is strictly limited by French law. Carrying guns, for instance, is forbidden. To be qualified as self-defense, the use of guns must be (1) absolutely necessary, (2) proportional to the threat, (3) the only possibility of defense (the victim does not have time to call the police). An analysis of judicial files shows that guns are only used in about a third of all

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homicides (Mucchielli, 2004a, 2004b), and, according to analyses based on medical files, homicide by guns is strongly decreasing since the middle of the 1990s (Péquignot, Le Toullec, Bovet, Mellah, & Jouglu, 2004).

Previous Studies on Homicide

Research on homicide has been very scarce in France. The earliest studies were linked to the development of research on juvenile delinquency from the 1960s onwards, and mainly focused around the Vaucresson research center. In 1976, a thesis by Jean-Claude Chesnais entitled *Violent deaths in France since 1826* established the major historical, geographical, and social characteristics of homicide. No further data on homicide were produced until Jean-Michel Bessette published his doctoral thesis in 1984, and much later some articles based on that research (mainly Bessette, 1994), but even then these relied on empirical materials dating back to the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, Michel's (1991) thesis on murder provided an interesting review of the legal, historical, and social science literature, but by the way of empirical evidence relied only on a few dozen French and Swiss newspaper articles that also dated back to the 1970s. At the beginning of the 1990s, the statistical division of the Ministry of Justice edited some data on judicial files of homicide between 1986 and 1990 (Laroche, 1994). More recently, a small team of psychosociologists has worked specifically on "crimes of passion" (intimate partner homicide), with data from two regional newspapers between 1986 and 1993, and about 50 judicial files (Houel, Mercader, & Sobora, 2003, 2008). Then, my own previous research has consisted of (a) the study of 105 homicides brought to an assize court in the Paris area in the 1990s (Mucchielli, 2004b), (b) a study on criminal investigations and causes of nonelucidation of homicide, from files archived in police and *gendarmerie* units of the same area (Mucchielli, 2004a, 2006), and (c) a comparison of the various statistical sources on homicide and their evolution since the 1970s (Mucchielli, 2008).

Data Sources and Overall Trends

Data

The health-based source (INSERM, *Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale*, a French public research body dedicated to human health) makes an annual count of the "(main) causes of death," with "intentional homicide" as a distinct category. Other categories for "violent death" are accidents (of all sorts, including domestic accidents, hunting accidents, highway accidents, drownings, and so on), poisonings, suicides and deaths whose "cause" or "intention" is unidentified.

As each of these different categories may conceal a murder, the distribution of deaths between them is a critical issue.

In practice, the classification is done by physicians of various sorts (general practitioners, hospital physicians, public records doctor, or others), who perform a medical examination and deliver the death certificate, without which no deceased person can be buried (the legal term for this certificate is the "closing of the coffin"). To do so they use the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), updated regularly, and which currently contains 12,000 headings divided into 21 chapters, including one devoted to "external causes," including accidents, suicides, and homicides (Pavillon & Laurent, 2003).

In case of a "suspicious death," which must be formally reported by the doctor, the certificate is not sent to the local registry office but to a forensic medicine institute, which later informs the INSERM of its ultimate classification. However, for many reasons, including the doctor's lack of training or experience, and pressure from the family, general practitioners (and to a lesser extent, emergency physicians) may be unable or unwilling to learn more, thus preventing the intervention of a medical examiner who might, during an autopsy, discover that the cause of death was unnatural (Lorinde la Grandmaison, Lasseuguette, Bourokba, & Durignon, 2004).

Next, studies show that some medical examiners neglect to send the information yielded by their examination to the INSERM, thus causing

serious underestimation of the number of suicides (Chappert, Péquignot, Pavillon, & Jouglu, 2003).

The last essential question, then, is of course: What becomes of the deaths for which “intention is not determined,” especially since their number is far from negligible? For example, a study of deaths caused by firearms in 1999 shows 2,607 such deaths (representing 6% of violent deaths), which break down into 78% of suicides, 6% of homicides, 4% of accidents, and 12% of causes whose intentionality is undetermined (Péquignot et al., 2004, 15). A retrospective survey conducted in 2001–2002 by researchers from the *Centre d'épidémiologie sur les causes médicales de décès* – CépiDc, INSERM (Epidemiological Center on the Medical Causes of Deaths) on 532 certifying physicians covering the year 1999 concludes that suicides represent about 24% of deaths classified as “undetermined” before age 25, and 40% after age 25, increasing the overall suicide rate by at least 7%. Also, according to two local studies, the increase would be as high as 20 or 30% if cases classified as “cause unknown or unreported” were included. Researchers from the same team point out that “socio-demographic characteristics as well as geographic differences and trends over time remain similar before and after data have been corrected by extrapolating survey findings to official statistics,” meaning that underestimation may be considered to be constant, and the trend over time reliable.

This team did not work on homicides, although they estimated that “the corresponding under-reporting of deaths due to homicide is certainly greater.” An earlier study (on the year 1990) did identify “undetermined” causes of death and showed that most were accidents and suicides, but that the several hundred murders possibly hidden there would lead to the conclusion that health statistics on homicides are underestimated by 40–45% (Bourgoin & Nizard, 1994).

Police statistics tally up incidents for which a police report was written and transmitted by the police or *gendarmerie* to the Public Prosecutor's Office, to the exclusion, primarily, of *contraventions* (petty offenses) as well as of traffic offenses and their attendant unintentional violence (Aubusson de Cavarlay, 1998). The units of analysis vary, and include the report, the offense, the object, the

victim, and the offender. In the case of homicide, the unit of analysis is the victim. Once the act is recorded, if it is considered as solved, charges are brought against persons. In appearance, this statistic therefore counts homicide victims and presumed offenders, as well as a brief demographic presentation of the latter (their sex, age group, and nationality). Two important problems arise, however, pertaining to the legal definition of the acts.

First, as a rule, police statistics register completed offenses and mere attempts under a single heading. Homicides are an exception, but only since 1988. Examination of homicide trends, completed and attempted, over the last 20 years shows that the two categories vary in broadly similar ways since 1993, seeming to indicate that from then on we are dealing with one and the same set of phenomena. However, the trends differ for the 1988–1993 period. Continued vigilance is required, then, on this point. The notion of attempted homicide is indeed vaguer than that of completed homicide: the line between extremely serious assault and battery and attempted murder is very thin (particularly with the question of alcohol abuse we'll see later).

In appearance, the question is not statistically decisive, inasmuch as very serious assault and battery (sometimes not far from violence causing unintended death) are a minute part of the overall category of deliberate assault and battery (DAB): somewhere around 1.5% among adults and even less for juveniles.¹ The fact remains:

¹To clarify this point, I first studied a sample of 256 cases of deliberate assault and battery with ensuing total incapacity to work (TIW), tried by a Paris area *correctionnel* court in 2000, involving 312 over-age offenders and 321 victims (Mucchielli, 2006). Sixty-two percent of victims were granted a TIW of less than 8 days, of which three-fourths were even under 3 days. Conversely, 38% were granted a TIW of over 8 days, but only 1.5% of these had very serious injuries causing long-term or even permanent incapacitation. In 10% of cases, the offender had used a knife and in only 1.5%, a firearm. Next, a recent study, on juveniles this time, analyzing a sample of cases tried by juvenile court judges (in their chambers or in court) in 2005, involving 235 offenders and 282 victims, yielded comparable findings. Only in 7% of cases did the violence suffered lead to a TIW of over 8 days, above 21 days in 1.8% of cases, and long-term incapacitation in only one case, representing less than 0.4% (Le Goaziou & Mucchielli, 2009).

Since the police and *gendarmerie* services recorded 176,000 DABs in 2007, a 1% rate would represent 1,760 cases, which is much more than the number of homicides (826) and attempted homicides (1,040) recorded for that same year.

Furthermore, and generally speaking, this legal definition of acts is a sensitive point, especially during the investigation phase. One wonders, in particular, whether the police do not tend, occasionally, to load charges on some cases and some individuals, as well as to protect others, for a variety of reasons. To test this hypothesis on a large sample, we merged the data from the last four available years of police statistics (2004–2007), and calculated the distribution of women, foreigners, and juveniles among the individuals charged within the three broad criminal categories used at the police level: completed homicide, attempted homicide, and fatal assault and battery. At the same time, we did the same calculation with court statistics for 2003–2006, to compare police definitions with those finally adopted at the trial. The study of police definitions shows that foreigners are more often prosecuted for attempted homicide than for fatal assault and battery (violence causing unintended death), whereas the opposite is true for women. Now, these differences disappear, for the most, in court conviction statistics. Can it be that the police tend to load charges on foreigners more than on French citizens? And that women are “protected” more than men? We can merely advance the hypothesis, where only a meticulous examination of a sample of case files would provide clear evidence. Lastly, these questions of definition do not seem to affect juveniles for the recent period.

There is a second broad problem concerning definition: The notion of “intention to kill” separates the category of homicide from that of “deliberate assault and battery having caused unintended death.” Those two curves differ during the period, especially during the early years (up to 1995). Observation of the series of fatal assault and battery cases since 1972 would show

other periods when disparities were great. In fact, the “intention to kill” is often difficult to ascertain, particularly when the offenders, and often the victims as well, are heavily under the influence of alcohol.² This again points to the importance of these legal definitions and to their possible variation over time, as well as to the need for a comprehensive capture, at the least, of all the assaults that caused death, irrespective of whether or not they have been defined as intentional homicide.

Court statistics are the oldest source of statistical information on the criminal population. The *Compte général de l'administration de la justice criminelle* [General record of criminal justice] has been published since 1827. However, this source experienced several periods of crisis, the last of which dates back to the mid-1970s, and led the publication of these statistics to disappear in 1978 (Aubusson de Cavarlay, Huré, & Pottier, 1989). Until that date, we possess statistical series of the convictions for a group of crimes – homicide, fatal assault, and other injuries defined as crimes – based on the Criminal Records Registry. A series was again published annually from 1984 on, based on the same information (convictions registered in the criminal records), detailing the abovementioned offenses, and making it possible to isolate fatal, deliberate violence. This source also shows the sex, age group, and nationality of convicted persons. Furthermore, in its yearly publication, the Ministry of Justice consistently mentions that the number of convictions is underestimated, since about one third are not conveyed to the Criminal records registry by the courts. Last, when reading the graphs, it is important to remember that final convictions are

²It has already been pointed out that in trials before the *Cour d'Assises* (an assize court, or a court before which the most serious offenses, called *crimes* in the French criminal code, are tried by a jury), as the offenders usually do not deny the facts, determining whether the homicide was perpetrated intentionally or not represents one of the main stakes, if not *the* main stake, with respect to their defense (Mucchielli, 2004a, 2004b).

handed down, logically, several years after the fact. Moreover, the average duration of legal proceedings (for *crimes*) has increased over the years. It was approximately 3.5 years, for all cases, in the early 1990s. By the mid-2000s, the duration was about 4 years for juveniles and 5 for adults.

Police Clear-Ups as a Filter

The difference in magnitude between police and court statistics is also partly due to the fact that only a fraction of recorded homicides are solved (slightly over 80% in the mid-2000s), and that fraction varies according to the homicide categories differentiated in the police statistics. “Gang-related homicides” are the least often cleared (about 40%), whereas others that are frequent are as follows: homicides related to theft (about 75%), and especially homicides “for other reasons” (about 90%), as well as homicides committed on juveniles (as victims) under the age of 15 (also about 90%). This is understandable, since over 80% of tried cases involve close relations (family, couples, friends, or neighbors), which greatly facilitates the detectives’ investigations (Mucchielli, 2004b). This leaves 20% of uncleared cases. A previous case-file study and interviews with police detectives on their detection work (Mucchielli, 2004a) led us to develop a typology of the main causes (not mutually exclusive) of nondetection, the main ones being: absence or nonidentification of the corpse, insufficient evidence, especially a lack of eyewitnesses, resistance on the part of the suspect (especially when detectives try to get a confession), lack of prior relationship between offender and victim (making it difficult to understand the motives), the suspect’s leaving the country and lack of international police cooperation, insufficient physical and human resources for investigation (due to work overload and to the need to prioritize emergencies), and last, political pressure. For all of these reasons, and although some of the aforementioned difficulties are improving

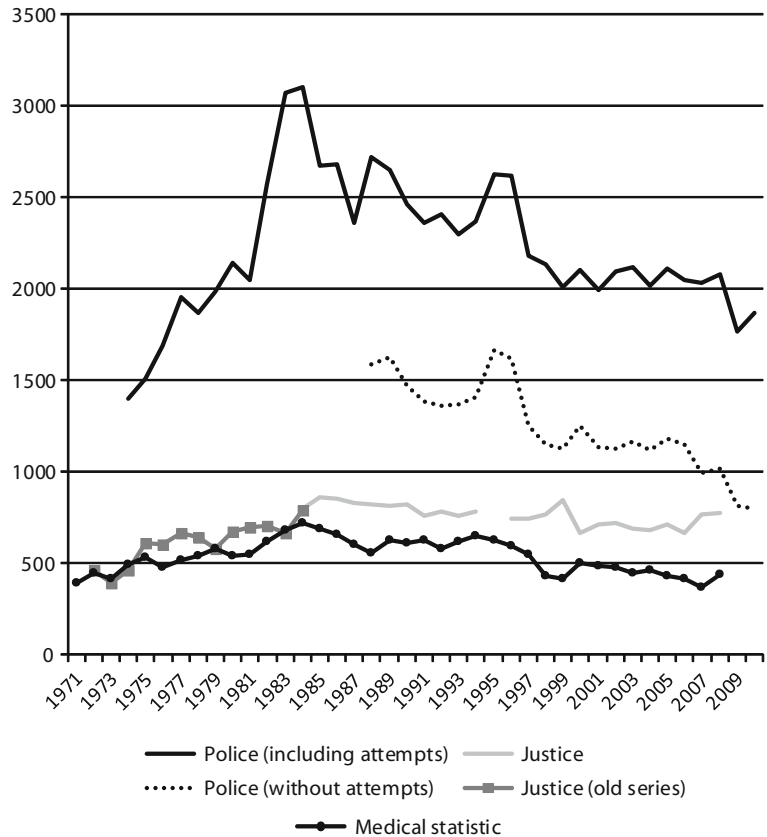
steadily,³ some homicides will never be tried and therefore cannot be included in court statistics.

Overall Trends

At this point, we can shift our focus from differences in levels between the different sources to the overall trend and periodization of statistical series. Figure 19.1 shows that the three sources concur as to overall trends and illustrate two phases: an overall rise during the 1970–1984 period, followed by an overall decline from 1985 to the present. When we go into greater detail, the concurrence is even closer for the 1989–2006 period (for which police statistics make a distinction between completed and attempted homicides). The police and INSERM curves show a rise from 1993 to 1995, followed by a drop from 1996 to 1999 and a slight upturn in 2000 (continuing until 2002 for the police data), with a downward trend since. The Police curve shows greater variations, but the timing is very much the same, whereas the Justice curve shows even fewer variations in the general downward trend, except for a slight increment in 1998 and especially 1999, probably corresponding to the 1993–1995 police peak, given the average duration of criminal proceedings.

³This is true of international police cooperation, as well as in handling missing person cases. On the latter issue, the French administration has done a great deal in the last 10 years, in collaboration with victim assistance schemes. In particular, it has reinforced the coordination of government services, with the creation, in 2002, of the *Office Central chargé des Disparitions Inquiétantes de Personnes* (the Central Office for Alarming Disappearances of Persons), which merged in 2006, into the Central Office for the Control of Personal Violence, working to combat violent personal offenses, especially homicide, rape, pedo-pornography, sequestration and kidnapping, and handling alarming disappearances and the discovery of unidentified corpses. This bureau centralizes information and handles the missing persons’ database in particular. The Ministry of Justice, in turn, signed a convention in 2006 aimed at setting up a national system for alerting the population, with the help of the mass media, in cases of the kidnapping of a juvenile.

Fig. 19.1 Illustration of the serialization of five sets of data from three sources based on extremely varied methods and counts, as indicated by the considerable differences in magnitude. It is essential, then, to determine how these data are produced, both to check on any biases and to attempt a comparison



Epidemiology of Homicide

Regional Distribution of Homicide Rates

Geographical data are not very consistent in police and justice statistics because of a categorization in administrative large districts (French “départements”) while homicides are much more localized in some cities and some quarters of cities (Mucchielli, 2009). At this general level of observation, we can only observe three main results. First, there is a global concentration of homicide in the most urbanized regions. Second, there is still a relative specificity in the high level of homicide of the Mediterranean regions and especially Corsica, but this specificity has decreased through the two last decades. Third, this specificity is partly linked with the importance of organized crime (like drug trafficking) and it is this kind of homicide (related to organized

crime) that seems to explain more and more of the “French homicide ranking” featuring Corsica in first place and the Seine-Saint-Denis (north Parisian poor suburbs) in second.

The data presented below are based on the abovementioned official data sources as well as on the largest research based on judicial files: 105 homicides brought to an assize court of the Paris area in the 1990s (Mucchielli, 2004a, 2004b).

Incident Characteristics

Relationships Between Perpetrators and Victims

A key question for the overall understanding of homicide is how to distinguish homicides linked to other forms of criminal behavior and “other homicides.”

Table 19.1 Types of relationships between perpetrators and victims in a sample of judicial files, Paris area, 1987–1996 ($N=102$)

	Numbers	%
No relationship	19	18.5
Extra familial or marital relationships	34	33
Familial relationships	15	15
Marital or para-marital loving relationships	34	33.5
Total	102	100

Source: Mucchielli (2002)

1. Homicides linked to other forms of criminal behavior (11.1 % of homicides in 2009)

First, this category includes homicides that are related to the criminal underworld, mainly linked to the competition for illegal market control, such as of the drug market. This phenomenon is concentrated in time and space (during the 1980s and the 1990s, other homicides in this category were linked to the specific kind of political war in Corsica, between different nationalist groups, but this war is now almost over).

Second, this category includes homicides that are perpetrated during a theft, a burglary or a holdup, in an intentional or an unintentional way (this category of homicide has globally decreased since the beginning of the 1990s).

2. “Ordinary homicides” (88.9% of homicides in 2009)

Homicides between unknown groups capture a large diversity of situations, ranging from improvised fights in a pub between drunk men, homicides perpetrated by a mentally ill individual, and hate crimes (against a member of an ethnic minority or a homosexual). The majority of homicides in this category, however, are linked to ordinary conflicts of social life, between persons who know each other well. A research on a sample of judicial files shows that more than 80% of these homicides have happened in the context of familiar relationships (Mucchielli, 2002). The first circle is constituted by marital or paramarital loving relationships. The following circle consists of familial relationships (child homicides,

parent homicides, etc.). The third circle is the neighborhood one. Most of those last cases are also characterized by the ancientness of a conflict between perpetrators and their victims (Table 19.1).

Victim and Perpetrator Characteristics

From time immemorial, the perpetrators of homicides have been very unequally distributed by sex. In contemporary France, 85% of the perpetrators are men, while 15% are women. Men are more often involved in homicides (as opposed to attempted homicides and fatal blows) committed in the street, as a result of a poorly motivated conflict (originating in circumstances of the moment, not long brewed), between a perpetrator and a victim who did not know one another. To the extent that small numbers allow for any conclusion, it may be broadly assumed that women commit crimes of a rather different type. In addition to infanticide, women are more often than men involved in crimes against a spouse, in the domestic setting, with a view to punishing him (for his treacherousness, his cowardice, desertion, etc. Mucchielli, 2004a, 2004b). It should be noted, however, that infanticide is not as typically a women’s crime as is commonly believed. In police statistics, the proportion of infanticide committed by women has decreased from 80 to 50% between the 1970s and 2009.

When it comes to the age characteristics of perpetrators, police statistics only distinguish between adults and minors. Judicial statistics, however, allow for the distinguishing of age brackets. The proportion of minors is the same at the end of the 2000s as in the 1980s: around 5%. In fact, around 60% of perpetrators are aged between 20 and 40. Homicide is mainly a crime of young (male) adults. It rises from adolescence to the “mature age” then decreases and vanishes after age 60.

Victim characteristics are captured by medical statistics; the gender share is very constant since the 1970s: men represent 60% of victims, women 40%. The age average of victims is 40 for men and a little higher (between 40 and 45) for women.

Familial and Social Situations of Perpetrators

Police or justice statistics do not capture information on perpetrators' or victims' familial and social situations (they only capture their gender, age, and nationality). Once again, we must turn to prior research for additional information. Here, we will again use the study of a judicial sample of 105 homicides perpetrated in the Paris area between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s (Mucchielli, 2004a, 2004b).

Contrary to a common prejudice that incriminates the one-parent family and divorce in the genesis of delinquency, the circumstances during the perpetrator's childhood do not appear to be a determining factor. In almost two cases out of three, the perpetrators under study were raised for most of their childhood by a parental couple, either the initial or one that was recomposed (the latter situation representing a clear minority in the sample). Conversely, the instances where a perpetrator was raised by a single parent almost all the time (during the whole of his/her childhood) are very rare (under 5% of the cases). This reminds us that a one-parent family at a given time will often be recomposed later. Then, we note the frequency of situations where the individuals were not raised by either parent, or had only distant and occasional contacts with their parents. One characteristic of the population under study is the large proportion of particularly unstructured family situations. In close to 20% of cases, the perpetrators were raised for several years by a third party (e.g., their grandparents), by foster families selected by social workers, or by educators in homes for youth. This is an important variable because statistical analysis makes it possible to identify certain consequences of the family histories on the psychological profile of the perpetrators. Emotional deprivation, immaturity, and a tendency toward depression are strongly linked to not having been raised by their parents. The analysis also shows that the perpetrators of homicide who experienced that type of childhood are more likely to have committed the crime after a one-on-one fight for a reason resulting from immediate circumstances (as opposed to a bitter, long-standing conflict). In total, the

family factor constitutes a personal handicap and a considerable social risk. Confirming another firmly established fact, *family conflict* is one more factor that strongly contributes to making individuals vulnerable, even though it is usually hidden behind apparently stable forms of family relationships. The nature of the perpetrators' relations with their parents is tentatively delineated below, as far as the information collected made it possible (in 18% of cases, it proved impossible). And even in the other cases, the data are only rough approximations that are probably well below the real figures. Violence within the family is typically under-reported (and is even sometimes not perceived as such by the victims). Nevertheless, certain tendencies are clearly noticeable. In cases where we know the nature of the relationship between parents and children, they are usually a source of conflict, and in more than one case out of two, the conflict involved physical violence.

In this case study in the Paris area, considering the very bad level of schooling of murderers and the period studied (the years 1987–1996), which was characterized by a very high rate of unemployment, particularly among blue-collar workers, it comes as no surprise that only 39% of the perpetrators of homicides had a job and were economically active. However, it was more surprising that the rest are less often unemployed (a bare 10% of all perpetrators) than simply economically inactive. After examining the files, it appears moreover that among the economically inactive, a high proportion of persons do not have a permanent home (over 1 out of every 3 cases); the proportion would probably be twice as high if some had not been able to rely on family solidarity. Among the perpetrators of homicide who are in the labor force, the vast majority belonged to the working classes and to the category of lowest wages. Blue- and white-collar workers account for almost four fifths of the total number (79%). This includes individuals with a CAP (a lower-level vocational training certificate) or a *baccalauréat* (school leaving certificate obtained at age 17–18), as well as some with no diploma. There are also some self-employed craftsmen, tradesmen, and businessmen, who were actually

all in small enterprises (restaurant owners, fruit and vegetables market vendor, electrician, owner of a small scrap yard, and scrap dealer). These occupations require hardly any qualification and are not very lucrative. On the whole, about 90% of the perpetrators of homicide who are employed belong to the working classes, with many of them at the lowest salary levels. And if those who are economically inactive are included, the proportion exceeds 95%, a very strong over-representation of economically inactive persons and of blue- and white-collar workers.

Finally, we do not have any systematic data about homicide perpetrated by the police against citizens, such as criminals in a chase or during a questioning, but also simple citizens in a street demonstration or during riots. Those cases are rare but real. At the beginning of the 1990s, the situation was so problematic that the nongovernmental organization Amnesty International has edited a report on violence by the police in France, based on eleven cases of homicide perpetrated by policemen outside of any self-defense situations during an 18-month period (1993 and half of 1994). The report emphasized the lack of control and the evident clemency of judicial sentences. Unfortunately, there is no equivalent of such a report for the 2000s.

Mental Disorders, Alcohol Abuse, and Acting-Out

Based on the same judicial sample (Mucchielli, 2004a, 2004b) as mentioned above (105 homicides), we have also analyzed psychiatric examinations of homicide perpetrators (Mucchielli, 2001). According to those experts, three quarters of perpetrators are in what we have called “a bad psychological health,” but cases of the official labeling of mental disorders are rare. In the sample, only 13% of perpetrators were diagnosed with psychopathic tendencies; the majority were men with a very weak intellectual level. The most frequently encountered psychological problems include immaturity, early emotional deprivations, anxiety, high emotional state, and depression. In second comes the psychopathic tendencies and, at the end, perverse, paranoid, and psychotic tendencies.

All those psychological problems are strongly correlated to the familial history and the childhood of homicide perpetrators. In the same study, it was established that being raised in a conflict-ridden family atmosphere, apparently free from physical violence, is on the one hand very often linked with a highly emotional psychological profile, and on the other hand quite often associated with economic inactivity and occupational instability. Moreover, being raised in a conflict-ridden family atmosphere that involves physical violence is very frequently linked to a psychological profile characterized by immaturity, emotional deficiency, and possibly, psychotic tendencies. This element is also present in the history of the rare cases where the conflict between the perpetrator and the victim had lasted for more than 10 years, as though having experienced violence made a conflict-ridden, long-term relationship – usually in married life or married-like situations – tolerable until the day when it resulted in an act that was more violent than usual.

Finally, the above-cited research (Mucchielli, 2004a, 2004b) has shown that the most important factor to understanding the escalation of conflict into a homicide was the use of alcohol, which is a classic result (see e.g., Murdoch, Phil, & Ross, 1990). In the French judicial sample, around 55% of perpetrators and more than 40% of victims were drunk at the time of the homicide (drugs or others psychotropic substances are marginal in this sample, and most of time associated with alcohol). And in many cases, the strong alcohol uses of homicide offenders made it very difficult to establish the intention of the homicidal act.

Explanations for Homicide Specific to France

For several decades, historians have viewed trends in homicide rates as one of the rare reliable indicators of the evolution of interpersonal violence across Europe. Moreover, they have evidence of a historical decline of physical violence since the end of the Middle Ages (Muchembled, 2008; Spierenburg, 2008). But what about today? Although the idea that “violence is back” has

become a commonplace, the number of homicides perpetrated annually in France has actually been declining since the mid-1980s.⁴ The fact remains that we are now actually experiencing the lowest level of homicides since the beginning of the nineteenth century (Bourgoin, 2008).

In fact, the period 1970–1985 seems to have been an exception. Since the beginning of the twentieth century and out of war's time, it is the only period during which homicide has increased in a real trend. How can we explain this?

Pointing to demographical factors is a classical explanation in the sociology of crime (South & Messner, 2000). And we have seen that homicide is mainly a crime of young adult men; this finding has many implications for France during the 1960s, a consequence of the “baby-boom” after the Second World War. But the proportion of young men aged below 25 does not continue to increase after 1970. We can, however, suggest two others hypotheses. First, in France this period is characterized by a very strong increase of the unemployment rate: a multiplication by 6 for men and by 3 for women. This period is one of the worst periods of French industrial history. It has strongly and quickly increased the level of social inequalities, which is a general factor of homicide rates (Ouimet, 2011). This phenomenon has certainly exacerbated and degenerated familial and social preexisting conflicts. Second, during this period, French political and social history is characterized by a specific type of social conflict, a consequence of the conjunction of two apparent antagonistic phenomena (Stora, 1991, 1992). On the one hand, France has conducted during the 1950s and until 1962 the hardest colonial war of her history: the Algerian war. On the other hand, Algerian people (mainly men) constitute the most important migrant group during the 1960s and 1970s, as a consequence of the recruitment policy of French majors firms, in particular in motor industry and building trade. Historians of French contemporary history have pointed out that there was a very important

increase of racist violence against men from the Maghreb (i.e., Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) during the 1970s (Gastaud, 2000; Viet, 2004). Based on a large review of national and local newspapers, a journalist had even listed during this period of the 1970s and early 1980s several hundred of what he has called “arabicides” (Guidice, 1992). This second hypothesis is consistent with an examination of “ethnic factors” and the “fractionalization process” emphasized by Ouimet (2011).

To progress in the explanation of the different trends, we need more research combining micro and macro dimensions, based on a subtle typology of the different types of homicide. Anyway, we can also conclude on two major characteristics of French homicide phenomenon.

First, despite social, ethnic, and political factors that sometimes increase the homicide rate, and despite criminality linked to the criminal underworld, homicide is mainly a convenience crime, a crime of proximity. In the majority of situations, the protagonists of homicide know each other well, or even very well, and they often drag out an old interpersonal conflict. Moreover, it is this strong inter-knowledge between perpetrators and victims that also mainly explains the level of physical violence reached in altercations that finish in homicide. This kind of psycho-sociological law has been already showed in the study of nonlethal assault and batteries, both for adults (Mucchielli, 2006) and juveniles (Le Goaziou & Mucchielli, 2009). In others terms, one is getting “beside himself” and fiercely attacking someone else as he knows this person well and as the situation is overloaded in affects and emotion. On the contrary, violence for a theft from a stranger is instrumental and so one can stay under control.

Second, a strong macro-sociological link exists between homicide and problems of social integration, concerning particularly some urban areas more or less ghettoized. This finding has been reported in various international studies (see e.g., Land, McCall, & Cohen, 1990; Sampson & Wilson, 1995; Williams & Flewelling, 1988) and we have found the same result in contemporary France. But even in those areas, only a tiny minority of people kill. In the life-course and life story of

⁴These trends, both in France as well as in a European context, are discussed in more detail by Summers & Haen Marshall in the previous volume.

homicide perpetrators, some familial factors are also playing their role. In fact, the combination of social exclusion and destructured childhood strongly increase the risk that, when confronting ordinary conflicts of social and familial life, some people are not self-restrained in the violence of their reaction. Considering their personal history, we can often say that they have little recourse to face those conflicts and not much to lose in their social life: no good job to keep, no reputation to save, and no personal or familial project. For many murderers, their life summary is: a hard past, a poor present, and no future.

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Background

The Federal Republic of Germany is a densely populated country (82 million inhabitants on 357,000 km², i.e. 230 inhabitants/km²) and highly urbanized (at the end of 2007, 31% of the population lived in cities of at least 100,000 inhabitants) (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009a).

Germany's demographic structure is characterized by two main features: immigration and ageing. At the end of 2008, 6.7 million foreign citizens lived in Germany, and in 2007, 19% of the population included migrants or descendants of immigrants (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009a). Regarding the age structure, it is noteworthy that the proportion of inhabitants 65 years or older is on the rise (in 2008, it was 20% compared to 15% (West Germany only) in 1980; it is projected to further increase to 23% in 2020). At the same time, the proportion of young people in the age bracket from 16 to 29 years dropped from 22% in

1980 (West Germany) to 17% in 2008 and is projected to further shrink to 14% in 2020.¹

Illiteracy in the strict sense of the word is virtually absent in Germany; the literacy rate was estimated to be 99% in 2003 (CIA, 2010). The life expectancy at birth is 79 years (76 for males, 82 for females) (CIA, 2010).

Another relevant factor in discussing homicide in Germany is the prevalence of alcohol abuse. In 2003, per capita recorded alcohol consumption among adults above 14 years was 12 l of pure alcohol (WHO, 2008), which is the seventh highest value worldwide. Nonetheless, alcohol *abuse* is a behavioural problem restricted to a small segment of the population: according to a survey of the German-speaking population between 18 and 64 years in 2006, 11% of the respondents show risky alcohol consumption behaviour (more than 30 g alcohol/day for men, and 20 g alcohol/day for women); 4% of this age group can be classified as alcohol abusers, and 2% as alcohol addicted (Pabst & Kraus, 2008: S39, S41).

Drug abuse is not as widespread as risky alcohol consumption; according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the annual prevalence rates of use for the population aged 15–64 are estimated at 0.2% for opiates (2007), 5% for cannabis (2007), 0.4% for ecstasy, 0.5% for amphetamines and 1% for cocaine (the last three figures refer to the population aged 18–64 in 2006). In comparison with other European

¹Own computations based on the 'middle scenario' in (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009b: 39, 40, 43, 44) and population tables provided by the Statistisches Bundesamt.

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countries, Germany occupies a middle rank (UNODC, 2010: 277–301).

In the context of a study on homicide, the prevalence of gun ownership is another interesting feature of German society. In the International Crime Victim Survey 2004/5, 13% of the respondents indicated that they own a firearm, and 4% said that they have a handgun (van Dijk, van Kesteren, & Smit, 2007: 279); respectively, these figures are somewhat higher and lower than the average proportions across all participating countries of 14% (firearms) and 3% (handguns).

Previous Research on Homicide in Germany

Empirical research on homicide in Germany is dominated by criminalistic and psychological studies. It concentrates on the identification of typical *modi operandi*, and psychological and other characteristics, which might be relevant for the propensity to commit a homicide, often with a focus on specific types of homicide, such as killings of intimates (Lamott, 2009), homicides against children (Höyneck & Görgen, 2006; Höyneck, 2010), serial murders (Harbort & Mokros, 2001) or killings for material gain (Volbert, 1992). They are often based on samples selected from special populations (such as clients of forensic psychiatrists, e.g. Remschmidt, Martin, Niebergall, & Walter, 2002, or inmates of psychiatric institutions, e.g. Lamott, 2009) or from a specific region (e.g., Titterington & Grundies, 2007; Dotzauer & Jarosch, 1971; Weiher, 1989); thus, it is questionable that their descriptive findings can be generalized to the whole population of offenders in Germany.

There are only few studies that examine the general development and epidemiology of homicide in Germany. Among these, the detailed analysis of homicide trends in West Germany between 1953 and 1997 by Thome and Birkel (2007), which is partially updated in Birkel (2009), is worth mentioning; their data source is the Police Crime Statistics. The important, although somewhat outdated, study by Rode and Scheld (1986),

who analyse all court verdicts (except cases with foreign offenders) for murder and manslaughter of the years 1969 and 1981, contains some complementary information regarding offender characteristics such as the socio-economic status.

Analyses with a more sociological focus on the explanation of homicide *rates*, that is, the connection between macro-level characteristics of German society and the prevalence and distribution of homicides, is virtually absent. In a series of publications, a group of economists presents findings on the correlates of rates of different crimes, including murder and manslaughter, based on pooled time-series analyses of data for the federal states from the mid-1970s onward (e.g. Entorf & Spengler, 2000; Entorf & Winker, 2005; Spengler, 2006). They identify some robust correlates of homicide; among them are the (conditional) conviction rate and the average length of prison sentences, per-capita-GDP and the proportion of males aged 15–24.

Data Sources Used for this Study

The two main data sources for homicides committed in Germany are the cause of death statistics regularly published by the Statistisches Bundesamt, and the Police Crime Statistics compiled by the Bundeskriminalamt (Federal Criminal Police Office).

The causes of deaths statistics are based on the death certificates in which a physician indicates the primary cause of death after the post-mortem examination. The information contained in the certificates is coded according to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) of the WHO by the statistical offices of the *Länder* (federal states), who forward the data to the Statistisches Bundesamt (2010: 2–6). The post-mortem examination is conducted by normal physicians without special training in forensic issues. If the cause of the death is obviously an assault or it cannot be determined and there are signs of an unnatural death, the physician has to notify the police. The results of the investigation form the basis of the Police Crime Statistics: if it turns out that, in fact,

a crime has happened, a record will be created for the appropriate category.

The categories of the Police Crime Statistics are defined corresponding to sections in the German Penal Code and according to criminological criteria. Thus, it is necessary to attend to the legal definition of homicide in German Penal Law.² In the *Strafgesetzbuch (StGB)*, the German Penal Code, several types of homicide are defined. The most serious one is murder (§211): ‘A murderer (...) is any person who kills a person for pleasure, for sexual gratification, out of greed or otherwise base motives, by stealth or cruelly or by means that pose a danger to the public or in order to facilitate or to cover up another offence’ (*Strafgesetzbuch*, §211, as translated by Michael Bohlander, 2009). All other intentional killings where the aggravating circumstances according to §211 (murderous lust, greed, etc.) are missing fall into the category of manslaughter, which is defined in §212. The difficulties of proving the defining elements of murder according to §211 are obvious, and in many cases it will be hard to tell if a specific crime is to be classified as ‘murder’ or as ‘manslaughter’. Cases in which someone requests to be killed by someone else are covered by §216, which mandates a milder sentence than §212. Finally, until 1998, infanticide was not punished as murder or manslaughter (as it has been since 1998), but as infanticide according to §217.

The term ‘homicide’ commonly refers to an intentional killing, but there are also cases in which someone died in the course of an attack where it is difficult to assess if there was, indeed, a determination on the side of the offender to kill, or the victim came to death more or less accidentally. Therefore, such cases should be also considered in a criminological study on homicide. In German penal law, such offences are punished according to §227 as ‘bodily injury resulting in death’ or under

§231 as ‘participation in a brawl resulting in death’, depending on the circumstances.³

The Police Crime Statistics reflect the knowledge at the end of the police investigation, before the files are forwarded to the public prosecution authority, whereas the causes of deaths statistics are based on the information at the very beginning of the process (the records are not updated in accordance with the outcome of the investigation by the police, except for cases in which an autopsy was conducted); therefore, the Police Crime Statistics are the preferred source of data.

As mentioned earlier, the distinction between murder (§211), manslaughter (§212) and assault resulting in death (§216) is, in many cases, difficult to draw. In many cases, this issue can be settled only in court, and the registration by the police for the Police Crime Statistics will be guided by a provisional judgment in the light of the rule that offences should be subsumed under the category with the highest potential punishment. But there is no guarantee for consistency over place and time. These problems multiply in the case of attempts, where it is often difficult to say if there was an actual intention to kill involved, or only a simple assault, robbery, etc. There is much leeway for classification according to principles of expediency (Kreuzer, 1982, 2002), which might be the explanation for widely varying proportions of attempts: as it seems, the

²For a comparison of legal definitions of homicide across Europe, see Smit and Bijleveld (2012).

³In addition, analogous crimes of stalking, arson and smuggling of human beings resulting in death are defined in §§238, 306c of the German Penal Code and in §97 of the law on residence in Germany (*Aufenthaltsgesetz*). Similar cases of killings in the course of a robbery, sexual abuse of children or rape are covered by §§176b, 178, and 251 of the *Strafgesetzbuch*. Unfortunately, separate data for rape resulting in death and sexual abuse resulting in death are only available since 1999 (before that year, such cases were registered together with non-lethal rapes etc.), and in the case of robbery, it is not possible to separate lethal from non-lethal cases for the whole period under study. Similar problems apply to stalking resulting in death, arson resulting in death and smuggling of human beings resulting in death. Thus, these offences will be excluded from our analyses, but this seems to be acceptable in view of the low number of cases involved.

propensity to classify a non-lethal act of violence as homicide depends on the existence of specialized homicide departments in the respective police forces, and the workload of these departments (Sessar, 1979; Kreuzer, 2002). Thus, data on attempted homicides are of low reliability.

In view of the difficulties involved in the classification of homicides, we will present the combined rate of all intentional killings and killings in course of other crimes as far as they are recorded separately (i.e. the categories murder, manslaughter [including killings on request], infanticide and assault resulting in death [including participation in a brawl resulting in death]) under the exclusion of attempts when describing trends in homicide based on Police Crime Statistics.⁴ The data refer to the whole of Germany for the years since 1993; before this year, the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) is excluded, because reliable data are not available for this territory. It has to be noted that for the purpose of the Police Crime Statistics, the cases are registered for the year in which they are recorded, that is, at the end of the investigation, which is not necessarily the year in which the crime happened. For this reason, figures for the former GDR and Berlin from 1993 to 1998 (as well as for Germany as a whole) include many cases in which people were killed at the former border to the Federal Republic including the Berlin Wall in the years between 1962 and 1989 during attempts to leave the GDR, and are somewhat inflated by these crimes.⁵ Because of peculiarities of data availability, we will concentrate on the period from 1987 to 2009; to a limited degree, figures for earlier years are available, which are presented first.

⁴The resulting combined rate of completed homicides is dominated by murder and manslaughter: In 1993–1998, 71% of the cases were murder/manslaughter, 1% infanticides and 28% assaults resulting in death. In 2005–2009, the corresponding proportions were 84% (murder/manslaughter) and 16% (assault resulting in death); infanticide was no longer recorded separately.

⁵It is difficult and only partially possible to identify these cases; therefore, they are generally included in the figures reported in this paper, unless indicated otherwise.

Epidemiology of Homicide

Recent Trends in Homicide

As can be inferred from Fig. 20.1, the rate of completed homicide cases rose in West Germany from 1963 until the early 1980s, from below 1.5 per 100,000 inhabitants to nearly 2.0.⁶ Then, a slight decline started which was interrupted by the German reunification, which was followed by an increase until the mid-1990s. Thereafter, a continuous and remarkable decline started, so that the homicide rate fell below 1.0. Interestingly, East Germany has a higher incidence of homicides than the western part of the Federal Republic. Immediately after the reunification, it rose to 4.5 per 100,000, which was more than twice the rate of West Germany at that time. But since the mid-1990s, the incidence of homicide in both parts of the country converged quickly, although the gap has widened again a bit since 2000. The high rate of the former GDR during the 1990s is in part due to cases of killings at the inner-German border prior to 1989, on which investigations were started after 1990, but it is – as already mentioned – impossible to sort out these cases.⁷

Looking at the individual offences, it turns out that – since 1987 or 1993, respectively – the development of murder and manslaughter largely mirrored that of the combined figures, although they peaked earlier (1993). Assault resulting in death, on the contrary, increased in West Germany even before the reunification, and reached its high later than murder and manslaughter (1995). Also, the proportional increase in the early 1990s was

⁶It has to be noted that in Germany one case is counted even if there is more than one victim. In the period from 2005 to 2009, there were on average 1.08 victims per completed homicide. We start with the year 1963, because it is the first one in which assaults resulting in death occurring as part of a traffic offence were not recorded in the Police Crime Statistics, as it was done until 1962. Thus, pre-1963 figures are not comparable with those from 1963 onwards.

⁷In contrast to the cases at the Berlin Wall, which were excluded in the computation of the homicide rates for West Germany and the whole of Germany.

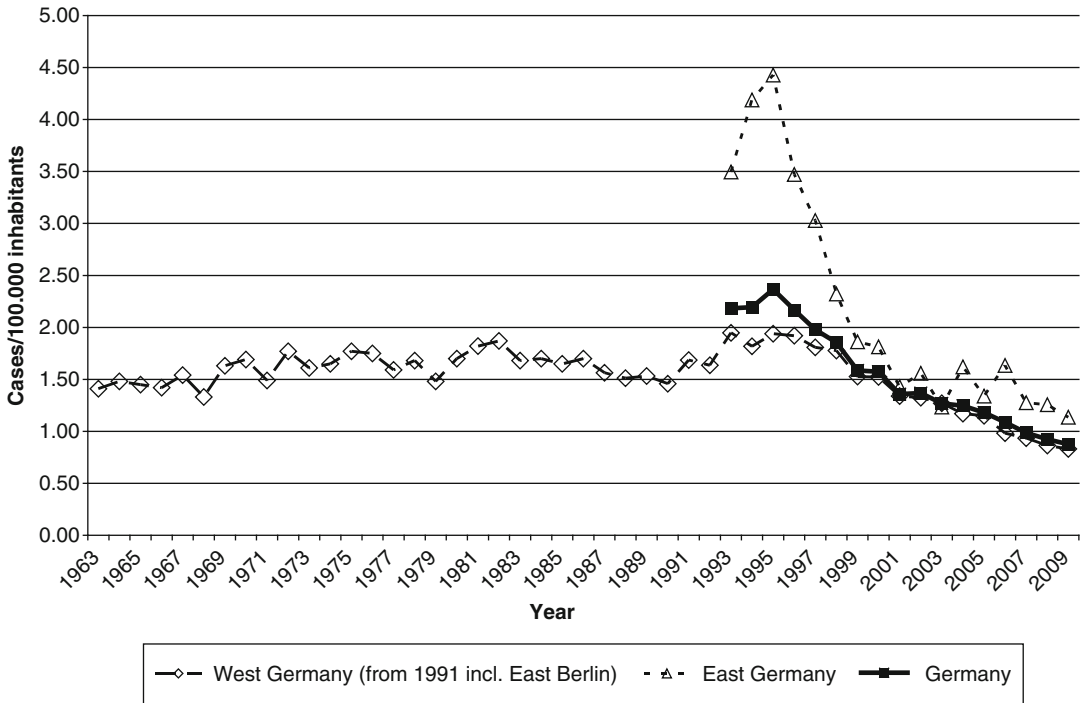


Fig. 20.1 Rate of completed homicide (murder, manslaughter, assault resulting in death, infanticide) in Germany, 1963–2009. *Note:* Fatalities at the Berlin Wall are excluded. *Source:* Bundeskriminalamt, Police Crime Statistics

much more pronounced (the combined rate rose by 9% between 1993 and 1995, while assault resulting in death increased by 82%; in West Germany, the combined rate rose by 24% during 1987–1995, while the proportional increase of assault resulting in death was 167%). Infanticide, finally, increased only moderately (in the West even before the reunification) and declined in the second half of the 1990s (in the West starting earlier) until the revocation of the law which defined this crime. The incidence in East Germany was considerably higher than in West Germany (on average 0.048 per 100,000 population during 1993–1998, compared to 0.024).

Regarding rape and sexual assault resulting in death – which is not included in the combined homicide figures presented above (and below) – it turns out that it is of minor quantitative importance: There are only a few cases each year. In the period from 1999 (when the crime was recorded for the first time under a separate category) to 2004, the incidence of these crimes was higher in the

West (0.025 per 100,000 inhabitants, compared to 0.018 in the East), but it has declined in recent years there (during the period 2005–2009, the average rate was 0.005).⁸

There is, after all, another interesting subcategory, murder in connection with robbery, which gives some indication on the role of instrumental motives – which seems to decline: The incidence of this type of murder decreased continuously in the West (from 0.13 per 100,000 population in 1987–1992 to 0.03 in 2005–2009) and remained stable in the East (around 0.03). The proportion of all murders which belong to this category declined since 1987 from 17 to 8% in the West, while it *increased* (since 1993) in the East from 4 to 7%.

⁸For sexual murder (a subcategory of murder), the picture is very similar: A continuous decline of the incidence, especially in the West (from 0.048 per 100,000 population in 1987–1992 to 0.015 in 2005–2009), where it was until recently also higher than in the East (0.016 in 1993–1998, 0.015 since then).

Finally, we would like to sketch the development of clearance rates (which are available only for all cases, including attempts): They show less variability than the incidence of homicide. In the West, there was a temporary decrease of the clearance rate from 94 (1990) to 85% (1993) followed by a rise to 95% in 1998; since then it has remained at this level. In the East, after the reunification, the clearance rate was considerably lower than in the West (73% in 1993), but rose quickly and reached 95% in 1999; since then, it has fluctuated around this value. Regarding the different types of homicide, there are no major differences, besides the fact that the clearance rate for infanticide was lower (in most years below 80%) than that of murder, manslaughter and assault resulting in death.

Regional Distribution of Homicide Rates

We computed the average homicide rates of the federal states for four 6-year periods from 1987 onwards (the last period consists only of 5 years), the average rates of western and eastern states, as well as some descriptive statistics.⁹ In the first period (1987–1992), the dominant pattern is the difference between the federal states, which consist of a single city (Bremen, Hamburg, West Berlin), the so called ‘city states’ (*Stadtstaaten*; average rate 3.1), and the large federal states (*Flächenländer*), which had a much lower homicide rate (1.4). In 1993–1998, as data for the former GDR became available, a huge difference between the western (1.8) and the eastern (3.5) parts of the federal republic became visible, with the remarkable exception of Saxony, which showed a level (1.6) comparable to many western federal states. Besides that, homicide rates rose

generally (for West Germany, the average was 1.8, compared to 1.6 in 1987–1992), although to a differing degree, so that disparities became somewhat more accentuated and the dispersion rose (range: 4.6, coefficient of variation: 63.2; the corresponding figures for 1987–1992 are 2.2 [range] or 51.9 [coefficient of variation]). During the next two periods, a pronounced decline set in, especially in East Germany and the city states, so that that regional differences were significantly moderated (in 2005–2009, the range was 1.0, and the coefficient of variation 33.7). Nowadays, it is still an eastern *Flächenland* – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania – which has the highest homicide rate (1.7), but it is comparable to that of some western federal states in the first period. This holds true also for the *Stadtstaaten*, where the number of killings per capita is now well below 2.0 per 100,000 population.

It is difficult to interpret these regional differences, because they do not correspond in an obvious way to disparities regarding prosperity, unemployment or other plausible correlates of homicide rates (see above), besides the general split between the West and the East – but even the assumption that this cleavage explains the higher incidence of homicide in the former GDR is difficult to reconcile with the very low homicide rate of Saxony.

At last, we would like to look at the incidence of homicide in municipalities of different size categories.¹⁰ City size is, admittedly, a less than perfect measure of urbanization, because even small municipalities are often part of urban agglomerations; nonetheless, a clear pattern emerges: the homicide rates of cities of 500,000 and more inhabitants are highest (between 4.2 on average for 2005–2009 and 8.0 for 1993–1998), and those of small municipalities of less than 20,000 inhabitants lowest (between 2.2 and 3.7). But we also

⁹Because of limitations of space, we do not tabulate the data here. The numbers of cases in the Police Crime Statistics for Berlin are generally to some extent inflated by a change in recording procedures for 2009; it is unknown to what degree homicide figures are affected by this. Any possible influence is mitigated by the computation of the multi-year-averages reported here.

¹⁰One federal state reported in 2009 generally too many cases for municipalities of less than 20,000 inhabitants and too few cases for cities between 20,000 and less than 100,000 inhabitants. It is not clear to what degree homicide data are subject to this problem. In any case, it should have affected the average figures for 2005–2009 only marginally.

Table 20.1 Attributes of cases and suspects

	Murder/manslaughter			Assault resulting in death		
	1993–1998	1999–2004	2005–2009	1993–1998	1999–2004	2005–2009
Offender acted alone ^a	80.3	82.8	81.7	77.2	74.0	76.5
Under influence of alcohol ^a	35.4	35.3	35.2	37.0	35.6	36.0
Previous appearance as suspect ^a	54.2	59.6	59.2	46.0	51.5	50.9
Consumer of hard drugs ^a	5.0	8.1	8.8	2.7	5.9	5.1
Suspect threatened with firearm ^b	1.0	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.1	0.4
Suspect shoot with firearm ^b	17.5	10.9	7.7	1.2	0.8	0.2
Proportion of female suspects	9.7	12.8	13.2	10.6	13.8	15.8
Proportion of non-German suspects	32.4	30.6	27.6	18.5	16.8	12.4

^aProportion of cases which have been cleared up

^bProportion of suspects

note that in the largest cities the decline of homicide rates (which occurred in municipalities of all size categories) since the late 1990s was strongest in absolute (3.8) and proportional (48%) terms, so that there was some convergence (the difference between the rates of the smallest municipalities and cities of 500,000 and more is now 2.0, compared to 4.3 in 1993–1998).

Incident Characteristics

According to the figures in Table 20.1,¹¹ homicides are perpetrated by single offenders in four out of five cases of murder/manslaughter; assaults resulting in deaths are slightly more often committed by more than one offender (in about a quarter of the cases). There were no major changes in these proportions since 1993–1998.

There has been some concern about increased alcohol consumption among youths, and its putative role in violent acts occurring in the public. But there seems to be no clear-cut connection between this phenomenon and the incidence of homicide, at least, because the proportion of cases committed by alcohol-intoxicated offenders (as assessed by the police officer investigating

the case) remained stable, which implies a decline in the absolute number of such cases.¹² This does not preclude the possibility, however, that problematic alcohol consumption played a role in the increase of the offending rates of youths noted below, which might be compensated by an opposing trend of the older age groups. To solve this issue, it would be necessary to compute age group-specific proportions of intoxicated suspects, which is not possible at the moment.

Regarding illegal drugs,¹³ however, it turns out that the proportion of cases committed by consumers of hard drugs rose during the period under study, implying also an increase of the absolute number in the cases of murder/manslaughter (from 162 in 1993–1998 to 198 in 2005–2009) committed by these persons. This finding suggests that the general decline of offending rates was accompanied by a slight aggravation of homicidal tendencies among drug addicts.

Finally, our data indicate that unlawful killings are committed very often by people with prior involvement in delinquency: In nearly 60% of the cases of murder/manslaughter, and half of the cases of assault resulting in death, the suspect (or at least one of the suspects) had been under

¹¹In Table 3.1, we present separate figures for murder/manslaughter and assault resulting in death, because there are differences in the distributions of attributes between these types of homicide. Because of its minor quantitative importance, infanticide is not included here.

¹²It has to be mentioned that in 2000, Brandenburg did not collect data on intoxicated suspects. This does affect data for the whole country only marginally, and the influence on the multi-year-average for the period 1999–2004 is negligible.

¹³In 2000, Brandenburg did also not report data on users of hard drugs.

suspicion for a crime prior to commission of the homicide.¹⁴

Perpetrator Characteristics

First, we will describe the prevalence of homicide offending by age and gender (Table 20.2).¹⁵

The first thing to note is that homicide is a predominantly male phenomenon with respect to the offenders. The proportion of female offenders for homicides (except infanticide) is below 20% (Table 20.1; for infanticide, it is 100% by definition). The number of suspects per 100,000 population varies by age between 0.3 (below 14 years) and 18.8 (young adults from 18 to 20 years) for males, and between 0.2 and 2.2 for females. From these figures it can also be inferred that the age-crime curve is much flatter for females than for males. Therefore, the gender gap in offending is highest for young adults, where offending peaks; for the age group from 18 to 20 years, for example, the male rate is 8.5 times the female rate. The flatter shape of the curve for females also implies that offending declines only slowly with increasing age (in fact, it actually rises a bit for women

between 23 and 29 years, compared to females aged 21 or 22), while it declines very steadily for males. Comparing the age-gender-specific offending rates for multiple-year averages, we see that changes in the prevalence of offending are concentrated in the age groups with the highest involvement in homicide: Offending rose for both males and females remarkably for older youth and young adults (women between 18 and 20 years being the exception), to decline thereafter considerably. But the increase for youths during the first period was not compensated fully by the decline in the following years, so that their involvement in homicide rose. For the higher age groups (with the exception of females from 50 to 59 years), the decline of the rates more than compensated the rise. The drop of homicides well below the initial level in recent years is therefore, as it seems, primarily attributable to the decrease of offending among older adults, in combination with a decline in the population share of the young and a rise in the proportion of the old. Because changes in offending were stronger for males than for females, the proportion of female suspects rose from 1993–1998 to 2005–2009 from 10 to 13% for murder/manslaughter, and from 11 to 16% for assault resulting in deaths (Table 20.1).

The Police Crime Statistics comprise some additional information on suspects (Table 20.1): Turning to the citizenship of suspects, it is interesting to see that about a quarter of all suspects of murder/manslaughter, but only an eighth of the suspects of cases of assault resulting in death are non-Germans. The reasons for the difference between the two proportions are unclear. Furthermore, after an increase ending in 1998 (when it peaked with 39% for murder, 35.4% for manslaughter, and 21.5% for assault resulting in death), the proportion of non-German suspects has declined considerably in recent years, paralleling a decline in the number of non-German inhabitants (which was smaller in proportion; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009a). In absolute and relative terms, this development occurred throughout all categories of instance of legal residence in Germany (tourist, student, employee, person carrying on a business or trade, asylum seeker, member of a foreign armed force stationed in Germany), with the exception of

¹⁴The fact that a person had been suspected of a crime before does not necessarily imply that there is a prior conviction. The proportion of offenders with prior appearance as a suspect is an underestimate, because checks for a prior appearance are only conducted for a limited period and with respect to the federal state in which the homicide occurred (Bundeskriminalamt, 2009: 69).

¹⁵If we talk of ‘offenders’ or ‘perpetrators’ here, we always refer to suspects, strictly speaking, because the person identified as suspect by the police is not necessarily (although most probably) the actual offender. This question can only be resolved at later stages of the prosecution process, to which the Police Crime Statistics do not refer. The data on suspects allow no differentiation between perpetrators of attempted and completed crimes. Furthermore, offending rates are computed using only data on suspects who are German citizens (relating them to the number of inhabitants who are German citizens), because a part of the non-German suspects has its permanent residence outside Germany (e.g. tourists) and, therefore, does not show up in German population statistics. Another reason is that the statistics on non-German residents are known to be chronically unreliable. Thus, there is no appropriate denominator available for the computation of offending rates including non-German suspects.

Table 20.2 German suspects per 100,000 German inhabitants by age and gender

Age	Gender	1987–1992	1993–1998	1999–2004	2005–2009
Under 14	M	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.3
	F	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
14/15	M	2.7	6.1	4.9	4.3
	F	0.8	1.7	1.5	1.3
16/17	M	7.9	16.0	11.6	12
	F	1.2	2.1	1.9	1.8
18–20	M	19.1	29.5	18.2	18.8
	F	2.7	2.3	2.3	2.2
21/22	M	13.0	24.4	14.1	14.8
	F	1.8	2.4	2.4	1.8
23/24	M	13.2	18.3	13.2	12.4
	F	2.4	2.3	2.1	1.9
25–29	M	11.7	12.9	10.7	10.5
	F	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9
30–39	M	10.7	11.3	7.9	6.9
	F	2.0	2.1	1.6	1.5
40–49	M	6.9	8.8	6.7	5.5
	F	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.2
50–59	M	4.0	4.5	3.7	3.4
	F	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8
60 over 60	M	1.8	2.0	1.7	1.7
	F	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3

Source: Bundeskriminalamt, Police Crime Statistics

‘other(s)’, which includes unemployed people, refugees, unsuccessful asylum seekers with a permission to stay in Germany, and visitors. There is, finally, one notable trend: a decline of the proportion of suspects who fired a gun during the commission of their crime (which does not necessarily mean that the gun was actually used to kill the victim) by nearly 10% in the case of murder/ manslaughter (the use of guns has always played a negligible role in the case of assault resulting in death).¹⁶ This development corresponds to a broader trend of a declining use of guns during the commission of crimes generally (nowadays, a gun is fired during 0.2% of all crimes, compared to 0.3% in the mid-1990s, see Bundeskriminalamt, 2009). The general decline in the propensity of criminals to use

guns might have contributed to the decline of homicide rates, but it surely cannot account for it, because the (absolute) figure of homicides not involving the use of a gun shrank as well.

The Police Crime Statistics also contain information on the relation between the residence of the suspect and the location of the crime scene. According to this data, most perpetrators are involved in killings in the municipality where they live (the average proportion for the years 2005–2009, excluding 2008,¹⁷ is 62% for males and 70% for females in the case

¹⁶Because of technical problems, Thüringen underreported data on gun use in 2009. The reported average proportion for the years 2005–2009 should not be significantly affected by this.

¹⁷Not all federal states reported data for 2008; therefore, this year was excluded from the computation. Note that the proportions sum up to more than 100, because during any given year, some suspects commit several crimes at different places (their municipality, in another federal state etc.) and are counted, therefore, under several categories, but only once for the total number of suspects (which is the denominator for the computation), due to the counting rules (*‘echte Tatverdächtigenzählung’* – ‘counting of real suspects’).

of murder/manslaughter; for assault resulting in death, the fractions are a bit higher). About 30% of the male suspects (for murder/manslaughter), and about 26% of the female suspects, are under suspicion for killings outside the municipality they live in, but within the boundaries of their federal state. Only a small part of the suspects are active outside their federal state (5% of the males and 4% of the females), and even less reside outside the Federal Republic (2 and 1%, respectively). In the course of time, the share of mobile male suspects has declined; for example, between 1993 and 1998, on average 12% of the male suspects of murder/manslaughter were connected with crimes outside their federal state. For females, the proportions are fairly stable.

Victim Characteristics

Table 20.3 shows the victimization rates for men and women by age group. Similar to the case of suspects, the homicide risk of men shows more variation over time than that of women, especially for youths and young adults. Furthermore, the age-crime curve of the victimization risk has become very flat for both sexes recently and the homicide risk of youths is now the second lowest for both sexes. The victimization risk of men is

generally higher than that of women, especially for young and middle-aged adults, while for the elderly it is very similar for both sexes. At the same time, the gap between men and women has considerably narrowed, mainly because the homicide risk of young and middle-aged men has declined strongly. The result is a convergence of the shares of men and women among the ranks of homicides victims (from 64:36 in the first period to 55:45 in the last).

The relationship between the victim and the offender prior to the offence is classified by the police using five categories: 'spouse/relative', 'acquaintance', 'fellow-countryman' (foreigner of the same nationality), 'casual acquaintance' and 'no prior relationship'. For these data, again, multi-year averages were computed. It emerges, first, that people – women more so than men – are killed by persons they know quite well most of the time: Men predominantly by acquaintances (between 34% in 1993–1998 and 37% in 1987–1992), women by their spouse or other relatives (43–58%). Second, the increase of homicide rates during the first half of the 1990s was accompanied by an increase in the share of these crimes that occurred among strangers (from 22 to 33% in the case of men, and from 10 to 14% in the case of women), while the share of killings among spouses/relatives sank (from 20 to 14% or from 45 to 43%, respectively), because

Table 20.3 Victimization rates by age and gender

Age	Gender	1993–1998	1999–2004	2005–2009
Under 6	M	1.9	2.2	1.8
	F	1.6	1.8	1.7
6–13	M	0.8	0.6	0.4
	F	0.7	0.5	0.3
14–17	M	3.0	1.6	0.9
	F	1.6	1.0	0.8
18–20	M	7.2	2.5	1.6
	F	2.5	1.5	1.0
21–59	M	3.5	2.2	1.4
	F	1.8	1.3	1.0
60 over 60	M	1.4	1.1	1.0
	F	1.1	1.0	1.0

Source: Bundeskriminalamt, Police Crime Statistics

the absolute number of fatal attacks in this configuration did not increase very much. The subsequent decline of homicides was concentrated on stranger homicides; thus, the proportion of stranger homicides sank (from 33% [1993–1998] to 20% [2005–2009] for men, or from 14 to 8% for women, respectively), while those of homicides by spouses/relatives more than returned to its original level, especially for women (from 43 to 58%). For them, the proportion of homicides committed by acquaintances declined remarkably as well (from 36 to 27%). Another interesting development is the continuous decline of the proportion of killings committed among foreigners ('fellow-countrymen') who share the nationality, but are not connected by more than a casual social relationship (in 1987–1992, the share was 7% for men and 2% for women; in 2005–2009, the corresponding proportions were 3% and 0.2%).¹⁸

Sexually Associated Killings

Sexually associated killings present a specific category of offences which comprise a huge variety of manifestations. Attempts to find a suitable classification based on aspects such as sexual motivation (sexually motivated murder) usually fail to capture the essence of this phenomenon. Situational variables such as intoxication, resistance shown by the victim or the presence of witnesses play a major role in determining whether or not an assault will end fatally and be classified as sexually associated (Proulx, Beaugard, Cusson, & Nicole, 2007).

A considerable amount of empirical research has been carried out internationally in this area, which cannot be reflected on here. However, the general estimation stating that 3% of all classified murders comprise sexual murders is indeed supported by the Police Crime Statistics. There is a noticeable decline in the absolute number of sexually associated murders in Germany (1989–1998: $n = 309$; 1999–2008: $n = 249$;

2009: $n = 14$).¹⁹ This can be attributed to a decline of murders committed by strangers (paralleling the development for homicide in general). Today, more than half of all sexually associated killings are committed by acquaintances or relatives of the victim. In the course of the last 2 decades, the rate of acquaintances or relatives as offenders has risen by more than 15%. The rate of sexually associated killings committed by offenders unknown to the victim has decreased by more than 10%.

The question whether or not sexual murderers differ from rapists is very difficult to answer. In principle, it can be assumed that in the case of sexual murderers the relevant risk factors amount in such a way that a specific state of disillusionment is to be expected. These offenders are more ready to enter situations containing the risk of confrontation with the offender's failure and a consequent loss of control. Although rapists also show problematic behavioural externalizations, their anti-social behaviour is to a certain degree still competitive, whereas the sexual murderer experiences his anti-social behaviour in a context of total failure. However, there is also evidence for the widely held assumption that sexual murderers are in principle merely rapists who kill (Grubin, 1994, Salfati & Taylor, 2006; Oliver, Beech, Fisher, & Becket, 2007).

The behavioural analysis unit of the Bundeskriminalamt has carried out a number of studies on sexually associated killings, the results of which can only be sketched briefly here. The studies most relevant in this context have dealt with previous criminal records of sexual offenders

¹⁸ 'Fellow countryman' is recorded only if 'spouse/other family member' or 'acquaintance' does not also apply.

¹⁹These figures do not include cases of rape resulting in death and sexual child abuse resulting in death, the latter being particularly rare. Were these cases included, the number of cases of sexually associated murders listed in the German Criminal Police Statistics in the time span 1999–2008 would amount to $n = 444$. Such offences are in rapid decline and, in over 70% of the cases, were committed by relatives or acquaintances. Such cases are in practice hardly discernable from sexual murders and should, therefore, in principle be considered in this context. This was indeed done in the so-called Geography Study (Dern, Frönd, Straub, Vick, & Witt, 2004) and the study of previous criminal records of sex-offenders (Straub & Witt, 2002) carried out by the Bundeskriminalamt.

(Straub & Witt, 2002) and the geographic behaviour of offenders (Dern et al., 2004).

According to Straub & Witt (2002), sexual murderers ($n=39$) and rapists ($n=367$) do not differ significantly with respect to their previous criminal records (79% vs. 74%, previous convictions: 69% vs. 56%). Both groups, however, show a considerable criminal versatility (on average $n=20$ vs. $n=22$ individual criminal antecedents) concerning the individual previous criminal records (on average $n=5$ affected sections of the German Penal Code). Eighty-seven per cent of previous criminal records concerned cases of theft (rapists: 66%), 45% concerned physical assault (rapists: 54%), and 45% of previous criminal records contained sexually associated offences (rapists: 27%). The rate of previous criminal records changes, however, when contrasting offences with and without prior offender–victim relationships. In cases where no prior offender–victim relationship could be detected, 84% of sexual murderers and 85% of rapists had previous criminal records. In cases where there had indeed been prior offender–victim relationships, the rates were significantly lower (75% vs. 69%). These results were confirmed by a study on the geographic behaviour of violent sexual offenders, which concentrated solely on stranger offenders (85% vs. 86%; $n=167$ cases of sexual murder and $n=348$ cases of rape; Dern et al., 2004). The rates for previous sexual offences here were found to be 55 and 52% of the given criminal records, respectively, i.e. 46% of all sexual murderers and 45% of all rapists were known to the police because of a sexually associated offence before the index offence.

From the viewpoint of criminal profiling, it is of specific interest to find out how far non-local sexual offenders are from their anchor point (AP) when actually committing the offence.²⁰

²⁰The following locations were selected as *anchor points* for the purposes of this study: The offender's place of residence, the offender's prior places of residence, the offender's place of work, and the place of residence of the offender's primary family (parents, siblings or children). Thus, the anchor point concept was being used in a strict manner, which should prevent the over-estimating of regional effects. In the vast majority of cases, the offender's anchor point was his place of residence.

The results of the aforementioned study point to a clear majority of local offenders.²¹ In approximately three quarters of the cases, the distance between the initial contact site (ICS) of offender and victim and the offender's AP amounted to less than 10 km. Up to a distance of 5 km between ICS and AP, there seems to be a significant difference in favour of communities with more than 20,000 inhabitants. Thereby it seems that urban areas seem to offer a more convenient opportunity structure than more rural areas. The fact that the majority of offenders remain within the boundaries of the community relevant for them is of particular interest. The emerging picture of sexual murder as a phenomenon arising from everyday routine rather than being committed by fantasy-driven offenders of a non-local background becomes even more complete when considering that the ICS site is as a rule local. Once the offence has been started as an act of a spontaneous approach or assault, the offender attempts to minimize the risk of detection by a change of location. This means that in cases of sexual murders involving the disposal of the body, the ICS site will point to the offender's AP rather than the body disposal site (Dern et al., 2004). Surprisingly and in contrast to cases of rape, in cases of sexual murder offenders with a prior deliberate intention (this pertains to so-called planned offences) and serial murderers were not significantly more non-local than one-off or spontaneous offenders. This might be explained by the fact that the offender knows from the start that the victim will not survive the act and thus will not be able to provide incriminating information. In cases of child victims, this hypothetical correlation is particularly distressing. Offenders who rape children not previously known to them (i.e. stranger cases) tend to keep a safe distance to their AP (so-called buffer-zones). Perpetrators who kill children not previously known to them in a sexually associated act, however, approach their victims in proximity to their AP. This difference is statistically significant (Dern, 2009). Also, a previous deliberate

²¹A case was classified 'regional', when the distance between the initial contact site and the anchor point of the offender did not exceed 20 km.

intention is present significantly more often in cases involving child victims than in cases involving adult victims (Beauregard, Stone, Proulx, & Michaud, 2008; Dern, 2009).

Explanations of Homicide Specific to Germany

The long-term trajectory of the German homicide rate fits well into a general pattern throughout Western Europe, which consists of (a) a long-term decline of the incidence of homicide until the 1960s, (b) an upswing of homicide rates from around 1970 to around 1990, and (c) finally a new decline of fatal criminal violence since then, which (d) seems to be mainly due to long-term variation in the frequency of male-on male-fighting (Spierenburg 2012; Marshall & Summers 2012; Aebi & Linde 2012).²² To account for this global trend is beyond the scope of this section; the interested reader is referred to Spierenburg (2011).

Nonetheless, it makes sense to look for explanations for country-specific temporary deviations from the global pattern, as well as for regional variation and peculiarities like the declining use of guns. Unfortunately, we were not able to identify elaborate explanations for these aspects in the literature.

Also the findings of Entorf and co-authors cited above are of little guidance here. Their results suggest the possibility that differences in law enforcement might be relevant here, and these authors point to remarkable variation between the federal states in this respect; for example, the difference between the conviction rates of Bavaria and Schleswig-Holstein amounted to 20% points in 2001 (Entorf & Spengler, 2005). But it is unclear if this finding (referring to crimes of all types) carries over to the punishment of homicide.²³

Another result, according to which the level of societal wealth (as measured by the GDP) is relevant, is hard to interpret substantively. But it contributes to an understanding of the continuing split between West and East Germany: the level of wealth is still lower in the former GDR.²⁴ Besides that, it seems rather obvious that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the German reunification with their accompanying social ruptures (which are still felt today) played a role in the rise of homicides during the early 1990s, especially in the East, and delayed the decline of the homicide rate for some years. It is tempting to interpret it in a Durkheimian perspective as a consequence of temporary normative disorientation – anomie – induced by rapid social change, that is, as an exemplar of ‘acute anomie’ (Durkheim, 2005). Related factors might be the reduced capacity for law enforcement immediately after the breakdown of the GDR (reflected by the low clearance rate noted above) and a loss of confidence in the law enforcement agencies. Future research should examine these plausible hypotheses empirically.

Regarding long-term trends, the analyses of Entorf and co-authors point to the possible impact of the changes in the age structure mentioned earlier. However, it should be noted that demographics alone cannot fully account for the long-term development, because the age group-specific offending and victimization rates presented above show huge variation over time. It is rather that demographic changes and the trajectory of age group-specific rates combine to produce the observed development of aggregate homicide rates; the latter would still need to be explained when the influence of the former had been assessed.

²² See also Eisner (2008).

²³ Besides that, the estimation of the effect of law enforcement variables like the conviction rate on crime rates is fraught with methodological difficulties (e.g. Panel on Research on Deterrent and Incapacitative Effects, 1978).

²⁴ In 2009, per-capita-GDP ranged from 21,264 EUR (Brandenburg) to 22,228 EUR (Saxony) in the former GDR, while it amounted to between 25,511 (Rhineland-Palatinate) to 35,731 (Hesse) among the western *Flächenstaaten* (among the city states, Hamburg is the wealthiest with 48,229 Euro) (Statistisches Landesamt Baden-Württemberg, 2010).

Policies Specific to Germany

In reaction to the school-shootings of Erfurt (2002) and Winnenden (2009), there were several changes in the law on weapon ownership (*Waffengesetz*) in 2002, 2008 and 2009. The aim of this legislation was to restrict the access of youths and young adults to guns, as well as to oblige the owners of guns to protect their firearms better from unauthorized use. Furthermore, the carrying of long knives in public was prohibited. In addition, so called ‘pump guns’ were outlawed, and the step-by-step introduction of a national weapon register was mandated.

Besides gun legislation, there are no high-level policies initiated by the federal government involving legislation aimed specifically at homicide. But the *Gewaltschutzgesetz* (law on the prevention of violence)²⁵ might be of indirect relevance; it came into force in 2002. This law grants victims of violence the right to apply at civil courts for orders against the offender. The measures available to the courts include orders to refrain from entering the home of the victim or a certain perimeter around it, and orders to refrain from contacting the victim. These measures are intended to prevent the escalation of series of violent confrontations between intimates, which often precede killings of females by their spouses. About the same time, the police laws of the federal states were modified, entitling police officers to order suspects of domestic violence to leave the home of the victim immediately for a specified period, even if it is also the place where the suspect lives. The purpose of these provisions is the same as that of the *Gewaltschutzgesetz*.

²⁵The exact title of the law is ‘Law on the improvement of the civil law protection against violence and stalking, as well as on the facilitation of the cession of the conjugal home in the case of separation of 11 December 2001’ (*Gesetz zur Verbesserung des zivilrechtlichen Schutzes gegen Gewalt und Nachstellungen sowie zur Erleichterung der Abtretung der Ehewohnung bei Trennung vom 11. Dezember 2001*).

Conclusion

We showed that the homicide rate rose in (Western) Germany between the late 1950s and the early 1980s, stabilized thereafter, and dropped remarkably – after a temporary increase in the 1990s – until the present day. The latest decline was accompanied by a convergence of homicide rates of the West and the East, of the city-states and the *Flächenländer*, and of small and large cities. There is also convergence of the involvement of different age groups in unlawful killings, be it as offender or victim. This tendency is driven by movements in the younger (but not the youngest) age groups, especially young men. At the same time, homicides among strangers show the largest variation over time, while the figures for intimate killings are more stable. In international comparison, the German homicide rate is relatively moderate (Aebi & Linde 2012). This might partly explain the following two observations, with which we conclude our chapter: First, homicide has received only limited scholarly attention in Germany so far. Extant research focuses on specific types of homicides as well as on criminalistic and psychological aspects, but much less on the understanding of long-term trends and regional variation. Thus, we were able to report detailed knowledge on the behaviour of sexual murderers, but could only speculate about the background of the remaining remarkable regional differences in the incidence of homicide. There is clearly a need for further research. Second, only recently (specific types of) homicide became a political issue.

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Introduction

In the Netherlands, on average, 223 persons per year die in a homicide (Nieuwbeerta & Leistra, 2007). This chapter provides an overview of all 3,771 homicide cases that occurred in the period 1992–2009, by outlining the epidemiology of homicide and by describing the types of homicide and the characteristics of those involved. In doing so, a distinction is made between domestic homicides, homicides in the context of an argument, criminal homicides, robbery homicides, and sexual homicides. In addition, this contribution offers several explanations specific to the Netherlands for the recent decline in the rate of lethal violence (e.g., population size, societal distribution, the use of firearms, unemployment rate, substance use, and detention policy). Finally, it presents an insight into policies and the general punishment of homicide in the Netherlands.

Background

The Netherlands is a parliamentary democratic constitutional monarchy, located in North-West Europe. The Netherlands is often referred to as Holland. This is rooted in the early history of the Netherlands – nowadays, North and South

Holland are only two of its 12 provinces. The population (approximately 16.5 million) consists mostly of ethnic Dutch inhabitants. Predominant ethnic groups include Turkish (2.0%), Surinamese (1.9%), Moroccan (1.7%), and Dutch Antillean (0.7%) groups (CBS, 2010b).¹ The life expectancy for girls born in the Netherlands is approximately 82 years, for boys approximately 78 years. In spite of the aging population, mortality rates show an annual decline in the last 5 years (CBS, 2010a). According to recent figures, approximately 99% of the population is literate (CIA, 2009). Lifetime prevalence of mental disorders in the Netherlands is estimated to be 41%, of which alcohol dependence accounts for 6% and drug dependence for 2% (Bijl, Ravelli, & van Zessen, 1998). In the Netherlands, firearm legislation is restricted and hence, firearm possession relatively low compared to other Western countries (around 5% of all households) (Van Dijk, Van Kesteren, & Smit, 2007).

Previous Studies on Homicide

Systematic research on homicide in the Netherlands is relatively limited. However, the few studies that focused on long-term trends in homicide indicate some important developments. Spierenburg, for example, who studied long-term homicide trends

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¹Someone is regarded as having a non-Dutch ethnicity when either one or both parents are born outside the Netherlands.

in Amsterdam from the seventeenth century onwards, indicates that the homicide rate has decreased over time. In fact, as has been outlined by Spierenburg earlier in this book, until the mid-twentieth century there was a long-term downward trend in homicides in almost all European countries. Much of this long-term decline occurred during the early modern period, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. In addition, the long-term downward trend does not only concern all homicides but also particularly applies to male-on-male violence. Also, in almost all European countries the lowest homicide rates were found in the 1950s. However, from the 1970s onward the trend seems to change: Since the 1970s an upward trend in the European homicide rates was detected. In the same period, there was an increase in the proportion of guns and knives as a method of killing and medical care improved. However, from the mid-1990s, the homicide rates stabilized or even decreased in most European countries (Spierenburg, 2008), including the Netherlands.

Previous research on contemporary homicide in the Netherlands tends to focus on one of the four main areas: The epidemiology of homicide, the victims and perpetrators; homicide subtypes according to the relationship between victim and perpetrator, homicide subtypes according to motive and finally, sentencing of homicide offenders. It should be noted that the study of homicide in the Netherlands has a fairly short history; as opposed to other Western countries such as Australia, England & Wales, and the United States, the Netherlands does not have a long tradition of monitoring homicide. Up until the 1990s, epidemiological homicide research was virtually nonexistent, as official databases were either inaccurate or did not allow for the matching of victim, perpetrator, and incident characteristics (Leistra & Nieuwebeerta, 2003).

The first area of research on homicide in the Netherlands is mainly based on national homicide data and involves the description of incident, perpetrator, and victim characteristics of a particular year (Bijleveld & Smit, 2006; Smit, Bijleveld, & van Zee, 2001) or multiple years combined (Leistra & Nieuwebeerta, 2003; Nieuwebeerta & Leistra,

2007; Smit & Nieuwebeerta, 2007; Van Os, Ganpat, & Nieuwebeerta, 2010). Because of the use of national data, the amount of detail available on individual homicides is rather small.

Recent studies on homicide subtypes according to the relationship between victim and perpetrator include studies on intimate partner homicide (De Boer, 1990; Fuldauer, 1994), child homicide (Brants & Koenraadt, 1998; Liem & Koenraadt, 2008b; Verheugt, 2007) and multiple family homicide (Liem & Koenraadt, 2008a), homicide-suicide (Liem, 2010; Liem & Koenraadt, 2007; Liem & Nieuwebeerta, 2010; Liem, Postular, & Nieuwebeerta, 2009), the killing of parents (Koenraadt, 1996), the killing of prostitutes (van Gemert, 1994a), and the killing of older homosexual men (Van Gemert, 1994b). The majority of these studies have relied on data from selected sources (forensic psychiatric reports, police records) rather than on national data. Other homicides outside the family realm, such as homicides resulting from an argument or altercation have hardly been studied.

A third area of homicide research focuses on specific homicide subtypes according to motive, including criminal liquidations (Van de Port, 2001) and sexual homicides (Van Beek, 1999). Specific attention has been devoted to honor-related homicides (Nauta & Werdmölder, 2002; Van Eck, 2001; Yecilgöz, 1995). Because of the rare occurrence of such events, most studies conducted in this area take on a qualitative approach, including a small number of cases.

A final area of research concerns the sentencing of homicide offenders (Johnson, Van Wingerden, & Nieuwebeerta, 2010) and recidivism of homicide offenders (Vries, Liem, & Nieuwebeerta, 2010). These studies have relied on national data stemming from the Dutch Homicide Monitor (see later), allowing for a representative overview (Johnson et al., 2010).

Data Sources Used for This Study

To provide an overview of the epidemiology of homicide in the Netherlands, including the characteristics of the cases and the individuals

involved, the Dutch Homicide Monitor² is used. The Dutch Homicide Monitor is an ongoing monitoring system, which includes all homicides in the Netherlands that have taken place between 1992 and 2009. The year 1992 was used as a cut-off point. Before 1992, no uniform registration system for homicides in the Netherlands was available; accordingly, the homicide incidence and characteristics of homicide cases were not known. This database includes all lethal offences that have taken place between 1992 and 2009, which have been categorized as either murder (art. 289 and 291 Dutch Code of Criminal Law) or manslaughter (art. 287, 288 and 290 Dutch Code of Criminal Law), together comprising the category homicide. Not covered in these articles are physician-assisted deaths, assistance to suicide, and abortion, since in the Netherlands, these are considered crimes only in exceptional circumstances.³ Also, not covered in these articles include attempted homicide, negligent homicide, or aggravated assault.

Although Statistics Netherlands (Central Bureau of Statistics) also publishes data on homicide, the Dutch Homicide Monitor contains more detailed information on event, perpetrator, and victim characteristics (see also: Leistra & Nieuwbeerta, 2003). The Dutch Homicide Monitor is composed of seven sources, which partially overlap each other:

- All newspaper articles related to homicide generated by the Netherlands National News Agency (ANP). In the period 1992–2001, the ANP has published more than 13,000 newspaper articles related to homicide in the Netherlands. These articles contain considerable information on the characteristics of the homicides, the perpetrators, and victims.
- The Elsevier Annual Report. From 1992 onwards, the weekly magazine Elsevier publishes an annual report on all homicides that have taken place. This report is based on both ANP articles as well as on police files.

- Files from the National Bureau of Investigation (NRI). From 1992 until 2005, information on homicides in the Netherlands has been collected by the NRI as part of the National Police Force (KLPD). The information available in these files concerns the date and location of the homicide, the homicide method as well as basic demographic characteristics of both victim and perpetrator.⁴
- The Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (VICLAS) from the NRI. This system contains information about homicide cases in which the victims had been sexually assaulted or raped.
- Files from the Public Prosecution Service. This database includes the judicial procedures of a homicide.
- Files from the Judicial Information Service and the Ministry of Justice.
- Files from the Criminal Justice Knowledge Centre (WODC). In addition to files from the KLPD and the Public Prosecution Service, these files contain detailed information stemming from interviews with relevant investigators who were in charge of the homicide event (e.g., Smit et al., 2001; Smit & Nieuwbeerta, 2007).

The use of multiple sources in the Homicide Monitor enables us to create a complete and reliable overview of all homicides that have taken place in the Netherlands in the period 1992–2009.

Epidemiology of Homicide in the Netherlands

Recent Trends in Homicide

In the Netherlands, on average, 223 persons per year die in a homicide (Nieuwbeerta & Leistra, 2007). This constitutes a small part (3.3%) of all unnatural deaths (CBS, 2006). The number of

²For this chapter, we used version 2.0 of the Dutch Homicide Monitor.

³Physician-assisted dying includes both physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia at the explicit request of the individual.

⁴Because of capacity problems in some police regions, we were not able to completely finish the verification process for the homicides committed in 2005–2010 at the moment of writing this chapter. However, for 12 of the 25 police regions the verification process has been completed.

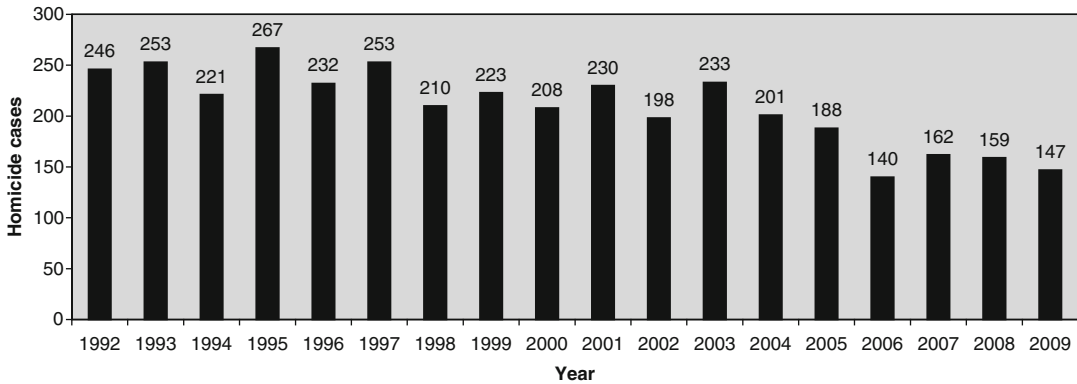


Fig. 21.1 Number of homicide cases in the Netherlands 1992–2009

homicides per year has declined steadily over the past decade, with a sharp decline in 2006 (see Fig. 21.1). The highest number of homicide victims was reported in 1995, in which 281 individuals died. The lowest number of homicide victims was reported in 2006, when 148 individuals died in a homicide.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Dutch population increased with almost one million inhabitants to 16.5 million. In the early 90s, the homicide rate was approximately 1.7 per 100,000 inhabitants. In the years that followed the average homicide rate remained steady at around 1.5 per 100,000. In the last 3 years this rate has decreased even further to 1.2 per 100,000. In 2007, the homicide rate was reported to be at its lowest at 0.9 per 100,000. In sum, both the total number of homicides as well as the overall homicide rate have steadily decreased over the last decades. The drop in intentional homicide is, however, not unique to the Netherlands: As Aebi & Linde have shown earlier in this handbook and in previous publications (Aebi et al., 2010), other European countries have also shown a decrease in the homicide rate.

Compared to homicide rates in other West-European countries, the homicide rate in the Netherlands is about average. Compared to Eastern-European countries, however, the homicide rate in the Netherlands is relatively low (WHO, 2009).

Regional Distribution of Homicide Rates

The majority of the homicide cases took place in main urban areas: in particular in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague. A relatively large number of criminal homicide cases occur in these cities compared with other areas in the Netherlands: 18% of the total number of homicide cases occurred in Amsterdam, whereas 26% of all criminal homicide cases were registered here. Amsterdam also has a relatively high percentage of unsolved homicide cases (35%). Even though there is a high fluctuation of regional homicide rates over time, a systematic trend is lacking.

Incident Characteristics

In the period 1992–2009, a total of 3,771 homicide cases were committed, involving a total of 4,028 victims and 4,181 perpetrators.⁵ Overall, approximately 10% of the homicide cases are unsolved.

In the Dutch, Homicide Monitor homicides are categorized according to the relationship

⁵The description of the characteristics of homicide perpetrators covers the perpetrators that have been prosecuted for homicide by the Public Prosecutor. In addition, perpetrators who could not be prosecuted because they committed suicide or who were prosecuted abroad are included.

Table 21.1 Homicide in the Netherlands by type, 1992–2009

Type of homicide	% Homicide cases	% Solved homicide cases
Intimate partner	17	19
Child	4	4
Parent	2	2
Other family	7	8
Argument/altercation	21	23
Criminal	12	13
Robbery	7	8
Sexual	3	3
Other	18	20
Not solved	10	–

between victim and perpetrator as well as according to the context in which the homicide occurred, distinguishing a total of nine categories: Four categories involving homicides in the family realm (the so-called “domestic homicides”), criminal homicides, robbery homicides, homicides occurring in the context of an argument, sexual homicides and the category “other”.

One of the most predominant types of homicide involves homicides including an (estranged) intimate partner (see Table 21.1), accounting for approximately one fifth of all homicide cases. The killing of a child or the killing of a parent constitutes a total of 6% of all homicide cases. Other homicides taking place within the family include the killing of siblings, aunts, uncles, and other family members as well as the killings of rivals in love. Altogether, approximately one third of all homicide cases in the Netherlands occur within the family.

Other predominant categories are criminal homicides and robbery homicides. Criminal homicides mostly involved drug-related homicides. These incidents varied from drug addicts who killed one another, drug users who killed their dealers, and dealers who killed one another during a bad deal. This category also involves homicides in the context of criminal retributions. In total this category encapsulates approximately 12% of all homicide cases. Robbery homicides,

accounting for 7% of the total number of homicide cases, include victims who died in the course of a robbery, burglary, or theft (Fig. 21.2).

The most predominant type of homicide constitutes homicide in the context of an argument or altercation between friends, acquaintances, or strangers. This category only includes victims and offenders who were not related by family ties and who were not involved in the criminal milieu. In the period 1992–2009, more than one fifth of all cases were classified as such.

Sexual homicides, accounting for 3% of the total homicide cases, involve prostitute victims and victims who had been sexually assaulted prior to, during, or after the homicide. The category “other” includes homicide cases that could not be included in any of the previous categories (either due to the context in which the homicide occurred or due to a lack of information on the relationship between victim and perpetrator) and is heterogeneous in nature. The distribution of homicides according to type has remained fairly constant throughout the years: The data do not suggest that there is a systematic increase or decrease of a particular type of homicide.

The number of perpetrators and victims involved in homicide cases has remained fairly stable over time. On average each homicide case involves 1.07 victims; roughly 4% of all homicide cases include two victims, while 1% involves three victims or more. The majority of all solved homicide cases are committed by one perpetrator (77%), 14% are committed by two perpetrators, and 10% involve three or more perpetrators; on average each case includes 1.40 perpetrators.

Domestic homicides typically include one victim and one perpetrator; this statistic is found in 88% of intimate partner homicides, 67% of child homicides, and in 81% of homicides involving parents. Sexual homicides include one victim and one perpetrator in 80% of all cases; in 78% of homicides that occurred in the context of an argument or altercation, there was one victim and one perpetrator. In general, in 54% of robbery homicides and 47% of criminal homicides multiple perpetrators are involved.

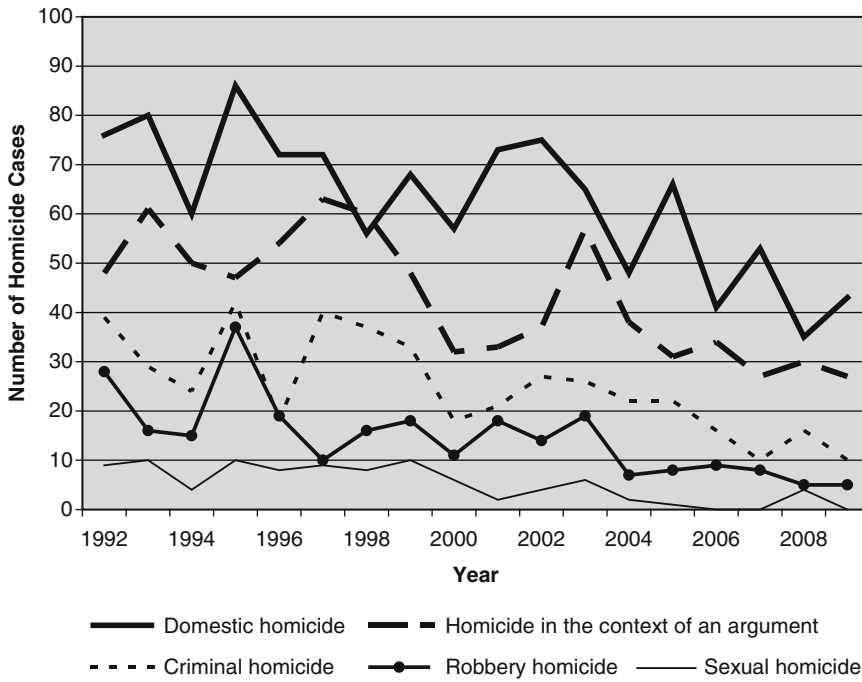


Fig. 21.2 Type of homicide in the Netherlands by year 1992–2009

Location

Approximately one out of every two homicide victims is killed in a residential setting. Roughly one third of the victims are murdered near a public road; in approximately one tenth (7%) victims are murdered in other public places such as in a park or forested area. Eight per cent of all homicide victims are murdered in discos, bars, and cafes. These figures have remained constant over time. Female victims are most likely to be killed in a residential setting (71%); men are often killed in a public area (46%) or in a residential setting (41%). When differentiating according to type of homicide, it appears that domestic homicides mostly take place in a residential setting (74%) and only occasionally in locations such as bars and cafes (2%). Criminal homicides, on the contrary, take place in a residential setting in only one third of cases; victims of this type of homicide are mostly murdered near a public road, in parks, or in water. Robbery homicides, including burglaries, are committed in a residential setting in 58% of cases. Sexual

homicides are mostly committed in public areas or in residential areas.

Modus Operandus

More than one third of the victims (37%) were killed with a firearm; another third was killed with a sharp instrument such as a knife or stiletto (34%). Other modi operandi include a blunt weapon (7%), strangulation and suffocation (10%), or physical instruments such as hitting or beating (7%). A very small percentage (5%) died of poisoning, drowning, burning, or by injuries inflicted by car. The modi operandi remained fairly stable over time. Most men were killed with a firearm (46%) or were killed with a sharp instrument (33%); women were mostly killed with a sharp instrument (35%) or died of strangulation (25%). Differences were found when distinguishing according to type of homicide: Criminal homicides were committed with a firearm in 69% of the cases. This is in contrast to domestic homicides, which involved a firearm in only

one-quarter of all cases. Compared to criminal homicides, domestic homicides were committed by stabbing or strangulation. Intimate partner homicides were mostly completed with a sharp instrument (42%), with a firearm (23%), or by strangulation (20%).

Victim and Perpetrator Characteristics

Gender

Like other types of criminal behavior, homicide mainly occurs between men: Approximately 70% of all victims and 90% of all perpetrators are male. This implies that women run a risk of 0.8 out of 100,000 to be killed vs. a risk of 2.0 out of 100,000 for men. These figures imply that 2.6 out of 100,000 men become homicide perpetrators, which is almost nine times as many compared to women, 0.3 of 100,000 of whom commit a homicide. These differences remain constant over time.

Gender differences can further be observed when distinguishing types of homicide. Victims of criminal liquidations and robbery homicides are predominantly male (96 and 76%, respectively). When women are victimized in these types of homicides, they are generally accompanied by a male intimate partner who is the original target of the homicide. Perpetrators of criminal homicides are also mostly male (97%). Although perpetrators of domestic homicides are also mostly men (82%), the majority of the child homicides are committed by women (52%). The figures show that women are rarely involved as homicide perpetrators; they are more likely to be involved as victims, particularly in domestic homicides between intimates. When women kill, they usually kill within the family.

Age

Differences between men and women are also pronounced when assessing the age at which they

become involved in a homicide. Boys and girls run a similar risk of being killed in the first years of their lives. On average, 2.1 per 100,000 children under the age of 1 year become homicide victims. This risk decreases as children age. Children between 1 and 14 years of age run the lowest risk of being killed (0.3 per 100,000). After 15 years, the risk rapidly increases. Generally, adolescents between the ages of 15 and 19 run a risk of 1.2 in 100,000 of becoming a homicide victim; this risk increases until they are 25-years old, when they run the highest risk of becoming victimized. Around this age, however, considerable gender differences arise. At age 25, men run a risk of 4.1 in 100,000 to become victimized, whereas women run a risk of 1.5 per 100,000. The risk of overall victimization slowly decreases, mainly because of a sharp decrease in male victimization. Around the age of retirement, men run a risk of 1.3 in 100,000 of becoming a homicide victim and women less than 1.0 in 100,000. Overall, roughly 8% of all victims were under 18; approximately 6% of victims were past retirement age (65 years). The majority of the victims (58%) were between 18 and 40 at the time they were killed.

These gender differences can also be observed in perpetrator age characteristics. For men, the likelihood of becoming a perpetrator is highest between the ages of 20 and 25. In this age category, almost 8.0 out of every 100,000 men commit a homicide. Even though women peak at the same age, their likelihood of committing a homicide is much lower, at 0.8 out of 100,000. Gender differences slowly decrease, mainly because the likelihood of becoming a perpetrator decreases for males. After the age of retirement, both men and women hardly commit homicide. The youngest homicide perpetrator in the period under study was 9-years old; the oldest 101. Approximately 5% of all perpetrators were under the age of 18 and roughly 1% was past retirement age. Most perpetrators (77%) were between 18 and 40 years old when they committed a homicide. Similar to other victim and perpetrator characteristics, considerable age differences exist when differentiating according to type of homicide.

Ethnicity

Roughly half of the total number of victims and perpetrators were of non-Dutch ethnicity⁶; the majority (65%) of non-Dutch perpetrators and non-Dutch victims (58%) were of Dutch Antillean, Surinamese, Turkish, or North African⁷ descent. Approximately 16% of non-Dutch perpetrators and 19% of victims originated from other Western European countries, and the remaining 20% of the perpetrators and 23% of the victims belonged to other ethnic groups. The distribution of victims and perpetrators according to ethnicity has remained constant over time. The relative risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of homicide is higher for individuals who are of non-Dutch ethnicity when compared with those of Dutch ethnicity. As mentioned earlier, the predominant ethnic groups in the Netherlands consist of those of Dutch Antillean (0.7%), Surinamese (1.9%), Turkish (2.0%), and Moroccan (1.7%) descent. However, these population-based figures contrast considerably with the degree to which individuals of these groups are represented in homicide statistics. Individuals of Dutch ethnicity run a risk of 0.7 per 100,000 of becoming a homicide victim, whereas the relative risk for individuals of Antillean descent is 6.8 per 100,000, for individuals of Surinamese descent, 4.2, for individuals of Turkish descent, 4.9, and for individuals of Moroccan descent, 5.7 per 100,000.⁸ When examining men in particular,

figures show that Antillean men run a risk of 11.7 out of 100,000 of being killed.

Homicide perpetrators show a similar ethnic representation: individuals of Dutch descent run a risk of 0.7 per 100,000 of becoming a homicide perpetrator, whereas for those of Antillean descent this risk is 14.3 per 100,000. Individuals of Surinamese origin run a risk of 5.5 per 100,000, for those of Turkish origin, the risk is 6.0 and for individuals of Moroccan descent the risk is 5.0 per 100,000. Again, when examining men alone, Antillean men run a risk of 28.1 per 100,000 of committing a homicide.

When assessing the ethnic background of perpetrator and victim according to type of homicide, data show that among criminal homicides, two thirds of the perpetrators and 70% of the victims are of non-Dutch ethnicity. Turkish perpetrators and victims are particularly overrepresented in this category (approximately 16% of the victims and 13% of the perpetrators); roughly one fifth of the perpetrators and victims of criminal liquidations are of Turkish origin. Turkish perpetrators and victims are further overrepresented among domestic homicides; these cases typically involve honor killings.

Explanations for Homicide in the Netherlands

As mentioned earlier, the decline in the overall homicide rate is not unique to the Netherlands, as a steady decline has been observed in other European countries as well (Aebi et al., 2010). Several explanations have been suggested for this decrease, varying from medical improvement and a growing sensitivity for violence, to explanations concerning an increase in internal (high self-control) and external control (increasing control by social institutions), which might have resulted in a decrease in violent behavior (see e.g., Eisner, 2000; Gurr, 1989; Spierenburg, 1996).

Several hypotheses can be put forward to explain the above-described drop in homicide rates since 2004. Previously, it has been suggested that homicide rates are related to the demographic composition of society (Parker, Mc

⁶Ethnicity might not be a completely reliable variable as it is often based on the personal judgment of the police officer.

⁷In most cases this involves perpetrators or victims from Morocco. To a lesser extent, this category includes perpetrators or victims from Tunisia and Algeria.

⁸Because of a relatively high number of missings in the variable ethnicity for the years 2005–2009, the rates of becoming a homicide victim or perpetrator according to ethnicity might be distorted. In fact, compared to the years 1992–2004, there seems to be an underrepresentation. The relatively high number of missing data on the variable ethnicity is probably caused by the fact that the verification process for the homicides committed in 2005–2010 was not completely finished at the moment of writing this chapter due to capacity problems in some police regions.

Call, & Land, 1999). In particular, the total population size as well as factors such as the societal distribution of age and ethnicity are considered to be related to the overall level of (lethal) violence (Messner & Blau, 1987; Messner & Sampson, 1991). Young men and those belonging to an ethnic minority are thought to experience the reality of life in the lower classes of society and are thus more likely to feel alienated and experience frustration (Anderson, 1997). Another interpretation for the overrepresentation of these groups of individuals is cultural: because of their cultural background, these individuals might be more prone to engage in violent behavior when it comes to honor and respect (Anderson, 1999). According to this line of reasoning, the recent drop in the homicide rate could be ascribed to a decrease in the total number of young men and individuals of non-Dutch descent.

Other hypotheses to explain this drop focus on social disorganization. Leading back to Shaw and McKay (1942), in socially disorganized areas (characterized by a heterogeneous population, poverty, and residential mobility) structural barricades seem to impede formal and informal control. According to this perspective, social disorganization thus results in a high degree of aggressive and violent behavior, the most extreme form being homicide. Previous empirical studies have shown that indicators for social disorganization, such as the number of single-parent families and the number of divorces, are significantly related to the degree of lethal violence (Lee, Maume, & Ousey, 2003; Maume & Lee, 2003; Rosenfeld, Messner, & Baumer, 2001; Stretesky, Schuck, & Hogan, 2004).

Still others argue that the degree of lethal violence is reflected in the degree of economic stress, typically indicated by the overall unemployment rate. Previous studies provide mixed results: some find that unemployment rates have no influence; others even find a positive relationship between the level of unemployment and the homicide rate (Land, McCall, & Cohen, 1990; Rosenfeld et al., 2001).

Finally, from a situational point of view, Gartner (1990) held that rates of violent crime are lower in a society in which there are (a) fewer

potential perpetrators, (b) fewer opportunities to commit a violent act, and (c) preventative measures that have been taken to prevent lethal violence (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Cohen, Felson, & Land, 1980; Cohen, Kluegel, & Land, 1981).

When examining these hypotheses in the Dutch context, the results remain ambiguous as there is no single indicator explaining the trends as described earlier. As recent data indicate, changes in the population size and societal distribution follow the opposite direction: whereas the homicide rate decreased, the overall population increased from roughly 15 million in the beginning of the nineties to 16.5 million in recent years. Similarly, the percent of non-Dutch citizens in this period increased too, from 6.5% of the total population to 11% in 2009. Other demographic explanations such as a change in age composition do not seem to be fully explanatory, either: the change in age composition of the population (measured in the proportion of young persons in society) is not limited to the years in which the homicide rate drop took place. The relative prevalence of young persons decreased throughout the nineties, and stabilized well into the new century, which does not provide a sufficient explanation for the recent decrease in the homicide rate. The same is true for the proportion of single-parent families, the use of firearms, and the unemployment rate: whereas the homicide rate decreased, the rate of these indicators followed an opposite trend. Other indicators, such as divorce rate, residential mobility, and urbanization, did not provide support for the abovementioned hypotheses either.

Indicators that might be related to the decrease and stabilization in the proportion of lethal violence in the Netherlands are substance use and detention policy. Simultaneously with the increase in the number of prisoners, there has been a sharp decline in homicides that were committed in the criminal milieu, robbery homicide, sexual homicide, and homicide in the context of an argument or altercation. In contrast, homicides in the family realm have remained relatively stable during the same time period. These hypotheses are, however, speculative – more comprehensive, detailed

research is needed before the causes of the decrease in lethal violence in the Netherlands can be extensively explored.

Policies Specific to the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, prison sentences are the norm for convicted homicide offenders. Life imprisonment is occasionally applied; non-life sentences are limited to 30 years for murder and 15 years for manslaughter. In the Dutch system, the criminal code only contains a sentencing maximum. The minimum term when a prison sentence is imposed is 1 day. There are no sentencing guidelines and no mandatory minimum sentences in The Netherlands. Dutch judges therefore enjoy broad discretionary power in both the type and severity of criminal punishment. The prosecutorial recommendation is in no way legally binding for the judge, although it is likely to offer a useful anchoring point in judicial sentencing deliberations, and judges are asked to offer reasons for deviating starkly from it (Johnson et al., 2010). One unique aspect of homicide sentencing in The Netherlands is a treatment option available to Dutch judges for offenders deemed to not be accountable for their actions because of their mental state at the time of the offense. For these offenders, a treatment-based sentencing option abbreviated as TBS is available. TBS is a mandatory treatment order in a special penal institute for the mentally ill. If an offender is deemed partially unaccountable for their crime, the TBS treatment may be imposed in conjunction with a prison term. After serving their time in prison, the inmate is then transferred to a mental institution, where they are periodically evaluated to determine if and when they should be released. This term is indeterminate and some offenders may spend the rest of their lives in these special facilities.

In the period 1992–2009, approximately 90% of all homicide cases were cleared – in other words, at least one suspect was known to the police. These suspects also include individuals who were prosecuted abroad and those who died after the homicide, either by homicide, suicide, or an accident. Among all homicide prosecutions,

about 72% were prosecuted for murder rather than manslaughter.

The large majority of suspects who were prosecuted were also summoned before a judge for a homicide offence (87%) – mostly for murder. Also, of the summoned homicide suspects, more than 80% were convicted of the offence, 5% were acquitted for the homicidal offence or released from all charges, and, for 13%, the trial results are yet unknown.

Of the homicide suspects who were convicted by the judge, a total of 52% were convicted of murder, and more than one third (38%) were convicted of manslaughter. Roughly 10% were eventually sentenced for a lesser offence such as physical maltreatment leading to death or negligent homicide.

In cases in which the suspects were summoned for homicide, the Dutch prosecutors recommended an average of 9 years of imprisonment. Dutch judges, however, sentenced offenders to about 7.31 years on average. Prosecutorial recommendations were typically more severe than the prison terms meted out by Dutch judges. For the homicide offence, approximately 73% of the convicted suspects were sentenced to incarceration alone, 5% to TBS, and 19% were sentenced to a combination of incarceration and TBS. Three per cent of the convicted suspects were sentenced for the homicidal offence to incarceration in a juvenile detention centre. Even though there were relatively small differences between the severity of punishment in the cases in which the suspect was convicted of murder or manslaughter (on average 8.97 years for murder vs. 6.72 years for manslaughter), substantial differences can be noted when differentiating according to the type of homicide committed. The majority of the convicted perpetrators were typically sentenced to incarceration only when they committed homicide in the family realm (domestic homicides), homicide in the context of an argument, criminal homicide, robbery homicide, or sexual homicide. In comparison with other types of homicides, individuals who killed their child, their parent or who committed a sexual homicide were more often sentenced to incarceration in combination with a TBS sanction.

One per cent of the perpetrators who were convicted for the homicide were sanctioned to 20 years of imprisonment or sentenced for life.

The average length of imprisonment and the frequency of life imprisonment sanctions has increased in recent years. In 1993,⁹ in the cases in which the suspects were summoned for homicide, the average length of the prosecutorial recommendation of imprisonment was 7.8 years. By 2006, the average length increased by 2.2–10.0 years. In the same period, in the cases in which the suspects were summoned for homicide, the imposed sanction increased from 6.0 years of imprisonment to 8.5 years: an increase of 2.5 years. This trend shows that in comparison to the year 1993, the average length of imprisonment recommended by the public prosecutors and imposed by the judge have increased in recent years.

In a recent study on sentencing homicide offenders in the Netherlands, Johnson et al. (2010) found that, in addition to legal case characteristics, age, nationality, and gender characteristics exert substantial influences in sentencing. Their study, making use of the same data described above, revealed that female offenders were sentenced to significantly shorter terms of incarceration, whereas non-European foreigners received significantly longer sentences. Very young and very old offenders also received partial leniency in sentencing. Victim characteristics mirror these findings: homicides involving female and Dutch victims typically receive longer prison sentences and offences involving very young or old victims are also punished more severely. The authors showed that criminal sentences were particularly severe for homicides involving male offenders and female victims, for those involving foreign offenders who victimized Dutch citizens, and for those who used a firearm in the homicide. It may be hypothesized that the latter finding can be attributed to the above-described relatively rare possession of firearms. Killing by means of a firearm might be considered particularly heinous and deserving of increased punishment.

⁹ Because of a relatively high number of missing cases, the length of imprisonment is only described for the years 1993–2006.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of homicide in the Netherlands over the last 18 years, outlining the epidemiology of homicide in the Netherlands, recent trends of homicide, as well as the nature and types of policies and punishment of this type of violent crime. In the Netherlands, on average, 223 persons per year die in a homicide. The majority of the cases concern homicides arising from an argument and domestic homicides. The majority of the victims and perpetrators are male, even though there are substantial gender differences according to type of homicide. The same accounts for characteristics such as location and modus operandus – both differ according to the type of the homicide committed. Roughly half of the total number of victims and perpetrators were of non-Dutch ethnicity. Regarding regional variation, most homicides are committed in urban areas. Most perpetrators are sentenced to incarceration; those who are sentenced to a combination of incarceration and TBS are typically found guilty of domestic homicide or sexual homicide.

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Introduction

Background

Homicide events in Switzerland do not only gain considerable attention from the general public, but have also provoked increasing scientific interest over the last few years. However, research on homicide is facing problems related to low absolute numbers, especially in small countries with low murder rates. To overcome this drawback, a national database of all cases of homicide, a regional sample of attempted homicides, and a national sample of suicides covering the entire country from the years 1980 to 2004 has been set up over several years, in a combined effort of the Institutes of Forensic Medicine and the Lausanne and Zurich Institutes of Criminology and with financial support from the Swiss National Science Foundation. This chapter is based on this database that contains information gathered from coroners', police and court records on offenders, victims, and events (Killias, Markwalder, Walser, & Dilitz, 2009). By completing the findings with official statistics and the existing literature in this field, this chapter aims to give an overview of homicide and its characteristics in Switzerland.

Switzerland

Switzerland is a small country in central Europe, with a surface comparable to, but a population about half of, the Netherlands. Surrounded by Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Italy, and France, it has been able to keep out of wars between these nations for over two centuries thanks to its neutrality. With its direct democracy, Switzerland has one of the highest living standards in Western Europe, with a literacy rate of almost 100% and a life expectancy among the highest in the World (CIA, 2009). There are four official languages spoken in the country, which consist of German (63.7% of the population), French (20.4% of the population), Italian (6.5% of the population), and Romansh (0.5% of the population). Switzerland has one of the highest percentages of immigrants within Europe; in 2009, 22% of the population were of foreign nationality.¹ The majority of immigrants, namely 86%, come from countries within the European Union, especially Italy (17%), Germany (14.7%), and Portugal (12%), and 11% are immigrants from Serbia and Montenegro (OFS, 2009a).

In regard to firearm possession, Switzerland presents one of the highest prevalence of households owning at least one firearm (approximately 28%) in Europe. This high number is mainly due

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¹Foreign nationality is defined as not being of Swiss nationality.

to the Swiss militia system that drafts most young male Swiss citizens into the military and requires the soldiers to keep their army ordnance weapons at home. Furthermore, after completion of the military duty (which includes 18 or 21 weeks of mandatory training and then seven recalls of 3 weeks during the next 10 years), the soldier can acquire his ordnance weapon for private use. In former times, most soldiers kept their guns after being discharged. Today, this proportion has shrunk to about 10%, due to several conditions that nowadays have to be met (VBS, 2011). Table 22.1 (see Appendix, pg. 485 or online at extras.springer.com).

Definition of Homicide in Switzerland

Homicide and its various subtypes are described in the second book of the Swiss Criminal Code (StGB), under the first title called offences against life and limb (*Straftaten gegen Leib und Leben*). Article 111 covers premeditated homicide and constitutes the general clause of homicide (Stratenwerth & Jenny, 2003). It defines intentional homicide as the intentional causing of the death of a person without the presence of special conditions enumerated in the following sections. Therefore, article 111 represents a residual category, applicable only if no other aggravated or privileged type of homicide described by the articles 112, 113, 114, and 116 of the Swiss Criminal Code is more suitable *in casu*. This three-level legal model (one neutral article as basis, followed by aggravated (qualified) and minor (privileged) legal dispositions) is also in use in the German and Italian penal legislations (Schwarzenegger, 2007).

The Swiss Criminal Code knows one qualified form of homicide (“first-degree murder” according to section 112) and three less severe forms, namely manslaughter (or second-degree murder, section 113), homicide on request of the victim (article 114) and infanticide (or neonaticide, section 116). Murder according to article 112 stipulates that the offender acts in a particularly reprehensible, unscrupulous manner, i.e., his motives, the method, or the circumstances of the act are particularly

shocking (Schwarzenegger, 2007).² First-degree murder is, according to section 112, punishable by either lifelong imprisonment or imprisonment no less than 10 years. It is for the rare offences that lifelong imprisonment is allowed.

Sections 113, 114, and 116 of the Swiss Criminal Code describe privileged forms of homicide.³ Section 113 defines manslaughter as an intentional homicide committed under conditions of extreme (and excusable) emotions, or in a state of profound mental confusion. Section 114 provides for a prison sentence not exceeding 3 years for homicide at the request of the victim, and section 116 defines infanticide, i.e., the killing of a new-born by the mother either during or immediately following delivery. The sections 111–116 SCC require the offender to present the intention to kill his/her victim(s). However, if the death of a person was caused without such an intention, i.e., through negligence or recklessness, section 117 SCC (negligent manslaughter) is applicable.

Previous Studies on Homicide

Because of a very limited amount of nationwide data sources on homicide, research on national homicide trends has remained rather limited. First trend data, covering the period from 1877 to the present, were published by Killias (1991) and Bieri (1998). Cross-sectional data on police records of attempted and completed homicides were published by the Federal Office of Statistics, with a focus on domestic violence (Zoder & Maurer, 2006). To overcome the limits related to too small absolute numbers, a national database of all cases of completed homicide was established by all Swiss institutes of Forensic Medicine and coordinated by the Institutes of Criminology

²This notion of unscrupulous manner was introduced by the amendment of 1989 and replaced the concept of reprehensible attitude or dangerousness in the original version of 1937.

³Article 115 StGB concerns the incitement of or assistance with suicide (punishable only if the motives are egoistic). This offence, thus, does not constitute homicide.

of the Universities of Lausanne and Zurich (Killias et al., 2009). This database will be presented in more detail later. It covers the period of 1980–2004 (in some areas, records older than 1990 were no longer available), with a random sample of all suicides and a regional sample of attempted homicides. Finally, the first step of the Swiss Homicide and Suicide Database project sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation consisted of creating a database limited to four cantons in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and was based on legal medicine, police and court files (Villettaz, Killias, & Mangin, 2003). This first database was used in several MA dissertations (Chamot, 2003; Ruiz, 2007).

Some studies have analyzed homicide within the context of violence in general at the regional level. Eisner (1997), for example, analyzed 1,100 police reports on homicide, assault, robbery, and sexual violence in the city of Basel and analyzed victim, offender and circumstantial variables for these offences. Another study (Frei, Graf, & Dittmann, 2003) is based on 81 homicides in the region of Basel City and it particularly considered the ethnical aspect of these crimes. Further, Massonnet, Wagner, and Kuhn (1990) analyzed basic victim, offender, and circumstantial variables and based their research on police reports of the canton of Zurich and Vaud. Another study (Fernandez & La Harpe, 1996) covered homicides in the Canton of Geneva between 1971 and 1990 by analyzing files from the Institute of Legal Medicine in Geneva.

Specific subtypes of homicides have also been the subject of studies. Homicides within the family and intimate partnerships have been especially subject to extensive research (Baggiano, 2004; Bayala, 2006; Buonvicini, 2007; Killias, Dilitz, & Bergerioux, 2006; Levray, 2007; Pedevilla, 2008; Zoder, 2008; Zoder & Maurer, 2006). Furthermore, some studies have more closely examined child-victims of homicide (Bärtsch, 1997; Michaud, 1985). In recent years, homicide followed by the suicide of the offender has gained considerable attention, which is a reason why research has considerably increased in this field (Frei, Han, Weiss, Dittmann & Adjacic Gross, 2006; Grabherr et al.,

2010; Haenel & Elsasser, 2000; Liem, Barber, Markwalder, Killias, & Nieuwbeerta, 2011). Furthermore, legal aspects of homicide offenders (Contat, 2005; Rodieux, 2008), serial homicide offending (Brughelli, 2010) and certain other aspects of homicide events, such as factors influencing the lethal outcome of an aggression (Décosterd, 2007), situational factors and modus operandi (Hardegger, 2008), as well as unsolved homicide cases (Gruber, 2005) have been subject to these studies based on the French part of the homicide database.⁴

Data Sources Used for This Study

General Description of the Database

The Swiss Homicide Database (SHD) is part of a research project realized by the Universities of Zurich and Lausanne and sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation SNF (Killias et al., 2009). The project's goal was to improve the empirical knowledge about homicide and suicide in Switzerland by creating a national homicide and suicide database based on legal medicine, police and court files. The first part of this project started in 2001 and was limited to four cantons in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.⁵ After completion of this first SNF-project, the SNF sponsored an extension of the project to all Swiss cantons. The extended Swiss project differs only slightly from the original project. To shorten the already complex data collection process, only completed homicides were included in the data collection, excluding attempts that were previously considered. Also, some questions have been added to the original questionnaire to complete the database.

⁴ These theses are limited to the French part of Switzerland because they are based on the first homicide database project in four french-speaking cantons. For more information about this database, see Villettaz et al. (2003).

⁵ The first project included homicides in the cantons of Vaud, Neuchâtel, Valais, and Fribourg (Villettaz et al., 2003).

As a general rule, only cases that were assumed to be committed *intentionally* by the offender were considered in the data collection process, whereas negligent manslaughter or assaults followed by death of the victim were not taken into consideration. However, this selection process was sometimes difficult to achieve, as legal medicine files, which constituted the starting point of the data collection, do not usually include legal classification of the offense. Hence it was sometimes not possible to clearly know from the beginning whether the offender would be found guilty of an intentional offense or not,⁶ so there are a limited number of marginal cases where the intention of the offender was not clear from the beginning.⁷ Furthermore, some offenders were consecutively discharged by the courts. Also, in some cases with multiple offenders, not all of them were finally found guilty as cooffenders⁸ of homicide by the courts, but convicted of a less serious crime, such as aggravated assault (Article 122 SCC). To keep the complete picture of the case and those involved in it, most cases include data on all participants of the crime, regardless of the legal outcome of their conviction.

Data Collection and Timeline of the Data

As a first step in the data collection process, homicide cases were identified through autopsy registries in the Institutes of Forensic Medicine of Lausanne, Geneva, Berne, Basle, Zurich, St. Gallen, Chur, and Lugano. All intentional homicide cases that took place in Switzerland between the years 1980 and 2004 were collected. Therefore, the study presents a complete dataset of all homicides that took place in Switzerland during this

period of time, with exception of the region of Berne where the Institute of Forensic Medicine's records prior to 1991 were no longer available. In some other cantons, some files were not available electronically before 1985 and could therefore not be retrieved. Further, cases where no autopsy has been performed are not included in the study. However, such cases are rare in Switzerland, at least in fatalities with an unknown cause where a homicide cannot be excluded from the beginning.

In a second step, police and court files were used to complete the data from the Institutes of Forensic Medicine. As autopsy files mostly contain information about the homicide victim, as well as about medically relevant circumstances of the act, this step was particularly important for data concerning offender characteristics, legal qualifications, and circumstances of the act that were not relevant to medical examiners and therefore rarely present in autopsy reports. Finally, the earlier data collection of the four French-speaking cantons has been updated to the year 2004 and merged into the new nationwide sample.

Data Coding

The data collected in the institutes of legal medicine, with the police, or in court archives were coded electronically, using a coding file for general case information, one for victim information and a third one for offender information. Filemaker (Filemaker Pro 2005) was used for registering data electronically. Although the Swiss homicide and suicide research project combined several data sources to obtain a complete dataset, the problem of missing data could not be avoided completely. Indeed, legal medicine as well as police and court records do not systematically include all pieces of information that are requested in our coding list. This is particularly true for variables that are not directly relevant to the police investigation. Therefore, it is essential to deal with missing cases in a coherent way. In this research, the technique of complete case analysis (or listwise deletion) was chosen, one of the most commonly used techniques to deal with missing data in homicide research (Riedel & Regoeczi,

⁶This is especially true for cases where no trial had been held yet. Furthermore, for cases with unknown offenders, the intent of the offender was determined on the base of presently known circumstances.

⁷There are 30 cases with known offenders which can be classified as "borderline" intentional.

⁸For the notion of cooffending in Swiss Criminal Law, see Trechsel & Killias (2004).

2004). This technique implies that all cases with no relevant information available were excluded for the analysis, and therefore only “valid” cases were considered. However, when it comes to questions in our coding list that allow for a “no” answer, the items left empty and the “no” answers were combined, given that an “empty” cell could also mean that the characteristic in question (e.g., a history of alcohol abuse) is not present. In other cases, the missing values only consist of cases with unknown offenders, cases where the court files were not available, and cases from the 2001 project that did not collect all of the information included in the 2004 coding list.

Data Limitations

As the database is based on autopsy registries, cases without any autopsy performed are naturally lacking. However, in cases of homicide, an autopsy is almost always ordered by legal officials, and the number of missing cases due to the inexistence of an autopsy is therefore small. In fact, a comparison of homicides followed by suicide in the Swiss database with homicide-suicide reports from the Swiss newspaper NZZ between 1995 and 2004 has shown that only 16% of all cases were not reported in our database, but reported in the newspaper. Homicide-suicide constitutes, however, a special category of homicide, since the death of the offender usually closes the investigation and an autopsy of the persons involved is not routinely ordered. Thus, for other homicide constellations, the proportion of cases not examined by coroners is certainly far below 16%. In sum, cross-checking with a different source reveals a rather high degree of matching.

Some of the earlier cases before 1985 might be missing due to the nonavailability of these data in electronic format. Also, some files were unavailable or could not be found anymore in the legal medicine archives. Finally, as homicide is a rare event in Switzerland, the validity of the data might be limited due to the small number of events whenever less usual categories of homicide are at stake.

Epidemiology of Homicide in Switzerland

Recent Trends in Homicide

Homicide rates in Switzerland are relatively low in comparison with other European countries. With a homicide rate of 0.9 per 100,000, Switzerland presents one of the lowest rates in Europe (Malby, 2010). According to the Swiss Office of Federal Statistics (OFS), the total number of homicide offences (article 111–116 SCC) known to the police presents only slight variations during the last 20 years. However, a strong trend toward an increase of attempted homicides is visible over the years, whereas completed homicides decrease during the same span of time. A project on whether or not this can be attributed to improved emergency care has just been started by the University of Zurich Institute of Criminology and the Emergency Department of the Zurich University Hospital (Fig. 22.1 - see Appendix, pg. 484 or online at extras.springer.com).

Together with arrest rates and data from the SHD, data on convictions are presented in Fig. 22.1. Here as well, a trend is difficult to discern, although a slight increase in convictions based on sections 111–116 SCC can be observed over the years. However, the numbers for the most recent years do not contain cases that were not yet finally adjudicated. Conviction data combine completed and attempted homicide.

Incident Characteristics⁹

In total, there are 1,313 cases (events) in the SHD, with 1,403 offenders who ended the lives of 1,464 victims. For the variables on type of incidents, location of the homicide, as well as modus operandi, the analysis was conducted based on the number of cases. By doing so, we avoid the distortion of the findings by cases with a high number of

⁹Because of the small size of Switzerland and the relatively low number of homicide cases per year, rates of regional homicide distribution would not be very relevant; therefore, the analysis is based on national homicide cases only, without disaggregation into regional subgroups.

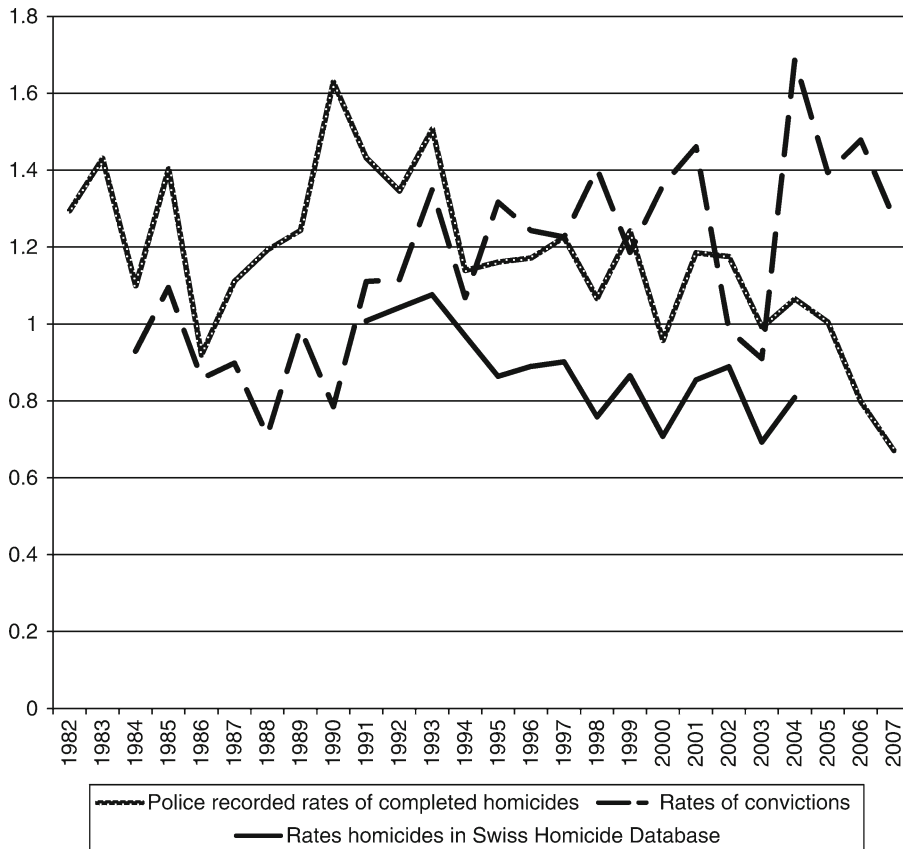


Fig. 22.1 Rates per 100,000 of police-recorded homicides, conviction rates and homicide rates from the Swiss Homicide database

victims. In total, there are only two cases with more than ten victims in our database. One case concerns the incident in the government of the canton of Zug in the year 2001, where 14 persons were killed by a gunman. The second case concerns the male “death nurse” of Lucerne who, during his employment in a nursing home, killed 22 patients. However, all victims as well as all offenders will be considered in connection with alcohol and drug influences as well as demographic variables.

Type of Incidents by to Motive & Victim–Offender Relationship

Based on 1,313 cases, almost half of the homicide incidents happened within the family ($N=605$). Domestic homicide, as used here, includes homicides within the family, intimate partners or love rivals. This category includes killings of children

(13.7%), other family members (19.8%), current and former intimate partners (57%), and rivals (8.1%). The next category in prevalence, with 17% of all cases, is homicides as a result of arguments or altercations. Homicide in connection with robbery makes up for 7%, while other criminal homicide makes up for 16% and includes cases connected to drug sales, organized crime, and any other criminal activities. Sexual homicide includes killings of prostitutes or their clients or killings in combination with a sex crime, such as sexual assault or rape, and accounts for 4% of all homicide cases.

The residual category of “other homicides” includes various constellations, such as unknown offenders and circumstances, homicide related to psychiatric disorder, and other cases that did not fit the other categories. This residual category accounts for 17% of our cases (Fig. 22.2).

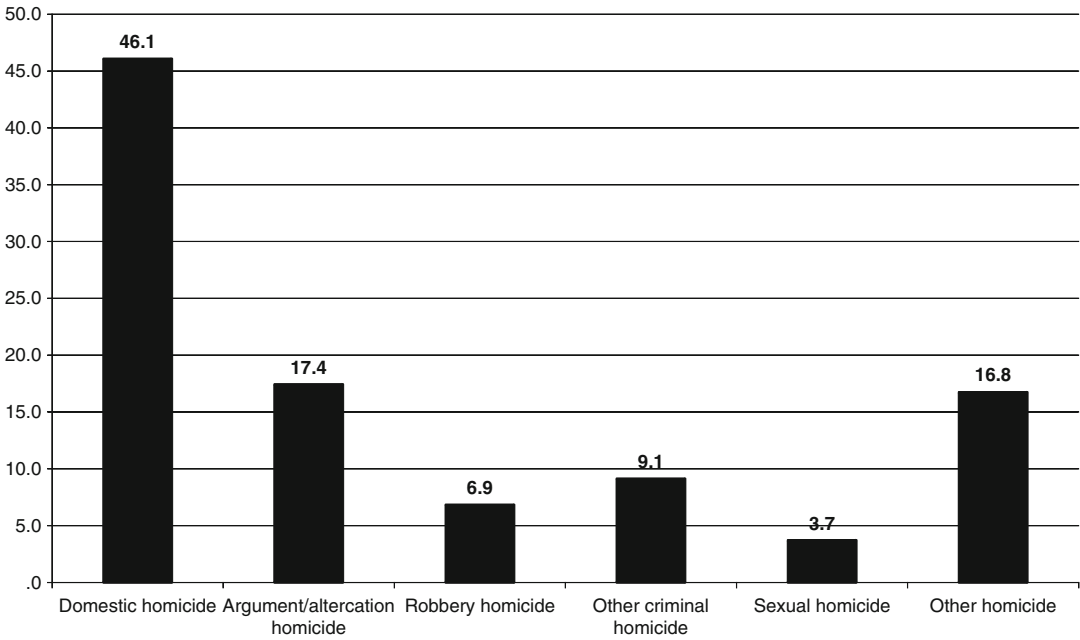


Fig. 22.2 Typology of homicide cases in Switzerland, in %

Table 22.1 Prevalence of completed intentional homicide (total, within the family including intimate partners, and homicides followed by suicide) in 7 countries (several recent years)

Country	Total Per 1 million population	Within the family		Homicide followed by suicide	
		Per 1 million population	In % of all homicides	Per 1 million population	In % of all homicides
USA	56	7.9	14	2.2	3.9
Finland	24	6.9	29	1.6	5.8
Canada	20	5.7	29	2.0	10
Australia	20	7.0	35	1.2	6
Netherlands	15	4.3	29	0.5	3.3
Switzerland	10	4.1	43	0.9	14
Spain	10	1.8	18	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Killias, Redondo, & Sarnecki (2011) (with indication of sources)

The preponderance of domestic homicides in Switzerland is even more visible in an international comparison. As Table 22.1 shows, Switzerland presents the highest percentage of homicides within the family as well as homicides followed by suicides among the few countries for which the necessary data was available. It ranges among the countries with the lowest overall homicide rate.

The high proportion of domestic homicides is by no means related to a high rate of domestic vio-

lence. To the contrary, the International Violence against Women Survey (IVAWS) has shown that women in Switzerland are considerably less often exposed to (former or actual) partner violence than women living in Denmark, Costa Rica, Italy (ISTAT, 2007), and six more countries that participated in the IVAWS (Johnson, Nevala, & Ollus, 2008). As will be shown later, the surprising frequency of domestic homicide is likely to be due to the high prevalence of guns in Swiss households.

In most of the cases (92.9%), the homicide took place between one offender and one victim. However, multiple victims and offenders are more frequent among some categories. Domestic homicides, for instance, present the highest amount of multiple victims, namely 8%, whereas sexual homicides are almost exclusively committed against one single victim. For all other categories, the percentage of cases with multiple victims ranges between 5.6 and 6.4%. On the contrary, robbery homicides are frequently committed in groups, as 25% of cases in this subtype involved multiple offenders. Criminal homicides are also often committed in groups, with more than one offender being involved in 14% of all cases. Only half as many multiple offenders (7%) can be found in the argument/altercation category. In all other subgroups, multiple offenders are below average (Fig. 22.4 - see Appendix, pg. 485 or online at extras.springer.com).

Location

In over half of the homicide cases (57%), the location of the offence is situated in a private dwelling, whereas 30% of homicides take place in public places, such as streets, bars, or other openly accessible places. Only a minority of cases take place in natural areas (6%), on the workplace (4%) or in other locations (3%).

However, there is considerable variation in location within the different subtypes of homicides. Domestic as well as sexual homicide cases are usually committed in a private dwelling, whereas criminal homicides, argument homicides as well as robbery homicides are more prevalent in public areas. This is plausible given the relationship between victims and offenders and the situations in which these homicides occur. Homicides in the workplace are rare in general, but frequent within robbery homicides, with stores, restaurants, or banks offering many opportunities for stealing or robbing. Argument homicides also relatively often take place in the workplace. Finally, sexual homicides are relatively frequent in natural areas. This might be due to the fact that offenders may have brought victims of sexual assault or prostitutes to some remote place to be hidden from public view.

Modus Operandi

Firearms are the modal weapon of homicide in Switzerland. In 44% of all homicide cases, the offender killed his victim with a firearm. This percentage is even higher for criminal homicides, where almost 70% of the cases are perpetrated by means of a firearm. For all other types of homicides, the use of firearms lies within 40% of the cases. However, sexual homicides present an exception to this rule, since only 6% of the cases were committed with a firearm. In this category, knives and strangulation are the dominant modus operandi, with 43% involving knives and 41% strangulation – which were actually the highest proportions of these modi operandi across all homicide categories. Knives, used in 30% of all homicide cases, are the second most prevalent weapon in homicide. They are more frequently used in sexual homicides and argument homicides, whereas firearms prevail in all other types of homicide.

Alcohol and Drugs

Our variable of substance influence during the homicide act includes alcohol, soft drugs, hard drugs, psychotropic medication, and other medication, as well as other substances. If no indication of a substance was found in the files, we assumed that victims as well as offenders were not under the influence of any substance during the offence. Therefore, our estimate of the prevalence of substance use is conservative and probably underestimates the true impact of intoxication.

For homicide in general, victims and offenders are equally under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the event. Around 35% of them present any kind of intoxication during the offence. However, the prevalence of substance use differs considerably across types of homicides. In all categories but domestic and robbery homicides, victims present a higher rate of intoxication than offenders. Sexual homicide victims were, with 60% of positive drug tests, found to be the victims most often under the influence, followed by argument and criminal homicide victims.

When it comes to the relative victim and offender intoxication, subgroups again differ considerably. As already stated, victims and offenders

show, overall, similar rates of intoxication. However, victims of criminal homicides are far more often under the influence (49%) than offenders (30%). Apparently, victims are perhaps selected by offenders in view of their intoxication, which could indicate that criminal homicides are more premeditated and planned and less often committed by offenders under the influence. Furthermore, sexual homicide victims as well as offenders present the highest percentage of intoxication. It should be noted, however, that these observations are based on low absolute numbers.

Victim Characteristics

Age and Gender Distributions

Age

In general, the mean age of homicide victims is 36 in Switzerland. However, there is considerable variation across types of homicide. The youngest victims can be found in the criminal homicide category (31.6), followed by domestic homicide victims (34.0), argument homicide victims (37.0), other homicide victims (38.4), and sexual homicide victims (41.2). Considerably older are victims of robbery homicide, with a mean age of 50.7.

The peak in domestic homicide victims aged 0 is mainly due to neonaticide cases that are relatively frequent ($N=22$). Overall, homicide victims tend to be considerably older than victims of other violent crimes, as assessed by crime surveys (Killias et al., 2007).

Gender

Gender is a very discriminating variable for the different types of homicide, since 56% of all homicide victims are male and 44% are female. Therefore, the overall risk of becoming a homicide victim is only slightly higher for men than for women. However, if we consider the different subtypes of homicide, the proportion of male and female victims differs considerably. Female victims are overrepresented in the categories of domestic homicides (68%) as well as sexual homicides (54%). In all other categories, males are predominantly victimized. The prevalence of male victims is around 10% higher than average in the categories of robbery homicides (66%) and other

homicides (66%), whereas criminal homicides and argument homicides present almost exclusively male victims (92 and 88%, respectively).

Overall, homicide concerns women in similar proportions as assault or robbery according to Crime Victim Surveys (Killias et al., 2007).

Ethnicity

The question of the ethnicity or nationality of homicide offenders and victims has received considerable scientific and political attention throughout Switzerland and other European countries over the past few years. We included in the category of foreign nationals all persons that were described as foreign nationals, i.e., persons without a Swiss passport, in the legal medicine, police and court files.

As indicated earlier, foreign nationals residing in Switzerland account for around 22% of the population. Hence, victims of foreign nationality are overrepresented in almost all homicide categories, except for robbery and sexual homicide. This is in contrast to crime victim surveys that did not find disproportionate violent victimization rates among immigrants (Killias et al., 2007).

Offender Characteristics

Age and Gender Distributions

Age

Generally, with a mean age of 34 years, homicide offenders are younger than their victims. However, the mean age varies across homicide categories. The youngest offenders can be found in cases of robbery homicide (26.7 years), sexual homicide (29.2 years), criminal homicide (29.65 years), and argument homicide (31.8). Offenders in the residual category of "other homicides" have a mean age similar to the overall average (34.5). Finally, offenders of domestic homicide are considerably older than those in other homicide categories, with a mean age of 38 years. Given the large proportion of domestic homicides in Switzerland, we can conclude that the general average age is inflated. However, even if only nondomestic categories of homicide are considered, murderers are obviously older than violent offenders in general (Killias, 2011).

Gender

Homicide is, in general as well as within the different subtypes, mainly perpetrated by males. In total, nine out of ten offenders are male, and only the category of domestic homicide presents, with 16% of female offenders, a different picture. However, this finding can be explained by the category of neonaticides, where the offenders are almost exclusively female. In all other categories, the proportion of female offenders is minimal, ranging from 1% in cases of argument and 2% in robbery homicides to 4% in cases of sexual criminal homicides, 7% in cases of criminal homicides and, finally, 9% in “other” homicide cases.

Ethnicity

In general, around half of the homicides are committed by foreign nationals. Given the fact that the foreign population in Switzerland constitutes only 22% of the total population, foreign offenders are highly overrepresented. Only domestic as well as sexual homicides are committed by a majority of Swiss offenders. In all other categories, foreign nationals outnumber Swiss offenders. This is particularly the case for homicides in the context of arguments and altercations, where foreign citizens account for 68% of the offenders. The residual category also presents a high share of foreign offenders. For criminal and robbery homicides, around half of the offenders were foreign citizens. Therefore, nationality constitutes a highly discriminating factor in assessing the risk of homicide offending. This is also true for violent offences in general and according to police statistics, victims’ accounts of offender characteristics during crime surveys and self-report studies (Killias, 2009).

Explanations for Homicide Specific to the Nation

Firearm Availability

As mentioned earlier, Switzerland presents one of the highest percentages of gun ownership per household in Western Europe. This high number of firearms in private possession is mainly due to military weapons that are legally kept at home.

Since Chap. 14 in the first volume of this book will cover the relationship between firearms availability and violence in Europe in general, as well as in Switzerland specifically, readers will find detailed information in that chapter.

Policies Specific to the Nation

Domestic Violence Programs

To prevent domestic violence, the Swiss legislature has changed violence and rape within partnerships into a crime that is to be prosecuted without any initiative or request by the victim. Furthermore, several cantons have introduced new laws that require, in case of a police intervention, the abusive partner in a relationship to leave the common dwelling for at least 10 days.¹⁰ However, to date, there are no evaluations that have tested the efficiency of these relatively new policies in regard to domestic violence in general and homicide within families and intimate partnerships specifically.

Conclusions

In sum, Switzerland has a low homicide rate in comparison to Europe and a rather stable development of homicide incidents over the last 20 years. With almost half of the cases, homicides within the family or intimate partnerships constitute the most current type, whereas argument homicides and homicides in the criminal milieu are, with 17 and 16%, respectively, much less prevalent. A considerable number of offences, namely 44%, are perpetrated with a firearm, making firearms the most frequently-used *modus operandi* in Swiss homicides. Thus, Switzerland presents a much higher amount of domestic homicides as well as

¹⁰The cantons of St. Gallen and Appenzell AR were the first cantons to introduce mandatory expulsion from the common dwelling in 2003. The legal foundation of this policy is defined in section 43 to 43quinquies of the law for the maintenance of public order of the canton of St. Gallen as well as in the section 17 of the law for the maintenance of public order of the canton of Appenzell AR.

gunshot fatalities then most other European countries, which is most likely linked to the high prevalence of firearms in Swiss households.

With respect to the different types of homicides, we noticed considerable differences among the analyzed subtypes. They differ among each other not only with respect to circumstantial variables, but also in their characteristics of victims and offenders. Disaggregation has, thus, allowed retrieving valuable detailed information about the different homicide constellations that would have gone unnoticed in an aggregated data sample. Hence, for future research, we suggest the use of disaggregated homicide data for analysis in order to respect these particularities within the different subgroups.

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Introduction

Background

Homicide occupies a particular place in the public imagination of crime. In Spain, as elsewhere, most news about crime emphasises those with a greater level of violence. Soto Navarro (2005) has reported that the most commonly reported crime in the Spanish media is indeed homicide, representing around 30% of all crime-related news items. The few studies monitoring trends have noted an increase in the number of news items on crime in general (Medina, 2006) and homicide in particular (Vives Cases, Ruiz, Alvarez Dardet, & Martin, 2005). The reporting of homicide is often accompanied by a considerable degree of dramatic tension, morbid attention to detail, and exhaustive follow-up reporting of the police investigation and judicial proceedings of those cases considered more newsworthy (Soto Navarro, 2005). In fact, in the last few years, a new sensationalist TV genre has emerged in Spain that has specialised in the reporting of these events. Indeed, one of the most notorious homicide events in recent years took place when a victim of intimate partner violence was subsequently burned alive in the street by her ex-partner after featuring in one of these TV outlets.

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As elsewhere, crime is becoming increasingly part of the political agenda (Medina, 2006). In the process, data on homicide are becoming distorted in public debates and more difficult to access. The governing party, for example, when still chasing power back in 2001, produced a number of official documents and statements claiming that Spain had the highest homicide rate in the European Union, despite lack of any evidence in this regard. In this contest, it is not surprising, then, that Spaniards exhibit a comparatively high level of concern with crime (Van Dijk, van Kesteren, & Smit, 2008). Yet, as we will see, Spain is not really such a violent country (Stangeland, 1995a). By comparative standards, the standardised homicide rate for Spain is in fact low within the European Union context and internationally. Homicide represents only 0.097% of all deaths and, when it comes to violent deaths, suicide is the real problem, with a rate about 7 times higher than for homicide. In the following sections, we provide some contextual information on Spain as well as on previous studies on homicide in Spain, before proceeding to engage with recent data on homicide, country specific explanations and policies.

Spain

After 40 years of dictatorship, Spain is now a democracy organised in the form of a parliamentary government under a constitutional monarchy. The Constitution of 1978 provided Spain

with an open quasi-federal structure. The country is now politically organised in 17 self-governing 'autonomous communities'. Autonomous communities have their own parliaments and are responsible for schools, universities, health, social services, culture, urban and rural development, and, in some places, policing. The outcome of the devolution process initiated by the Constitution has been a rather decentralised country with the central government accounting for just 18% of public spending, the regional government for 38%, the local councils 13% and the social security system the rest. This political solution is, however, perceived by some in the regions with a stronger national identity (e.g. Catalonia and the Basque Country) as insufficient. In the Basque Country, the lack of satisfaction among a minority with the 'State of the Autonomies' has allowed the continuation of an organised violent response in the form of nationalist terrorism (Elorza, Garmendia, Jauregui, & Dominguez, 2000). Despite the facts that the peaceful transition to democracy represented a remarkable political achievement and that Spain can be considered a fully fledged democratic member of the European and international community, concerns continue to be expressed about the supposed poor development of civil society, the hijacking of decision-making by a reduced elite, lack of transparency, the low standard of corporate governance and the often well-founded accusations of corruption (Heywood, 2005).

Spain is a developed country with the 12th largest economy in the world and very high living standards (the 20th highest Human Development Index in 2010). Happiness levels have been reported to be increasing from 1980 to 2006 (Inglehart, Foa, Peterson, & Welzel, 2008). Life expectancy at birth is 76.7 for males and 83.6 for females (CIA, 2009). After almost 15 years of above-average GDP growth, the Spanish economy began to slow down in late 2007 and entered into a recession in 2008. The recession exposed the overreliance of the economy on the construction sector during the years of above average GDP growth. The unemployment rate rose from about 8% in 2007 to more than 20% in August 2010. The unemployment rate is about 42% for

young people (aged 16–24), the highest in Europe. Even before the recession, poverty¹ and inequality² were high by comparison with other countries of similar living standards. The adult literacy rate (97.9%) has improved considerably since the transition to democracy, but 58% of the population aged 25 and above still have less than upper secondary educational attainment level, which is comparatively low among highly developed countries (Human Development Report, 2009). The economy also suffers from a highly segregated job market and other structural problems, such as a comparatively large shadow economy (Schneider, 2006), the limited productivity of its workforce and poor investment in research and development. The prospects for the economy are still uncertain. Spain was the last large economy to emerge from the recession and the recovery is expected to be rather slow and traumatic, particularly for the so-called lost generation of young people entering into the labour market for the first time (CIA, 2009). In 1981, only about 0.5% of the Spanish population were foreign nationals, a percentage that slowly grew to reach 1.6% of the population by 1998. Since then, Spain experienced a rather dramatic change that overlapped with the construction boom, and that led to one of the largest immigration rates across the world. This trend of rapid expansion seems to have stabilised more recently. By 2010, about 12.2% of the registered Spanish population were foreign nationals. The largest immigrant contingents are made up of Moroccans, Romanians, Ecuadorians, British and Colombians.

From a criminological point of view Spain is a rather safe country, even though Spaniards seem to experience comparatively high levels of insecurity (Van Dijk et al., 2008) and suffer from one of the most punitive regimes in Europe (165.42 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants in August of 2010 according to the online statistics of the Ministry of

¹14.2% of the population living below 50% of median income (Human Development Report, 2009).

²Gini Index of 34.7 and a proportion of 10.3 of the richest 10% to the poorest 10% (Human Development Report, 2009).

the Interior). In 2005, Spain had the lowest overall victimisation rate in the European Union, as well as below-average levels of sexual assaults and other forms of personal assaults and threats. The robbery rate, however, was above the European average (Van Dijk et al.).³ More recent national data suggest that little has changed in the last 5 years (García España, Díez Ripollés, Pérez Jiménez, Benítez Jiménez, & Cerezo Domínguez, 2010). The Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey also report below average rates of frequent fighting for school-aged children and some of the lowest rates of bullying for Spain (HSBC, 2008).⁴ Thus, as Stangeland (1995a) concluded over a decade ago, Spain is, generally speaking, not a violent country from a comparative point of view, even if it is one of the few European countries with a continuous history of nationalist terrorism in the form of the separatist Basque group ETA. In relation to gun ownership, Van Dijk et al. (2008) report prevalences of 12% for firearm ownership, and of 0.5% for handgun ownership, both below the industrialised countries averages of 14.2 and 3.4%, respectively. Nonetheless, the official government figures, based on a rather strict regulatory system of weapon registration, suggest a lower rate of around 7 privately-owned firearms per 100 inhabitants.⁵

Spain is said to belong to the Southern European wine-drinking regional culture (assumed to have a lower ratio of intoxication frequency to drinking frequency: Rossow, 2001). According to World Health Organization statistics (2005), Spaniards above the age of 15 consume around 10 L of alcohol per year. Spanish survey data suggest that beer is the drink of preference, although spirits become the drink of preference for young people during the weekends (Observatorio Español de Drogas, 2009). The Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey (HSBC, 2008)

reports very low levels of drunkenness for both Spanish boys and girls aged 11 and 15 when compared with other countries. Nevertheless, the National Observatory of Drugs observes that in 2007, about 19.1% of the population 15–64 reported at least one episode of drunkenness in the last 12 months, and reports as well a trend toward an increase of ‘drunkenness’ episodes among young people aged 14–18 (from 27.6% in the last 30 days in 1994 to 29.1% in 2008). Fights in bars, however, are uncommon (Luna & Rivera Bonilla, 1998). As Stangeland (1995b) has noted, Spanish young people drink to have a good time rather than to release their frustrations in an aggressive way. Nonetheless, some tourist resources seem to be attracting foreign visitors, reproducing a more violent environment in the context of the night time economy (Hughes et al., 2008).

Spain occupies a key geographical location in the flows of the globalised drug trade. It has traditionally been an important point of entry into Europe for a number of illegal drugs, particularly from South America and Northern Africa. This has guaranteed a high level of the availability of illegal drugs. It is not surprising then that the rates of illegal drug consumption are high by European standards (EMCDDA, 2009). There is also a high level of internal demand for recreational drugs linked to (1) the high significance of tourism and the night time economy, the (2) liberalisation of social attitudes and behaviour after the transition to democracy and the (3) prolongation of the post-adolescence period as a result of a highly segregated job market that delays the transition to independent living and adulthood. Cocaine is considered to be the ‘most problematic drug in Spain’ in terms of admissions to emergency rooms, drug-related deaths and placements in treatment (Observatorio Español de Drogas, 2009). The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction consider Spain as one of the European countries with the highest consumption rates for cocaine (EMCDDA, 2009). Annual prevalence for consumption of cocaine increased from the mid 1990s: it went from 1.8% in 1994 to a peak of 7.2% in 2004 for people aged 14–18 enrolled in

³These surveys, however, do not capture the much higher victimisation rates of the millions of tourists that visit Spain every year (For details see Stangeland, 1995b).

⁴See as well Enzmann et al. (2010).

⁵The small amount of firearms confiscated by the police suggests that the Van Dijk et al. (2008) figures may be an overestimate.

school,⁶ and from 3.1 to a peak of 5.3% in 2007 for people aged 15–34. The more recent data for young people aged 14–18 suggest a reversing trend from 2004 to 2008, with only 3.6% of this subgroup of the population reporting any use in the last year for the most recent data. Cannabis use is very common (annual prevalence of 30.5% for young people aged 14–18 in 2008 and 18.9% for the 15–34 age group in 2007) but generally considered less problematic from a public health point of view. Ecstasy and amphetamines usage is also high within the European context (last year prevalence rates for the 15–34 age group were 2.4 and 1.7%, respectively).⁷

Previous Studies on Homicide

Since the publication of Bernardo de Quirós ‘Criminología de los Delitos de Sangre’ (1906), there has been little work on homicide in Spain. Most of this work has been descriptive in nature, indicating trends and geographical variations. There are also countless legal works on different aspects of the regulation of homicide. Spanish epidemiologists and historians have so far shown more interest in homicide than criminologists. Recent works along these lines have emphasised the role of drugs and alcohol (Lucena et al., 2008), how tight gun controls limit the prevalence of gun-related homicides (Lucena et al.; Stangeland, 1995b), the lack of correlation between the geography of intimate partner homicides and intimate partner non-lethal violence (Ruiz Pérez et al., 2010; Vives Cases, Álvarez Dardet, & Caballero, 2003) and the poor quality of police statistics on homicide (Aebi & Linde, 2010). There are also a few studies examining homicide in different periods of the Spanish history from the middle age onwards (Córdoba de la Llave, 2005; Duñaiturria Laguardia, 2007; Gómez Bravo, 2005). Few published studies, in any case, have attempted a

more theoretically-grounded focus to the study of homicide. An early notable exception was Barberet’s (1994) work that approached the subject from the perspective of modernization and deterrence theory. The moral panics and associated policy and societal responses to intimate partner violence have also resulted in a growing interest in describing patterns of intimate partner homicide (Cerezo Dominguez, 1998; Vives Cases, Alvarez Dardet, Carrasco Portiño, & Torrubiano Domínguez, 2007; Vives Cases, Alvarez Dardet, Torrubiano Dominguez, & Gil Gonzalez, 2008; Vives Cases, Caballero, & Alvarez Dardet, 2004) and more particularly, in predicting the lethality of ongoing violent relationships (Echeburua, Fernandez Montalvo, & Del Corral, 2009). Given its contribution to the national homicide rate (a total number of 829 lethal victims since 1968, as high as 24% of all homicide deaths during its peak in 1980), it is necessary to mention that there is also a considerable body of historical, political and sociological literature analysing the phenomenon of Basque terrorism (Dominguez, 2002; Elorza et al., 2000; Reinares, 2001). Spanish public health data on homicide, in any case, feature regularly in cross-national studies of homicide that assess the role of patterns of alcohol consumption (Rossow, 2001), firearm availability (Hemenway, Shinoda-Tagawa, & Miller, 2002; Killias, 1993), institutional anomie (Savolainen, 2000), crime booms (LaFree & Drass, 2002), cultural and institutional forces (Eisner, 2008) or the relationship between homicide and suicide (Oberwittler & Liem, 2012).

Data Sources and Time Line

Background

One of the main challenges Spanish criminologists face is that of access to data. As Barberet (2005: 347) has put it, ‘criminologists in Spain have always been data-starved’. Unlike other European countries, there is not yet specific legislation regulating the access to administrative data and the existing laws fall short of the principles recognised in European directives. Perhaps as a long lasting legacy of Francoism, by comparison to

⁶Representing 75–82% of the 14–18 population since the series began.

⁷All figures reported are derived from the publications of the Observatorio Español de Drogas, a government agency committed to monitoring drug use and problems.

other European citizens, Spaniards still face significant difficulties with access to some public statistics that can be used to judge government action. This is reflective of a culture of lack of administrative transparency (Stangeland & Garrido de los Santos, 2004), but it also shows little historical regard for evidence-based programming in many policy areas (Vera Hernández, 2010).

This contrasts with other policy areas (e.g. drug use surveillance) where the quality of the statistics is quite high. Although the current governing party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE) promised during the 2004 campaign that they would create a national agency for the collection and dissemination of crime statistics, this promise has not been acted upon. In contrast to other policy areas such as, for example, drugs, there is no national agency in charge of commissioning or disseminating research on crime and criminal justice. As a result, the half-dozen police officers in charge of gathering these statistics cannot cope with demand (Barberet, 2005).

The changing dynamics of crime politics (Medina, 2006) have also contributed to increase the degree of paranoia and obstructionist behaviour among public officials in relation with the publication of crime-related data. Although the current governing party (PSOE) was very critical of what they denounced, when in opposition, as statistical manipulation and secrecy of the Ministry of the Interior, the fact is that once in power they have become increasingly reluctant to improve the situation. As a result, crime data in general is patchy and has become considerably more difficult to access since 2006 (Aebi & Linde, 2010). The one exception to this pattern is in relation to violence against women. A coalition of interests around this topic has been successful in mobilising public action, including the creation of a national Observatory Against Gender Violence and Domestic Violence that regularly publishes detailed statistics on this topic.

Data Sources: Police and Health Statistics

The two main sources of homicide data in Spain are the public health statistics on cause of death

and the Ministry of the Interior system of police recorded data. Both systems present limitations and strengths. For reasons that we can only speculate are due to different counting procedures, the number of deaths computed by each data source are very different, in some years wildly so.⁸ The Pearson correlation between these annual counts from mortality and police sources is 0.87 (slightly lower but not too dissimilar from other European countries, see Eisner, 2008).

Cause of death statistics are constructed based on the ICD external cause of injury codes and are made public through the government-based National Institute of Statistics (INE). These statistics constitute the basis upon which World Health Organization data for Spain are developed. Spain uses ICD-10 codes from 1999 and the broadly comparable ICD-9 codes before then. The National Institute of Statistics is a competent professional public body staffed by career statisticians and social scientists. The health data maintained by the INE provide useful information on some victims' characteristics and the mechanism of injury. Micro-data can be obtained by request from the INE. Aggregate data since 1980 are publicly available online. The INE website facilities allow users to interactively construct their own tables based on a limited set of key variables. They are possibly a more reliable indicator for annual rates, trends and international comparisons than the police data.⁹

Police-recorded data on homicide are available through the annual statistical publications of

⁸As Eisner (2008: 293) has remarked more generally about these differences, they may occur for various reasons: 'First, the territorial reference differs as the police count events that happen *in a country* while mortality statistics register events that happen *to the residential population of a country*. Second, police statistics record the year when the crime became known while mortality statistics count the year when the death occurred. Third, police records and death certificates are not necessarily completed at the same time and the legal assessment of the death may have changed between both procedures'.

⁹However, there are no published academic studies on the quality of these statistics.

the Ministry of the Interior.¹⁰ The introduction of a new statistical system in the late 1990s saw a considerable improvement in the amount of aggregate data that was being made publicly available (Stangeland & Garrido de los Santos, 2004). In relation to homicide, this resulted in improved information on incidents legally recorded as homicide (both completed and attempted), individuals arrested for these infractions, and some victims' characteristics. Unfortunately, the published tables were what they were, limiting the capacity of researchers to set their own contingency tables and, therefore, to explore specific issues. There are also serious question marks about how reliable the published police figures are. Suspicions arise for a variety of reasons.

First, many of the people responsible for these systems are not career statisticians or social scientists, but rather internally appointed police officers. Second, the few studies and audits carried out suggest that there are problems with the system. An audit of Guardia Civil figures in Madrid, for example, revealed several thousand cases of crime missing. This clearly explains the call for external audits that some observers have made (Barberet, 2005).

Equally, there are some significant unexplained anomalies in the published tables which are often left uncorrected.¹¹ There is, on the contrary, little information about methodology, how the data are gathered and even details about what they actually represent. The counting rules, for example, are not in the public domain. Moreover, the system has suffered from the process of the devolution of police powers in Catalonia, the Basque Country and Navarra. This devolution

process meant that gradually the degree to which these police statistics were reflective of the homicide problem in the whole territory of Spain had dwindled. Since 2006, the Ministry of the Interior only publish statistics for the part of the Spanish territory without devolved powers in police matters.¹² Finally, police unions and different political parties have accused subsequent governments of manipulating the published data for political reasons. Since 2006, the Ministry of the Interior has significantly restricted the amount of information published in relation to crime, for what most observers believe were political reasons. This makes it difficult to rely on their publications from then onwards for the study of homicide. Data on arrestees and victims are no longer published and only some population rates are available. Despite increasing academic criticism (Aebi & Linde, 2010) and formal calls from the Spanish Society of Criminology to change these practices, the situation remains the same. All these problems make the Ministry of the Interior data on homicide almost impossible to use for comparative scientific purposes (Aebi & Linde, 2010).

Data on Intimate Partner Homicides

As mentioned above, gender violence represents an exception to this pattern. The national Observatory Against Gender Violence and Domestic Violence brings together representatives from the Ministry of Equality, the Ministry of the Interior, the General Council of the Judiciary and some autonomous communities. The publications of the Observatory are based on the Ministry of Interior police data, data from the police forces of autonomous communities with devolved powers and the General Council of the Judiciary. In relation to homicide, these publications provide,

¹⁰For a more detailed analysis of the different publications of Spanish police data (see Aebi & Linde, 2010).

¹¹The figures for victim characteristics for the year 2004, for example, are of a magnitude 10 times lower than in previous and subsequent years (despite similar totals in terms of numbers of homicides). Aebi and Linde (2010) also note how different versions of the Ministry of the Interior statistics often have included different homicide figures for the same years without offering any explanation for the discrepancies.

¹²Unfortunately, the autonomous communities with devolved police powers have statistical systems measuring crime as opaque and unreliable as the central administration (see Aebi & Linde, 2010).

from 2002 to present, national data on male and female intimate partner homicide (those perpetrated by a partner or former partner), as well as details on victim and offender characteristics.¹³

Epidemiology of Homicide

Recent Trends in Homicide

Manuel Eisner (2008) has documented how, during the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth century, Spain had, like other Mediterranean countries, above-average homicide rates. Equally he has shown how, by the 1950s, Spain, again like other similar countries, had narrowed the gap and converged towards the less heterogeneous set of rates across Europe. In fact, for most of the 1950s and 1960s, the homicide rates were among the very lowest in Europe. The trend, however, began to change again during the 1970s as the country underwent dramatic economic, cultural and social changes associated with the slow death of Franco's regime (for a historical account see: Tussell, 2005). It is not surprising then that in their study of cross-national homicide rates from 1958 to 1998, LaFree and Drass (2002) characterised Spain as an industrialised nation that has experienced sustained change and a homicide boom. The trend follows a shallow U form with a declining rate during the 1950s and a constant increase from the 1970s onwards. The rates then experienced a slight decline in 1988 and reached a plateau during the 1990s.

Figure 23.1 shows the age-standardised rates from 1998 to 2008 for the total, male and female population. Given the varying significance of

terrorism throughout the period (particularly the 2004 Islamist terrorist attack in Madrid that resulted in 191 deaths), the figure also shows the total homicide rate excluding deaths attributable to terrorist attacks.¹⁴ It can be seen how, for the last 30 years, the total rate has been fairly stable. If we discount the 2004 terrorist attack in Madrid, the total rates have not been higher than 1.18 in 1988 or lower than 0.77 in 2007.

The turn of the millennium saw an increase in the homicide rate. Some policy makers (as discussed in Medina, 2006) and economists (Alonso, Garoupa, Perera, & Vázquez, 2008) argued this was a consequence of immigration.¹⁵ But then, already by 2003, we began to see a new decline in rates until reaching the historic low of 2007, the lowest rate in the last 30 years. The disaggregation by gender suggests that the shape of the total rate is driven by male homicide victimisation. The decline since 2002 has been driven by a decline in the male victimisation rate. Female victimisation has been more stable, although it has increased very slightly over the 30-year period. The trend of non-terrorist related homicide essentially shows the declining level of ETA lethal violence during this period, particularly from 1993 onwards.

Regional Distribution of Homicide Rates

For a regional distribution of homicide, see Figs. 23.2 and 23.3 where we present public health data aggregated for the last 3 years that are publicly available (2006–2008). For the most part, homicide is concentrated in the more highly populated parts of the country. Apart from the two largest metropolitan areas (Madrid and Barcelona, 158 and 80 homicides, respectively), the provinces with the highest counts of homicide are located in the coastal Mediterranean South East (Valencia with 73, Malaga with 61, Alicante 61, Murcia 53 and Almeria 31). Once we adjust for resident

¹³Although the information is more up to date and complete, it is not uncommon to see small variations (never more than 2 or 3 cases) in the figures published by the different organisms that make up the Observatory (see e.g. the contrast between the historical series in the 2010 report by the Observatory and the historical series published in the August 2010 report of the Ministry of Equality). In this chapter, I am using the more up to date figures by the Ministry of Equality for reporting totals and the more detailed figures from the 2010 report of the Observatory in relation to victim and offender characteristics.

¹⁴It should be kept in mind that the recording system does not currently allow the exclusion of other homicide events that may have had more than ten victims.

¹⁵Both set of actors are using arguably controversial analyses and data.

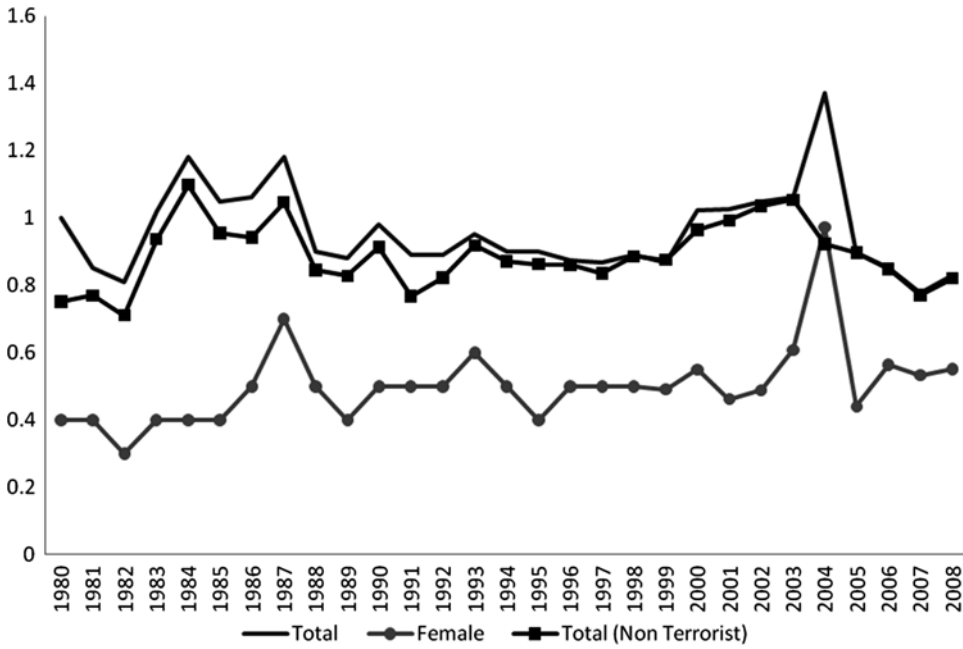


Fig. 23.1 Trends in homicide rate (Spain, 1980–2008). *Source:* National Institute of Statistics

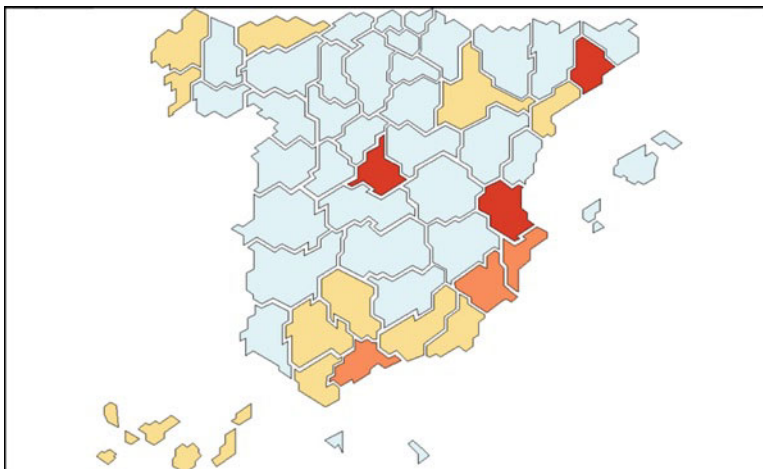
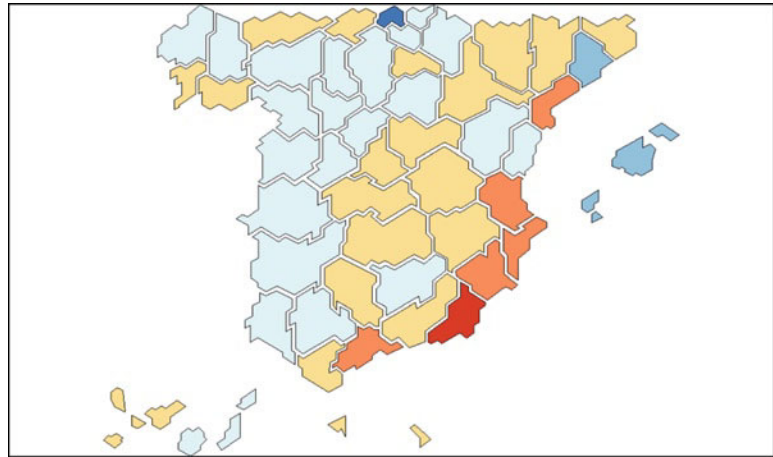


Fig. 23.2 Standard deviation map of homicide counts (Spain, 2006–2008). *Source:* National Institute of Statistics

Fig. 23.3 Percentile map of empirical Bayes smoothed homicide rates (Spain: 2006–2008).
Source: National Institute of Statistics



population, we still see that the Mediterranean coast of the peninsula boast the highest rates of homicide.¹⁶ Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that receiving over 45 millions of tourist every year, the ‘real’ population of Spanish provinces may differ significantly from the resident population, particularly during the tourist season.¹⁷ In provinces such as Malaga, Balearic Islands or Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, the ‘floating’ population of tourists can be twice to three times that of the resident population (Stangeland & Garrido de los Santos, 2004). Also, the rates presented are not age-standardised and the population structure of Spain tends to be much younger around the Southern and Mediterranean coastal regions.

Incident Characteristics

Motives and Victim–Offender Relationship

In Spain, there is no systematic national data on motives of the homicide incident. The information sheet that is used by the police to classify

criminal offences, detailed as it is, does not include an item for motives. Some studies, however, have aimed to fill this gap by studying the more detailed police records rather than the summarised statistical sheets. For example, Guerrero Checa and Santos Amaya (1995), using data from the city of Malaga, reported on 50 homicides that took place between 1988 and 1994. According to their analysis, 38% of these homicides were the result of fights with sharp instruments, often in bars. A second category of homicides, 28% of the total, resulted from disputes between drug dealers or were somehow connected to drug transactions. These tended to take place in the street or the household of one of the parties (normally in marginalised areas of the city), and the use of firearms was more common. In both scenarios, fights and drugs, young men tended to be over-represented. A third scenario of homicide was those in which the death resulted as a consequence of domestic violence (28%). Finally, a smaller number of homicides (14%) took place in the context of robberies or burglaries that went wrong. Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide national figures for these or similar configurations of motives or scenarios.

There is, nonetheless, some information available on victim–offender relationships from the police data published by the Ministry of the Interior. We have already reported on the limitations of Spanish police data, therefore, the data should be read with some caution. In particular, it

¹⁶Curiously, Barcelona, the city with the second highest count, has a rather low rate by comparison with the rest of the country.

¹⁷The system does not allow to cleanly separate foreign tourist victims from others. Also, a very large proportion of the ‘tourist’ population is composed of Spanish nationals.

is important to keep in mind that the data on victim–offender relationships are only reported in the publications of the Ministry of the Interior for data gathered by the National Police and the Guardia Civil (excluding the homicides registered by the police forces of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Navarra), and that the data are published in relation to the victims of both attempted and completed homicide acts. It is not, then, a measure of the victim–offender relationship between dead victims and the homicide offenders,¹⁸ but between the latter and all victims of homicide (regardless of whether the homicide was successful or not). For the most recent year for which these figures are available (2006), around 12% of homicide victims were intimate partners, 13% other family members, 36% friends or acquaintances and 39% strangers. There is, moreover, no clear information on how these codes are assigned. Given that the victim–offender relationship assumes the police know who the offender is, this variable may be less useful if the coding is done early in the investigation or when the crime is first reported. The data seems to suggest that from 1998, the first year for which this information is available, to 2006, the proportion of victims that were victims of homicide by a stranger experienced a linear increase (from 31 to 39%).

As a result of the public salience of the topic (for details see Medina, 2006), there is somehow more up-to-date and complete (includes the entire Spanish territory) information about a specific form of victim–offender relationships: intimate partner (or ex-partner) homicide. For this form of homicide, the plethora of policies adopted in the last decade seems to have had little impact, at least until 2009 (Vives Cases, Alvarez Dardet, et al. 2008). Vives Cases et al. (2004: 346) noted an ‘increasing epidemic’ between 1998 and 2003, whereas the rate of intimate partner femicides

(0.38 per 100,000 females aged 15 and over) remained stable from 2003 to 2008, and the proportion of female violent intentional deaths that resulted from intimate partner aggression (15% in 2003 to 20% in 2008) marginally increased during that period.

About 39% of intimate partner homicide offenders in 2009 were former partners or partners in the process of separation, highlighting the particular risk that women face after the break up of a problematic and/or violent relationship. The data also suggest that during the last 5 years, 20–31% of the victims (depending on the year and without any clear trend) had presented a previous complaint to the police for domestic violence. In 2009, 14% of the victims had a current restraining order against the perpetrator. Often, the perpetrators of female intimate partner homicide commit or attempt suicide (24 and 13% of the cases, respectively, in 2009).

Modus Operandus,¹⁹ Location and Seasonal Trends

The most common method of homicide in Spain results from the use of a sharp instrument (e.g. knife). The most recent published data (2008) suggest that 44% of the victims of homicide die as the consequence of injuries produced by a sharp instrument. For most of the years for which data are available, firearm discharges are the second most common injury-producing mechanism. Over the last decade, around 20% of the violent intentional deaths resulted from firearm injuries. However, it is very important to keep in mind that every year there is a large (and generally stable) proportion of violent intentional deaths that are coded as resulting from unspecified means (19% of the cases in 2008).

Police statistics gather detailed information on the location of homicides. Unfortunately, these data are only publicly available for intimate partner homicide. According to police data, 72% of these events take place in the home of the female

¹⁸These data (on the victim–offender relationship between dead victims and offenders) are not publicly available. They could only be obtained by request to the Ministry of the Interior. As reported above, this type of request often goes unanswered unless you have high-level political connections.

¹⁹The only statistical information publicly available for modus operandus refers to the mechanism of the fatal injury.

victims and 80% of the male victims (Consejo General del Poder Judicial, 2010). The only other public information on homicide location, thus, comes from public health statistics. ICD-10 codes establish ten different possible locations, but the empirical data for Spain suggest homicide only 'takes place' in six of these for most years: 'home', 'residential institutions', the 'street/highways', 'trade/service areas', 'other' and 'unspecified'. Unfortunately, the modal response for every year for which data are available is 'unspecified location'. In 2008, for example, 55% of the homicides were coded as taking place in an unspecified location. This suggests that medical personnel either do not have this information at hand, do not place a great premium in reliably coding this variable or both. The other common locations are the home of the victim (26%) and the street (13%). There are, however, significant differences by gender. The breakdown of location by gender suggests that women are at a greater risk than men at home (32 vs. 23%) and that women are at a lower risk in the street than men (2.5 vs. 16%), with similar proportions of cases coded as unspecified for women and men (60 vs. 55%). This is consistent with the greater vulnerability of women to intimate partner and other forms of family violence, and the greater involvement of men in other scenarios of violence (e.g. fights and drug-related violence).

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Offenders and Victims

The Ministry of the Interior gathers detailed statistics on all offenders that have been arrested. Data about their socioeconomic status, level of education, drug use, age, gender, nationality, relationship status and prior criminal records are all collected. Unfortunately, these data are not, for the most part, in the public domain and to date are largely unavailable to academic researchers. The only publicly available information relates to the nationality and gender of the arrestees for homicide (without a disaggregation for completed and attempted homicides) from 1998 to 2006, and excluding individuals arrested by the

police forces of Catalonia and Navarra. As explained earlier, since 2006, the Ministry of the Interior has altogether stopped the publication of data on gender and nationality of arrestees for homicide. The Ministry of the Interior also gathers information on relevant victim characteristics such as nationality, employment status and occupation, educational level and relationship status. However, these statistics are not currently in the public domain and have never been published, with the exception of some information on intimate partner homicide.

In 2006, the National Police, Guardia Civil and the police force of the Basque Country arrested 1,465 individuals for 1,129 attempted or completed homicides (1.29 arrestees per crime). A large majority of arrestees, 90%, were men. Given that most of these homicides were only attempted (66% of them), it can be presumed that most of the arrestees were only for attempted homicides.

Public health statistics provide up-to-date reliable information on the gender and age of victims of homicide. Figure 23.1 provides a graphical representation of the age-standardised rates for male and female victimizations. In 2008, 68% of the victims of homicide were male. With annual fluctuations, this proportion has been decreasing for the last 3 decades from a high of 80% of all deaths in 1980. In 2008, the age-standardised rate of homicide victimisation for men was 1.155 and, for women, 0.551. This continues to be a problem, thus, that affects primarily men. The age groups with the highest risk for homicide victimisation are, unsurprisingly, men aged 20–24 (1.72) and aged 25–29 (1.70). For women, the rates of victimisation are highest for women aged 25–29 (0.743), 40–44 (0.724) and 45–49 (0.722). The high risk women in their 40s experience is a function of the particular characteristics of intimate partner homicide in Spain.

In terms of socio-demographic characteristics of victims and offenders, nationality is the other key indicator for which we have data, and that has been widely discussed in the Spanish media and by politicians. The increasing use of a law and order rhetoric by politicians has followed, in parallel fashion, the moral panic around immigration

and crime (Medina, 2006). The significant and rapid increase of the immigrant population in Spain has produced public anxiety. As the immigrant population increased in Spain, there has been a very large increase in the proportion of the population that associates immigration from lower-income countries with crime (from about 30% of the population in the early 90s to about 70% more recently). Indeed, many politicians and practitioners have blamed the changing demographics for perceived changes on crime levels (Rechea Alberola et al., 2006). Homicide has not escaped this dynamic.

Is there any basis for some of these concerns? It is hard to tell based on the information available. What seems clear is that the proportion of foreign nationals²⁰ arrested for homicide has increased considerably over the last decade, from around 19% in 1998 to around 36% in 2006.²¹ Equally, there have been variations in the nationalities of people arrested for homicide that have, somehow, mirrored the changing demographics of the Spanish immigrant population. Traditionally, Moroccans have been the foreign nationals with the highest number of arrests for homicide, although more recently, we have seen Colombians and Ecuadorians increasing their numbers in significant ways.²² Whether these arrests reflect any form of increased institutional racism in Spain (of which there is some more general evidence: Wagman, 2006), a real change in the demographics of homicide offenders, or a combination of both factors, is hard to tell.

²⁰The Spanish administration does not gather statistics on ethnicity. The statistics of the Ministry of the Interior on homicide only reveals nationality. However, the degree to which police officers, when gathering information about suspects may or may not use the nationality of origin, even in cases in which a Spanish nationality has already been acquired, is unknown.

²¹In contrast, according to judicial statistics, in 2007 and 2008, only around 26% of men and women convicted of homicide and any of its forms (including imprudent homicide and cooperation/induction to suicide) were foreign nationals.

²²Romanians, Moroccans, Ecuadorians and Colombians by that order represent, today, the countries with the largest share of the immigrant population in Spain.

Nevertheless, the more detailed information on intimate-partner homicide collected by the Observatory Against Gender Violence and Domestic Violence suggests that, at least for this form of homicide, a real change in the demographics of offenders and victims may also be taking place (Consejo General del Poder Judicial, 2010), with 44% of the offenders and 38% of the victims in 2009 being foreign nationals (particularly from Latin America). The trend since 2002 has been of a lineal increase in the proportion of victims of intimate partner femicide that were foreign born. The average risk of dying from intimate partner violence for foreign women from 1999 to 2006 was 5.3 times greater than the risk for Spanish women (Vives Cases, Alvarez Dardet, et al., 2008). This greater vulnerability of foreign national women to intimate partner violence has also been observed when studying non-lethal violence through the use of victimisation surveys (Vives Cases et al., 2009).

Explanations for Homicide Specific to Spain

There has been little written in the form of explanations specific to homicide within the Spanish literature. As discussed in the introduction, most work carried out has been primarily descriptive. In the context of spare data and funding available, this trend is understandable. As Barberet (2005: 347) has highlighted, Spanish studies attempting 'explanations, theoretically relevant research and evaluation research have always been as desirable, but luxurious treats'. Theoretically-relevant research on violence more generally is growing, but there are still few explanatory studies of homicide.

There are, in particular, few statistical and econometric analyses studying the relationship between social conditions and homicide in Spain. Although time-series and area-based analyses have a long history within comparative criminology, there are few examples of this sort of work emanating from Spain. This, in part, has to do with the psychological and legal focus of most of Spanish criminology. The sparse bibliography

and the lack of tradition shows on the level of methodological sophistication and the many problematic assumptions made about the data in several of these studies.

Barberet studied trends in homicide from 1960 to 1989. Although homicide increased with gross domestic product, her research suggested that modernization and deterrence variables are insufficient to explain the changes in homicide during the period. She highlighted the added relevance of inequality and the particular poor fit of a modernization/deterrence model to explain changing trends in domestic homicide. Tapia Granados (2005) carried out fixed-effect panel regression models exploring the impact of economic cycles on different causes of mortality across Spanish provinces from 1980 to 1997, and did not find a relationship between total and male homicide victimisation and economic conditions. He reported a weak effect on female victimisation, but data limitations prevented him from drawing strong conclusions. Rossow's (2001) comparative cross-national analysis of the impact of alcohol on homicide incorporated time series analysis on differenced series of annual aggregate-level data on alcohol sales and homicide rates for the period 1950–1990 for each individual country (1962–1990 for Spain). His analysis of the Spanish data suggests that total alcohol sales were positively and statistically significantly associated with homicide. When disaggregated by gender, total alcohol sales only seemed to affect male homicide victimisation. He also examined the beverage-specific sales and noted a positive and statistically significant association between wine and spirit sales and homicide in Spain. The study did not control for other socio-economic factors. Alonso et al. (2008) noted a link between immigration and homicide, using data on arrestees, and speculated that immigrants are particularly prone to homicide as a result of reduced opportunity costs and inherent (cultural) traits.²³ Vives Cases et al. (2007) classified

Spanish provinces in two categories according to the Gender Development Index score (see United Nations Development Programme) and found that those provinces with below-average scores had a higher rate of intimate partner femicides. They concluded that gender inequality thus exacerbates violence against women. However, their analysis failed to control for any other socio-economic indicators. Medina (forthcoming) used spatial analysis techniques to suggest a relationship at the province-level between homicide and factors measuring deprivation and social disorganisation.

As indicated above, intimate partner homicides have received special attention in the Spanish context. Since the late 90s subsequent governments have competed to capitalise on public emotions about the topic. This has resulted in numerous legislative reforms that reached a zenith with the publication of the 2004 Law for Comprehensive Measures of Protection against Gender Violence. This law, in its first article, 'establishes' the causal relationship between gender inequality and violence against women. In general, government bodies and policy makers have uncritically accepted a 'universal risk' explanation of gender violence that has relied on gender inequality as the main and only factor accounting for it. In this context, research to highlight the relevance of other risk factors (e.g. socio-economic status, personality factors, alcohol abuse) for intimate lethal or non-lethal violence has not been very visible and has become almost anathema (Echeburua et al., 2009). Yet, slowly, but gradually, more sophisticated understandings are evolving that recognise the significance of gender inequality but also highlight the salience of risk factors for intimate partner lethality such as immigration status (Vives Cases, Torrubiano Dominguez, & Alvarez Dardet, 2008), alcohol/drug abuse of the perpetrator, social class and psychological factors (Cerezo Dominguez, 1998; Rodríguez Cortés & Soria Verde, 2003).

The Spanish media and some pieces of true-crime literature (Clarkson, 2009) have speculated that the changing dynamics of organised crime groups in Spain, particularly the arrival of Eastern

²³Their analysis, however, seems quite naive in relation to the accuracy of Spanish police data and took the arrestee figures as an indicator free from error of immigrant crime.

European and other international groups, have translated into a growing level of organised-crime related violence. Aebi (2004), in his account of changing crime trends across Western Europe from 1990 to 2000, also speculated that the upward trend in recorded violent offences could be partially explained by gang struggles over the control of illegal markets. There is, unfortunately, little data on the public domain that could allow for a test of this hypothesis. At the turn of the new millennium, the Spanish Ministry of the Interior created the Center for Intelligence on Organized Crime. Among its many functions, the Center prepares an annual report on the state of organised crime in Spain. Unfortunately, these documents are not in the public domain.

Punishment and Policies Specific to Spain

Legal Framework and Punishment

The Spanish Criminal Code of 1995 lists homicide and its forms as the first crime in its listing. Title I of the Book II of the Criminal Code is entitled 'Homicide and Its Forms', and it is dedicated to homicide, murder, aggravated murder, conspiracy or propositions to kill, imprudent homicide (including by reckless driving) and induction or cooperation to suicide. Homicide is defined by Spanish law as the intentional killing of another human being. When the killing is accompanied by either the unnecessary causing of pain, 'alevosia' (a complex legal concept that refers to situations where the offender aims to exploit a particular weakness of the victim), or was paid for, it is classified as murder (understood in Spanish law as conceptually different from homicide). If more than one of these circumstances is present, the act is considered aggravated murder. The Spanish Criminal Code establishes a mandatory minimum and maximum sentence. Homicide and murder are punishable with custodial sentences. The minimums and maximums are as follows: 10–15 years for homicide, 15–20 years for murder, and 20–25 for aggravated murder. These sentences are modified

according to the level of involvement and if the crime was only attempted or not completed. The specific sentence between the maximum and minimum is established by the judge taking into account a number of generally listed aggravating or attenuating circumstances. The presence of these circumstances may also allow for a sentence below the established minimum or above the established maximum. The presence of circumstances that are deemed to decrease the degree of criminal culpability are also associated with a reduced sentence.

Since 1995 new reforms have toughened the existing legislation. Some of these general reforms have implications for the sentencing of homicide offenders. A reform introduced in 2003 established that offenders convicted of a custodial sentence longer than 5 years would need to have served at least half of their term before being able to be classified in the lowest level of penitentiary classification (for implications to a number of benefits, such as release periods, access to conditional freedom, etc.). This reform also raised the maximum penalty to 40 years for terrorism crimes and also for situations in which several crimes punishable with 20 or more years were committed simultaneously, in the context of reforms aimed to toughen the regime for intimate partner violence. In 2003, another reform changed one of the circumstances the judges have to take into account when specifying the length of custodial sentence, so that former partners would receive the same, more serious, sentence than other family partners. This was followed by another reform the same year that created a new punishment banning contact with victims and suspending paternal rights, both compatible with custodial sentences. Finally, in 2010, the most recent reform establishes a new penal measure that allows for the post-penitentiary supervision, for 10 years, of offenders considered as high risk, in particular in relation to terrorism and sexual offences.

Unfortunately, the limitation of Spanish sentencing statistics makes it impossible to monitor the practice of the Courts. Criminal justice statistics in Spain are almost as sparse as crime statistics. For the most part, they are a limited tool to

assess the volume of case processing, but little else. Judicial statistics are also notoriously difficult to interpret in Spain and, although they have improved over the years, they continue to overestimate the number of criminal events as a result of multiple counting and computation errors (Garrido, Stangeland, & Redondo, 2001). For 2006, the last year for which this detail was published, 14% of the people convicted of homicide had a previous criminal conviction. Unfortunately, the available statistics do not provide much more detail than this. It is not possible then, for example, to compute the average sentence given to individuals convicted of homicide based on the published data or any further details in the specific sentences given.

Crime Prevention Policies and Homicide

Despite numerous promises on electoral manifestos during the democratic transition, Spain lacks any discernable crime prevention strategies or policies, other than those oriented to tackle crime through a combination of deterrence, incapacitation and rehabilitation. It could therefore arguably be said that Spain has arrived late to the so-called 'preventative turn' (Medina, 2011). For example, unlike in other European countries, there is not a developed municipal infrastructure for crime prevention; the government does not systematically monitor, sponsor or evaluate crime prevention activities; and there is a notorious lack of research foundation and bibliography in this area. So, although crime has become more important in political discourse (Medina, 2006), there is a distinctive lack of policy development in this area other than through changes to the criminal law and sentencing framework. In general, most observers agree that Spanish politicians believe that a 'good' social and economic policy is all you need in order to reduce crime, whereas debates about policing have been dominated by structural and organisational issues rather than the impact of police work on crime and safety (Medina, 2011). That is not to say that there is no crime prevention on the ground, but rather that these activities are not carried out under the crime

reduction banner, so they are often difficult to locate, their evaluation is very rare, and with the exception of, perhaps, activities to evaluate the risk of intimate partner abusers, there are none that could be presented as homicide crime reduction policies.

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Introduction

Italy is a peninsula in southern Europe that stretches into the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. It covers a surface area of 301,230 km² and includes the islands of Sardinia and Sicily. Italy counts nearly 60 million inhabitants, thus ranking among the thirty most populous countries in the world. At present, its population includes roughly 29 million men and 30 million women. Non-Italian residents account for 3.5 million (5.7% of total residents).

According to the Italian National Institute of Statistics data, in the past 50 years, the population structure of Italy changed considerably, with an increase in the prevalence of people aged 65 and older (+120%) and a decrease of those younger than 6 (−38%) (ISTAT, 2010). Cultural changes have occurred, too, such as the spreading of literacy in the population, with a fivefold increase in the proportion of individuals with a university degree and a decrease in the number of those who are illiterate (−200%) (ISTAT).

According to Eurostat (the European Statistical System) data, Italy has a higher wedding rate, a lower rate of unmarried couples, and a lower rate of divorces than other European countries

(Eurostat, 2010). But, as elsewhere, in Italy, the marriage rate is decreasing, while the proportion of unmarried couples is increasing. Marriage is still considered an important institution in many socio-cultural strata of the nation. Therefore, the conflicts centered on marriage and family can easily precipitate domestic violence in Italy, as happens in other countries where family bonding is given a higher value than individual independence.

The official unemployment rate in Italy was approximately 7% for men and 10% for women in 2009.¹ In the European Study of the Epidemiology of Mental Disorders (ESEMeD, 2004), prevalence of alcohol abuse in Italian respondents was reported at 1% compared to 4% in the whole European sample; prevalence of alcohol dependence was 0.3 vs. 1% in the European sample.²

The yearly per capita alcohol consumption recorded among Italian adults (15-year-old subjects and older) was estimated at 8 L (of pure alcohol) in 2003 (World Health Organization, 2008).

Access to treatment services against substance abuse and dependence, and deaths by substance

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¹These figures must be taken with caution, since there is no study on the reliability and validity of official unemployment data in Italy.

²The reliability of these data is uncertain: Italy still nurtures a strong negative stigma against alcohol abuse and dependence, so people are likely to hide this problem to lay interviewers, as those of the ESEMeD study.

overdose, increased substantially from 1984 to 1990, and decreased thereafter, likely as a reflection of the epidemic of heroin abuse in the young population in the 1980s, and the spreading of specialized services in the 1990s (Preti, Miotto, & De Coppi, 2002). Data from the World Mental Health Survey (WMHS), the most recent investigation on substance use in the general population carried out in Italy, reported roughly 7% prevalence of lifetime cannabis use in the sample (18–65 years old), and 1% prevalence of lifetime experience with cocaine use (Degenhardt et al., 2008). However, a survey of 16,552 male and female adolescents and young adults (age range: 15–34) commissioned by the Ministry of Social Solidarity reported a 30% prevalence of lifetime cannabis use and 7% of lifetime cocaine use (Ferrero, 2006).

Italian citizens are not allowed to keep and bear arms, unless specifically authorized by the local police with a gun license, which is released for specific usage: sport, hunting, and personal defence (in very limited cases). There is no Italian study reporting reliable estimates on firearms or private gun ownership in Italy. An uncontrolled survey reported in the press some time ago detailed about ten million legal weapons in Italy, with roughly five million people possessing at least one firearm (Numa, 2008). A study conducted by the Small Arms Survey, an independent research project of the Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, reported a 12% per capita gun ownership rate in Italy, and estimated seven million registered firearms circulating (Small Arms Survey, 2007). There is no reliable data on illegal firearms circulation in Italy. Since many criminal organizations operate in Italy, the circulation of illegally detained firearms and weapons is supposedly large.

Statistics on Crime in Italy: Recent Trends

Based on data from the Ministry of Interior (2007–2008 biennium), in Italy, the number of attempted homicides ($n=3,212$) was, on average, two and a half times higher than completed homicides ($n=1,238$). In the latest 5 years, the number of attempted homicides has increased (+10%),

while the number of homicides has not (+1%). Rapes, too, have increased in Italy in the latest 5 years (+14%), while other violent crimes, such as robbery, have not (+1%). In general, the total number of reported crimes in Italy has not changed considerably in the past 10 years. However, official data are a poor approximation of crime victimization. According to the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS), around 16% of the participants in the survey, including people from 30 nations, have been victims of at least one out of any ten common crimes in 2003–2004 (van Dijk, Van Kesteren, & Smit, 2007). However, it was calculated that only about a third of all assaults and threats were reported to the police (van Dijk, Van Kesteren, et al.). Moreover, victimization trends, as measured in the ICVS and in police crime records over a 5-year interval, were not correlated (van Dijk, Van Kesteren, et al.). The most recent survey on the topic, the European Survey on Crime and Safety, found a general decline in crime victimization in Italy and in other European countries (with the exception of Belgium), from 1989 to 2005 (van Dijk, Manchin, van Kesteren, & Hideg, 2007).

This decline in crime victimization parallels the decline in homicide rates reported in many European countries (Aebi & Linde, 2012).

Previous Studies on Homicide in Italy

The epidemiological studies on homicide in Italy published in peer-reviewed journals are very rare. Most studies, moreover, focus on single topics or local data (e.g., Gatti, Tremblay, & Schadee, 2007; Verzeletti, Astorri, & De Ferrari, 2009).

Preti and Miotto (2000a) analyzed the epidemiology of deaths by homicide in the Italian population from 1980 to 1994 and found a mean rate of 2/100,000, with men having fivefold higher rates than women. Homicide rates peaked in both genders in early adult age (25–34 years old), and a firearm was involved in about 75% of homicides. The distribution of homicide rates in the twenty Italian administrative regions by geographical position showed a clear north–south gradient for males but not for females, and more male victims of homicides. Unemployment rates were strongly

and positively associated with homicide rates, explaining up to 54% of variance in the regional distribution of homicide rates across the 20 Italian administrative regions (Preti & Miotto, 1999). Some professions are at a higher risk of homicide. One study investigated homicide rate among security guards from 1996 to 2006, and found that it was 11/100,000 person-years, compared with the homicide rate in the Italian population of 5/100,000 person-years (Clerici, Invernizzi, Veneroni, & De', 2009).

Recent years have witnessed renewed interest in homicide studies in Italy, from the perspective of mental health, forensic sciences, and criminology. As for offenders with a mental disorder, in Italy they are detained in special Forensic Hospitals (FHs); homicidal offenders have a longer stay in FH than nonhomicidal offenders (Fioritti et al., 2001). However, when compared with other inmates, patients who committed or attempted homicide showed less severe psychopathologies and a better behavioral profile, though they scored higher on the "hostility" and "suspiciousness" factors of the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (Fioritti, Ferriani, Rucci, & Melega, 2006).

In the field of criminology, authors principally investigated the role of criminal organizations, which is more prominent in Italy than in other European nations as Italian criminal organizations control large areas of the country, particularly in the south. A retrospective study carried out in Bari (in southern Italy) on lethal firearm wounds between 1988 and 2003 found that 75% of homicide cases were related to continual, ongoing fights among local criminal gangs (Solarino, Nicoletti, & Di Vella, 2007). Sometimes, Italian criminal organizations use particular methods of killing, intended to have an admonitory significance. A particular method is the "incaprettamento," a homicidal ligature strangulation in which the body is left in a typical position with the wrists and ankles linked by ropes (Fineschi, Dell'Erba, Di Paolo, & Procaccianti, 1998). Symbolic methods of killing are specific to each criminal organization, but generally the members of criminal organizations resort to firearms, and sometimes third parties – law enforcement officers, mainly – are caught in the crossfire (De Donno, Santoro, Rossi, Grattagliano, & Introna, 2009).

Fewer studies were dedicated to serial killing compared to the United States. Serial killing is thought to have a lower incidence in Italy than in Anglo-Saxon countries, but the exact figures are not available. Recently, Campobasso et al. (2009) reported on a serial killer who operated in the territories of southern Italy and killed fifteen elderly women: the offender reported sexual gratification as a main reason for the killing.

Italy is a European country with a relatively homogeneous population in terms of many variables that elsewhere affect the study of social correlates of homicide rates (race, interstate migration, linguistic identity, social inequality). Therefore, Italy is suitable ground for the exploration of homicidal behavior free from bias due to strong social differences.

Italy always had high homicide rates compared to other European countries, but in recent decades, the homicide rate in Italy has decreased, as observed in the United States and Canada (Cherry, Annest, Mercy, Kresnow, & Pollock, 1998; Leenaars & Lester, 2004) and in most European countries as well (Aebi & Linde, 2012).

This chapter reviews major data on the epidemiology of homicide in Italy. Data on victims will be analyzed by sex, age, and geographical location. Data on the offender will be presented according to police and judicial investigations. The role of mental disorders in both the victim and the offender will be analyzed. Additional information will be given on the relationship between victim and offender, and concerning victims or offenders of non-Italian nationality. This group includes people who were resident in Italy at the time of the homicidal incident but were not born in Italy.

Data Sources and Timeline

The data reported herein come from three sources: official statistics on causes of death, as reported by the World Health Organization Statistical Information System (WHOSIS); Italian national statistics on causes of death, as reported by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT); and data recorded in the homicide database of the Economic and Social Research Center-EURES,

as published in the EURES-ANSA annual reports. The EURES-ANSA annual reports integrate official data on homicide, based on prosecution and court statistics, with information on police investigations drawn from the press releases kept in the Data Bank of the National Agency Press (ANSA), and from the archive on criminal events of the Italian Department of Criminal Police Service and Analysis, Ministry of the Interior. Information coverage in the latest two available years (2007–2008) is complete, with full overlap between EURES database and the database covered by the ISTAT and the Ministry of Interior.

The classification of homicide deaths was in compliance with the WHO International Classification of Diseases (ICD) and, more specifically, with the deaths resulting from assault/homicide, i.e. injury purposefully inflicted by another person (ICD, ninth edition codes: E960–E978; tenth edition codes: X85–Y09).

Historical data come from the WHOSIS, and cover the 1979–2003 interval (World Health Organization, 2010).

Recent trends are drawn from ISTAT and EURES figures, and cover the 2002–2008 interval, the most recent available timeline. Since specific details on recent trends were not available for the whole period, they were reported with reference to the most recent biennium (2007–2008). Comparison across time of the details available for the 2002–2008 interval indicates that these details did not change relevantly, so data on the latest two available years can be considered representative of the recent trend.

Trend analyses were calculated using joinpoint analysis with the Joinpoint Regression Program version 3.4.2 from the Surveillance Research Program of the US National Cancer Institute (2009); Kim, Fay, Feuer, & Midthune (2000). Joinpoint regression analysis uses permutation tests to identify the points (i.e., “joinpoints”) where linear trends change significantly in direction or magnitude (Kim et al.). No minimum or maximum joinpoints were specified for the models used in this analysis, thereby allowing the joinpoint software to select the most appropriate model for the data. The change rate of each trend was tested to determine whether it was significantly different

from 0 (e.g., no change), and each trend in the final model was described by an annual percentage change (APC). Essentially, each joinpoint informs a statistically significant change in trend (increase or decrease) and each of those trends is described by the APC. The APC in age-adjusted mortality rate for each line segment, and the corresponding 95% confidence interval (CI) were estimated; statistically significant results (with extremes of CI not including the unit, i.e., when both were above or below 1) were marked with an asterisks in the figure.

All the other data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 13.0 for Windows (SPSS, Inc., Chicago, IL).

Epidemiology of Homicide in Italy

From 1979 to 2008, deaths by homicide in Italy increased until a peak in 1990/1991, then decreased in both males and females.

In males, a model with five joinpoints emerged as the most appropriate to describe the variation in homicide rates over time (Fig. 24.1).

In this model, a first segment from 1979 to 1982 underwent a nonsignificant increase, followed by a significant decrease from 1982 to 1987, then a new increase from 1987 to 1990. There was a decrease again from 1990 to 1994, followed by a further smoother decrease from 1994 to 2001, and finally a modest and nonsignificant increase from 2001 to 2008.

In females, the program extracted a linear, decreasing trend (no joinpoints) as the most appropriate to describe the changes in homicide rates over time (Fig. 24.1).

Overall, in the most recent interval with available data (2002–2008), the number of homicidal incidents and the number of victims slightly decreased.

Concurrently, there was a decrease in the percentage of domestic homicidal incidents and victims, while homicidal incidents and victims attributable to criminal organizations remained stable, albeit fluctuating over the years. However, homicidal incidents involving non-Italian victims increased from 2002 to 2008 (see below for details).

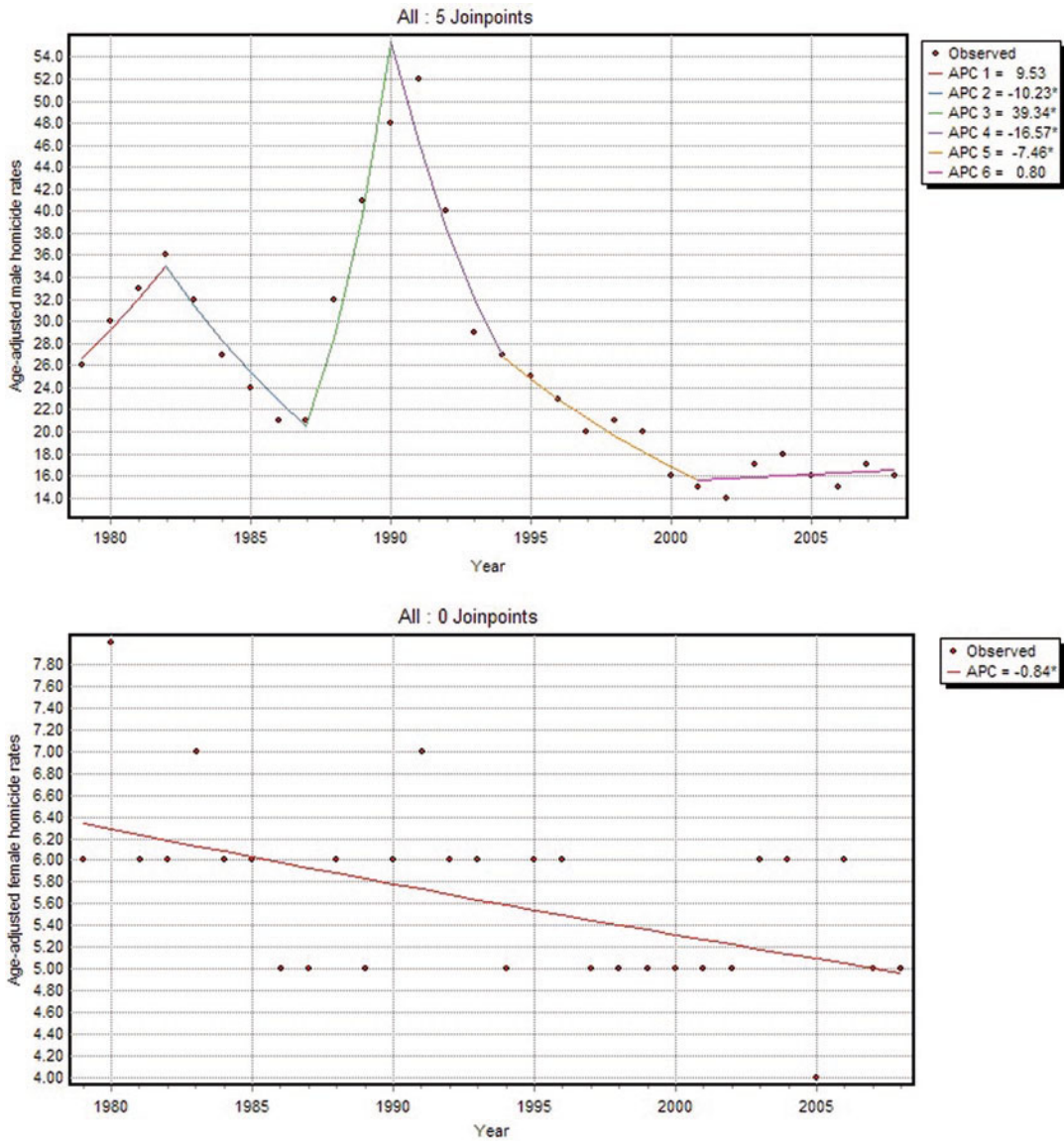


Fig. 24.1 Trends in age-adjusted male (*top*) and female (*bottom*) homicide rates in Italy – 1979–2008. Data show rates per one million inhabitants. Data were illustrated by joinpoint regression analysis, which uses permutation tests to identify the points (i.e., “joinpoints”) where linear trends change significantly in direction or magnitude. Each joinpoint informs of a statistically significant change in trend (increase or decrease), and each of those trends is described by a corresponding annual percentage change

(APC). APC in age-adjusted mortality rate for each line segment, and the corresponding 95% confidence interval (CI) were estimated; for a result to be statistically significant, extremes of CI should not include the unit (i.e., the extremes should be above or below 1). In males (*top*), five joinpoints were extracted, with six APCs (four of them were statistically significant). In females, no joinpoints were extracted, and the trend was linearly decreasing

Regional Distribution of Homicide Rates

Data on the regional distribution of homicide rates were analyzed for the latest two available years (2007–2008). Italy is characterized by a

marked north–south gradient – and a less pronounced west–east gradient – in the distribution of homicide rates. This is largely attributable to the impact of criminal organizations operating in the southern regions of Italy, which are also

located more to the east than northern regions. Using multiple linear regression, taking into account longitude and population density (number of inhabitants per square kilometer), it was determined that for each degree of latitude toward north, the homicide rates decreased by 0.21/100,000 inhabitants, when considering 102 local administrative areas (data missing on two of them). The model explained a 20% variance (adjusted r^2). Only latitude was statistically linked to homicide rates ($t=-4.59$, $P=0.0001$); longitude and population density were not.

The homicides attributable to criminal organizations were largely concentrated in the south, principally Campania (where the so-called Camorra operates), Calabria (where the so-called Ndrangheta operates), Puglia (where the so-called Sacra Corona Unita operates), and Sicilia (where the so-called Mafia operates). On average, homicides attributable to criminal organizations represent 21% of all homicides in Italy (2007–2008 data). This percentage was even higher in the past (24% in 2001; 30% in 1990).

As for the domestic homicides, they are only marginally more prevalent in north and central Italian regions (on average, 2.9 victims per one million inhabitants in both areas in the 2007–2008 biennium) than in southern regions (2.7 victims per one million inhabitants in the 2007–2008 biennium).

As for the homicides due to criminal intent, their incidence is higher in southern regions (including the two major islands of Italy, Sardinia and Sicily) than in the central or north regions. Other types of homicidal incidents are more evenly distributed across the country.

Incident Characteristics

Homicidal incidents are classified in Italian statistics according to the victim–offender relationship, and in particular they are divided into homicides occurring within the family, homicides occurring between friends/acquaintances, homicides occurring between neighbors, homicides occurring at work or by reason of business

relationship, homicides due to criminal intent, and homicides attributable to organized crime.

For the purpose of this study, homicidal incidents were grouped into the following categories:

- *Domestic homicides*, which include homicides committed within the family, or when the victim and the offender were related by family ties.
- *Criminal homicide*, i.e., homicides in which the offender and/or the victim was involved in criminal practices, including drug trafficking and organized crime; this category roughly corresponds to the “homicides attributable to the organized crime” of the Italian classification.
- *Homicides resulting from arguments/altercations*, which include incidents arising out of short- or long-term conflicts between friends, acquaintances, or strangers, and resulting in violent death. In this category, the offenders and victims were not next of kin and did not become acquainted in the criminal circuit. This category groups the homicides occurring among friends/acquaintances, the homicides occurring among neighbors, and the homicides that occurred at work or by reason of business relationship in the Italian classification.
- *Robbery homicides*, which includes homicides that took place during a robbery, raid, or burglary, and corresponds to the “homicides due to criminal intent” of the Italian classification.³

In Italy, the most prevalent homicidal incidents are domestic and criminal homicides. Across the 2002–2008 period, domestic homicides were statistically higher than all other types, except criminal homicides (Table 24.1).

Domestic homicides, criminal homicides, and homicides resulting from arguments/altercations more often produced multiple victims, on average in 9, 9.5, and 16% of cases, respectively, as against 4% in robbery homicides or 4.5% in the homicides that went unclassified because of lack of information (data concerning the 2007–2008 biennium).

³The Italian classification has no such category as “sexual homicide” (homicides within the context of prostitution and/or homicides where victims have been sexually assaulted or raped).

Table 24.1 Distribution of homicidal incidents in Italy by typology (2002–2008)

Typology	<i>n</i>	%	Yearly mean	Minimum	Maximum
Domestic homicides	1,317	30	188	166	223
Criminal homicides	991	22	141	77	190
Robbery homicides	784	18	112	88	158
Homicides from arguments/altercations	769	17	109	76	142
Other	23	1	3	0	8
Unknown	531	12	76	26	120
Total	4,415	100	630	594	691

Source: EURES, Rapporto EURES-ANSA 2006 and 2009

Classification of Incidents by Motive

Precise details on the motives involved in homicidal incidents were available for domestic and criminal homicides only. Data were from EURES-ANSA annual reports.

As for domestic homicides, passion is most often invoked as a motive of the homicide by the offender when he/she remains alive and is captured (20% of cases in the 2007–2008 biennium); jealousy is an oft-occurring reason, but sometimes the homicide resulted from a quarrel raised by the decision of the female victim (spouse or lover) to leave her current partner. Overall, arguments and altercations causing chronic conflict within the family were the most-often ascertained motive of a domestic homicide (28% of cases in the 2007–2008 biennium). Marital discord prevailed, followed by parent–son arguments.

In about 6–8% of cases, a social or mental handicap of the victim motivated the domestic homicide: in a fraction of cases, the reason was a “mercy killing” (i.e. euthanasia). In 8–9% of cases, the offender was suffering from a mental disorder: this more often resulted in the killing of a parent (the mother, principally) or in family annihilation, i.e., a homicide-suicide where the offender kills many or all members of his/her family and then commits suicide. This finding is also reported elsewhere (Liem & Koenraadt, 2008).

As for criminal homicides, motives are largely confined to arguments and altercations within and among organizations. In one-third of cases, the conflict concerned the leadership of the gang; in another third, conflicts were between gangs for the control of a territory; in 10% of cases, the homicide was a consequence of an illicit activity

(because of the victim’s reaction or police intervention). In the remaining cases, the motive of the homicide remained unknown. More details on the motives of a criminal homicide cannot be offered because in a vast majority of cases (80%) the offender remained unknown. However, the victims not affiliated with a criminal organization were only involved in 20% of cases (data: 2007–2008), and in the remaining cases the victim was someone affiliated with a criminal organization, so in the vast majority of cases, the motives for a criminal homicide are likely to coincide with those reported above.

As for robbery homicides, they often occur during an act of theft or robbery (20–30% of cases depending on the region), or as an act of revenge during a showdown (15% of cases). Less often, these homicides resulted from gang fights (3% of cases), fights about prostitution (3–5% of cases), or extortion (1–2% of cases).

Among the homicides resulting from arguments/altercations, the arguments related to work or a business relationship are involved in a limited fraction (about 3% of all homicides, data: 2002–2008).

Futile motives or disagreements are involved in the homicides among friends or acquaintances (11%) and among neighbors (3%). In 12% of cases, there were no details on the homicidal incident, because the offender remained unknown.

Victim–Offender Relationship

Specific details on the victim–offender relationship were available for domestic homicides only. Data were from EURES-ANSA annual reports.

In more than a half of cases, the victim was living with the offender (96 cases out of 165 in 2007; 101 out of 171 in 2008). In a large majority of cases (80%), the victim of a domestic homicide was the spouse of the offender.

The offender was a male in 83% of domestic homicides (2007–2008 biennium), and in 91% of cases among their victims there was a female, as against 67% of cases with male victims only. The victims of female offenders were often the spouse or the current partner (40% of cases in 2007–2008), or their children (18% of cases in 2007–2008). In domestic homicides, male offenders often kill multiple victims, and among their victims there are sometimes relatives who are not living with them (cousins, brothers- or sisters-in-law, and parents-in-law).

Homicides between couples, in which one member kills their current or former partner, represent the majority of domestic homicides (51% of all cases of domestic homicide in 2007–2008). In about two thirds of homicides between couples, the victim and the offender lived together, while in about 25% of cases the killing occurred after the separation of the couple.

As already reported, in criminal homicides, the victim was often a member of a gang, killed by a fellow gang member, rivals, the victim (in reaction), or the police, when present at the event.

In robbery homicides, the victim and the offender were typically strangers to each other.

In the homicides resulting from arguments/altercations, the victim–offender relationship is sometimes strong and durable, but more often superficial, and the homicidal incident is precipitated by arguments that are futile or of minor importance, except for those homicides occurring at work or because of economic reasons.

As mentioned above, in about 12% of cases, the offender remained unknown, so no details could be recorded on the victim–offender relationship.

Location

Data on the homicide location are derived from EURES-ANSA annual reports. Overall, in the

Table 24.2 Location of the homicidal incident in Italy, by typology (2007–2008)

Typology of the location	2007–2008	
	<i>n</i>	%
Home	415	33.4
Crowded place	295	23.7
Countryside	107	8.6
Public place	77	6.2
Workplace	60	4.8
Suburban road	38	3.1
Isolated place	44	3.5
Other ^a	119	9.6
Unknown	87	7.0
Total	1,242	100

Source: EURES, Rapporto EURES-ANSA 2009

^aThis group includes the following categories, each counting 0.5–1% of all cases: abandoned building, park, railway station, shop, hospital/surgery, social club, cemetery/graveyard, beach, canal/dump, prison

2007–2008 biennium, most homicides occurred in the victim's house (33% of all homicides), while another important fraction of homicides (around 30%) happened close to a crowded location (a square or a busy road) or in a public place, such as a dance hall, a nightclub, or a bar (Table 24.2).

Criminal homicides occurred more often in crowded places (around 50% of all criminal homicides; data 2007–2008), while domestic homicides largely took place in the victim's house (75% of all family homicides; data 2007–2008), often in the bedroom (25%) or in the kitchen (10%). Homicides with unknown details on the offender occurred more often in the countryside (15% of those with unknown details in 2007; 38% in 2008) or in an isolated place (19% in 2007, but 2% in 2008). The pattern in the distribution of the homicidal incidents by location has been rather stable across the last 7 years with available data (data not shown).

Modus Operandi

Data on the modus operandi are available for those homicides with known details on the offender and the incident only. Data stemmed

Table 24.3 Offenders by gender and method used to kill the victim(s) in Italy

Method used to kill the victim(s)	2007–2008					
	Male		Female		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Firearm	280	40.2	8	13.3	288	38.1
Knife/cutting weapon	215	30.9	28	46.7	243	32.1
Potentially offensive weapon	75	10.8	6	10	81	10.7
Strangulation	27	3.9	–	–	27	3.6
Beating/Hitting	24	3.4	4	6.7	28	3.7
Choking	13	1.9	3	5	16	2.1
Other ^a	31	4.5	7	11.7	38	5
Unknown	31	4.5	4	6.7	35	4.6
Total	696	100	60	100	756	100

Source: EURES, Rapporto EURES-ANSA 2009

This group includes the following categories, each counting 0.5–1.5% of all cases: fire, ramming/road accident, drowning, downfall, poisoning

from EURES-ANSA annual reports. Firearms are definitely the weapons used most frequently to kill the victim (Table 24.3).

Male offenders were more likely than female offenders to use a firearm to kill their victim(s), while female offenders most often used a cutting weapon to commit the homicide. This is a likely reflection of gender differences in the access to lethal firearms. In both genders, a potentially offensive object⁴ was used as a weapon in about 10% of homicides.

As for firearms, in the 2007–2008 biennium, 45% of all offenders (those ascertained as such by the investigation) did not possess a regularly issued firearm license, as against 6% with a regular license ($n=27$ in 2007; $n=34$ in 2008). In about a half of cases, this information was missing. Worth noting is that among the holders of a firearm license, 1 out of 5 (20%), on average, had known and recognizable psychiatric symptoms at the time of the homicidal incident, mainly attributable to depression: nevertheless, the license was not revoked.

Firearms (34% of all cases), cutting weapons (32%), and potentially offensive objects used as

a weapon (12%) were often used in domestic homicides (data: 2007–2008). As for domestic homicides ending up in the suicide of the offender, the offender often used a firearm to commit suicide after committing the homicide with the same weapon (about 40% of homicide-suicide cases).

The vast majority of criminal homicides were committed with firearms (around 95% of cases; data: 2007–2008). Robbery homicides did not differ from the general trend regarding the weapon used to commit the crime, but beating and hitting were more often used as a method of killing than in other types of homicides (on average, 6 vs. 3%; data: 2007–2008). Finally, a cutting weapon was often involved in homicides with a victim of non-Italian nationality (around 45% of all cases involving a non-Italian victim, amounting to nearly 22% of all homicides in the 2007–2008 biennium).

As for the crime scene, in about 20% of cases, there were attempts to hide the crime or to damage the body after the killing. Attempts to hide the body occurred in about 20% of these cases; the body was undressed or partially undressed in 15% of cases. In 15% of cases with intentional modification of the crime scene, the body was mutilated or buried; over-killing, with multiple and repeated injuries inflicted to the victim, occurred in 10% of cases (data: 2007–2008).

⁴A potentially offensive object is any object in the reach of the offender that might be used to hit or harm a victim, such as a bottle, a chair, a heavy lamp, or a vase.

Victim Characteristics

Data on victim characteristics were derived from the EURES-ANSA annual reports. In Italy, as in other countries, male victims prevailed over female victims by a 2:1 ratio.

Victims were employed in about 36% of cases; they were unemployed or not seeking a job in 29% of cases; in 35% of cases, this information was not available (data 2007–2008). Among the victims with known data on their profession (about 65% of cases in the 2007–2008 biennium), the larger fractions were employed in illegal or criminal activities (13%) or were manual workers (blue-collar workers or farmers; 13%). Among the victims employed in other legal jobs, most were unemployed or not working at the time (46% of all cases with known data).

The proportion of victims of non-Italian nationality increased over time, from 15% in 2002 to 24% in 2008. The ratio of victimization is 1.3/100,000 among Italian residents and 5.6/100,000 among non-Italian residents (2002–2008: averaged data), i.e. non-Italian residents have a fourfold higher risk of death by homicide than Italian residents. However, official data on the incidence of homicide among non-Italian residents are likely to be biased by the poor reliability of the information on immigration in Italy, a country with a high number of illegal immigrants who hide their place of residence.

The majority of non-Italian victims originated from eastern Europe, principally Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Albania, and Bosnia-Herzegovina (50% of all non-Italian victims in the 2007–2008 biennium).

Compared to Italian victims, non-Italian victims were more often killed during criminal incidents (28% of all non-Italian victims; data: 2007–2008), during quarrels between friends/acquaintances (28%), or in domestic homicides (25%). A large fraction of non-Italian victims were legally employed, 55% of all those with known data (data are available on 58% of all cases in 2007–2008); 29% were employed in illegal or criminal activities, while only 16% were not working or seeking a job.

In the 2007–2008 biennium, non-Italian victims were killed more often in northern regions (52%) than in central (23%) or in southern regions (25%). This is a likely reflection of the regional distribution of non-Italian inhabitants in the country: non-Italian residents are concentrated in the north, where they can find a job more easily (whether legal or illegal).

Age and Gender Distribution of the Victims

Male victims prevailed over female victims, principally in the south, where the ratio between male and female victims is around 6:1, as against 2:1 in the other areas.

Over the last seven available years (2002–2008), the age ranges with the highest risk were infants (younger than 1 year), young adults (aged 19–24 years), and adults (aged 25–54 years), with age-standardized rates per one million inhabitants of 7, 11, and 15, respectively.

Victims aged 64 years and older accounted for 10–13% of the total number of homicide victims, with a higher risk for females (25% in the 2007–2008 biennium) than males (9%). Females were more likely to be victims of homicide in the age range below 19, too (8 vs. 3% in males).

Non-Italian victims were younger than Italian victims (on average, 33 vs. 46 years old among Italian victims). Non-Italian victims prevailed among those aged 19–24 and 25–34 years (15 and 40%, respectively, of all non-Italian victims; data: 2007–2008). Non-Italian victims were mostly male: 71 vs. 29% of non-Italian victims who were female, but about a half of the victims from eastern Europe were females.

Offender Characteristics

Data on offender characteristics were derived from EURES-ANSA annual reports. In the past years, the fraction of homicidal incidents solved by the investigation with the identification of the offender(s) has increased from 67% of cases in the 2002–2003 biennium to 78% in 2007–2008. The cases with a positive solution were largely

domestic homicides, while criminal homicides often remained unsolved for years. Overall, socio-demographic details on the offender are increasingly available, offering important clues for preventive strategies.

Among known offenders, males prevail over females, 92 vs. 8% in 2007–2008 (further details below). In 2008, offenders of non-Italian nationality were male in 89% of cases and female in 11%.

About 50% of offenders with known details were not working or looking for a job, while the rest were employed, often in illegal or overtly criminal activities (23% in the 2007–2008 biennium). Those employed in legal activities were often manual workers (blue-collars or farmers). Worth noting is that about 2% of offenders were soldiers or policemen who killed a victim outside of a lawful armed conflict.

Typically, Italian victims were killed by a conational (85% of cases in 2007–2008) and non-Italian victims were also usually killed by a conational (55%). Offenders of non-Italian nationality increased over time, from 20% in 2002–2003 to 30% in 2007–2008 (data concerning known offenders only).

In 13% of cases (data: 2007–2008), the offender was suffering from a physical or neurological disorder likely to affect cognition. Around 8% of known offenders (and 57% among those with a physical or neurological disorder) were diagnosed with a mental disorder; only 1 out of 5 was on treatment at the time of the homicide. Approximately 3% suffered from active alcohol or substance abuse (and among those with a physical or neurological disorder, this abuse concerned 18% of subjects).

The offender(s) attempted to escape after the homicide in most cases (34% of cases, 2007–2008), while 9% remained on the scene; on average, 6% committed suicide after the homicide, and an additional 3% attempted suicide. Those who personally informed the police about the killing comprised 4% in 2007–2008, and another 6% gave themselves up to the police. Only 0.3% of the known offenders were killed in an armed conflict during the homicide.

About 80% of the offenders were arrested within 1 month. After 1 month, the chance that a homicide is solved decreases sensibly.

In domestic homicides, the offender was employed in a legal job more often than in the other kinds of homicide, particularly those attributable to the organized or the common crime. In domestic homicides, the offender was often married, while unmarried offenders amounted to about 25, the separated to 6, the divorced to 4, and the widowed to 2% (data: 2007–2008). The majority of the offenders in a domestic homicide were identified and most were arrested, but a higher fraction of them committed suicide after the killing than in other homicidal incidents (15% in 2007–2008). Male offenders were more likely than female offenders to commit suicide after the homicide (18 vs. 4% in 2007–2008), although female offenders were likely to attempt suicide unsuccessfully after the homicide (14 vs. 6% among males). The weapon used to commit the homicide is very often the same one used to commit the suicide.

About 15% of the offenders in a domestic homicide had a known and recognizable mental disorder, but only 1 out of 6 was in treatment; those with a current alcohol or substance abuse disorder amounted to 3%.

Age and Gender Distribution of the Offenders

The offenders of criminal homicides were male in all cases (data: 2007–2008; source: EURES-ANSA annual reports). Male offenders also prevailed in the homicides resulting from arguments/altercations. Female offenders were principally involved in domestic homicides (16% of known offenders) and in robbery homicides (2%).

As for age, most offenders were 25–44 years old (around 50% of all known offenders; data: 2007–2008). Those aged 64 and older accounted for 8%, while those younger than 18 accounted for 2%. However, among the offenders of a domestic homicide, people aged 64 and older constituted 16% of the total number of offenders, while those younger than 18 took up a scanty 0.3%.

Conversely, those aged 64 years and older accounted for 1% of the total offenders of non-Italian nationality, while those younger than 18 accounted for 2% (data: 2007–2008; source: EURES-ANSA annual reports). This is likely a reflection of the younger age of non-Italian offenders compared to the Italian ones.

Explanations for Homicide Specific to Italy

In Italy, the incidence of homicide has decreased in the past decade, although the decrease was less linear for male victims than for female ones. Since the incidence of attempted homicide increased in the same years, better emergency response and surgical interventions can be suggested as explanations for the decrease in homicide rates observed in Italy from 1990 onwards. Other studies from the United States, Canada, and Japan reported a decline in homicide rates (Cherry et al., 1998; Johnson, 2008; Leenaars & Lester, 2004), but changing rates in attempted homicide and the role of better emergency and surgical intervention across time were not investigated, to our knowledge.

In the United States, the decline in homicide rates, concurrent with a decline in overall crime rates (Blumstein & Wallman, 2006), was attributed – among other factors – to changing demographics with the aging of the population, better policing strategies, gun control laws, increased imprisonment, changes in the market of illicit drugs (principally crack cocaine), and the legalization of abortion (Levitt, 2004). The legalization of abortion is thought to have produced a reduction in the number of unwanted births, and since unwanted children are at a higher risk of crime, this might have contributed to the lowering of crime rates registered in those countries that have legalized abortion in the past decades (Levitt). All these processes are likely to have played a role in the countries where declining homicide rates were observed, and they may concur with the general decline in violence thought to have occurred in Western countries

(European countries, principally: see Aebi & Linde, 2012) over the past three centuries as a result of “civilization,” i.e. the centralization of power and its institutional arrangement, the spread of literacy, the organization of work in manufacturing, and improvements in hygiene and medicine (Eisner, 2001). Please note that problems arise when using data on historical periods that precede the creation of national statistics archives (nineteenth century), and many historical reconstructions suffer from the poor validity of the data contained in past sources (Spierenburg, 2012).

Contrary to the trend observed in the United States, Canada, or Europe, some countries have recorded increasing homicide rates after 1990, as a result of dramatic changes in socioeconomic conditions. In Russia, for example, homicide rates doubled after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, with growing unemployment rates largely contributing to this increase (Pridemore & Kim, 2007).

As for Italy, the most relevant changes that occurred after 1990 concern homicides attributable to political reasons, which virtually disappeared at the turn of the new century compared to the previous decades (particularly the years 1969–1990), and the modest decrease in the number of criminal homicides.

The disappearance of homicides attributed to political reasons in Italy can be explained by the changes on the international socio-political scene: After the end of the Cold War, underground, armed political organizations were less likely to get economic and military support from foreign secret services wishing to influence Italian internal affairs. To date, political violence and terrorism brought forth by radical organizations claiming an Islamic justification for their actions have not infested Italy, unlike Spain or England (for a review of political violence and terrorism in Europe, see Dechesne, 2012).

As for criminal homicides, in the 2000–2010 decade, police and court investigations had important successes after the “bombs war” campaign of 1992–1993, sparked by the Mafia to gain political visibility and influence political

choices in the changing post-Cold War political scenario.⁵

It should be taken into account that the number of missing people has sensibly increased in the past decades in Italy: official data reported about 500 individuals missing in 1974, and roughly 30,000 in 2007 (Cotone, 2008). There are no reliable data on missing people found dead, nor on those whose death was classified as homicide with no doubt (Cattaneo et al., 2010). Therefore, the finding of a lower incidence of homicide rates in Italy is open to questions and debatable.

Homicides with non-Italian victims have increased in Italy in the past years, unlike the general trend observed among Italian residents. Moreover, non-Italian residents had a higher risk of dying by homicide than Italian residents. Since Italy has become a point of arrival for migrants,

and many of them are illegal, official data on homicide rates with non-Italian victims cannot be taken for granted. Non-Italian residents from eastern Europe are particularly at risk for homicide, among all non-Italian residents: women from eastern Europe had the highest risk in 2007–2008, the latest period for which details are available. This is likely a reflection of the role of criminal organizations from eastern Europe in the human trafficking aimed at prostitution, with a high burden placed on young women.

Recent trends confirm the role of criminal organizations in the incidence of homicide in Italy, particularly in the south, although the highest risk of dying by homicide in Italy is attributable to domestic homicides. Domestic homicides are more likely to end up with the suicide of the offender, and are also more likely to produce multiple victims. Chronic arguments in the family often occur in an environment of domestic violence, thus any interventions aimed at diminishing the consequences of domestic violence should contribute to reducing the risk of domestic homicide, too. Mental disorders, too, have a role in this kind of homicide both through the victim, following arguments, and through the offender as a precipitating factor in the sudden outburst of violence. Mentally disordered victims can also be considered defenceless when faced with violence, which can increase the chance of a lethal outcome of a violent fight. Indeed, perpetration of violence and victimization are more common among persons with severe mental illness than in the general population (Choe, Teplin, & Abram, 2008).

In Italy, about 15% of the offenders in a domestic homicide were diagnosed with a recognizable mental disorder, but only a scant fraction was in treatment at the time of the homicide. Clearly, increased recognition and treatment of mental disorders and alcohol and substance abuse might reduce the risk of domestic homicide.

Firearms availability is a critical factor in homicide; it is worth noting that even the subjects with known and recognizable symptoms of a mental disorder were not revoked of their firearm licenses. This is a clear indication of some underestimation of the risk of violence in subjects

⁵In the 1980s and 1990s, the Italian magistracy began structured investigations into the organized crime in Sicily; these investigations culminated in a “Maxi Trial,” which sentenced to jail 342 Mafia criminals. In 1992, the Italian Supreme Court confirmed these sentences. The Mafia retaliated violently by killing people related to the trial: among others, a Palermo judge and a well-known Italian politician, Salvatore Lima, allegedly involved in a liaison with the Mafia. He was said to have been killed for failing to block the trial. In May 1992, a bomb killed judge Giovanni Falcone, his wife, and his bodyguards. In July 1992, a car bomb killed judge Paolo Borsellino and his bodyguards. Falcone and Borsellino were the main leaders of the investigations against the Mafia; their killing caused public emotion and protests and a strong government reaction, culminating in the arrest of an extremely powerful Mafia boss, Salvatore Riina. Afterwards, from May to October 1993, the Mafia launched a bombing campaign of terrorism against symbolic targets, hitting tourist spots such as Via dei Georgofili in Florence or Piazza San Giovanni in Laterano, in Rome. Ten people died and 93 were injured, and severe damage was caused to the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. There is evidence that Mafia leaders negotiated with some representatives of the Italian government in order to get a mitigation of the strict laws passed in the wake of the killing of Falcone and Borsellino. It is still unknown whether they obtained any clear result from these secret contacts. However, after October 1993, all violence ceased, and the alleged new leader of the Mafia, Bernardo Provenzano, started a strategy of quietness. Details on this period can be found in Tessitore (2003).

affected by minor mental disorders, who show symptoms of anxiety and depression. In fact, these symptoms can signal the onset of a severe episode of psychosis, and, especially when accompanied by agitation and irritability, such an episode can cause violence, both self-directed (suicide) and directed toward the people surrounding the affected individual, principally their close relatives (Nielsen & Large, 2010).

Beside firearms, other potentially lethal objects were used to kill a victim, such as knives, bottles, or heavy objects used to hit the victim. Immediate availability of a weapon is the most important antecedent of a homicide, as clearly indicated by the wider recourse to cutting instruments by women in perpetrating a homicide, since in Italy, women have less access to firearms than men. Nevertheless, any political activity aimed at reducing access to firearms in Italy must face the evidence that most firearms are illegally obtained and Italy, because of its geographical conformation, is open to illegal trafficking of weapons. However, better control of the firearm license of those diagnosed with mental disorders might save lives.

The role of poverty in homicide was confirmed by data on both the victims and the offenders: most were unemployed, and many who had a job were not working at the time of the homicide. It cannot be said whether the official figures on the employment status of victims and offenders sensibly differ from the general population, since official statistics on employment in Italy are scarcely reliable. However, the links between homicide and unemployment rates observed in the past in Italy (Preti & Miotto, 1999) suggest that unemployment, as a proxy for poverty and poor functioning of social networks, is relevant in homicide in Italy as elsewhere (Pridemore, 2002).

Policies Specific to Italy

Prevention of homicide in Italy is mainly achieved with police investigation, aimed at reducing the risk of homicide by robbery, vengeance, or criminal organizations such as the Mafia or Camorra.

In 1991, a specific department was created in Italy (Government legal decree no. 410, December 30, 1991), the DIA (Direzione investigativa antimafia; Department of Anti-Mafia Investigations), to investigate on the structures and activities of criminal organizations operating in Italy, and to promote any intervention that may oppose these organizations.

In 1994, a specific unit devoted to violent crime analysis was created in Italy, the UACV (Unità di analisi del crimine violento; Unit for the analysis of violent crime), aimed at investigating brutal killings and all homicides potentially attributable to a serial killer. This unit applies the most advanced forensic and criminological methods, and it also cooperates with similar units all over the world.

Intra-domestic violence as a risk factor for homicide is increasingly appreciated, and specific programs were addressed to reduce the incidence and the consequences of infant abuse and domestic violence. In Italy, as elsewhere, women are victimized both in the family and outside (Randall & Haskell, 1995; Toohey, 2008). In a recent study carried out in 2006 by a statistical team of the ISTAT on 25,000 women aged 16–70 years old, 15% of the interviewed women reported having been physically or sexually abused by their current or former partner, and 25% reported having been victimized by a friend, an acquaintance, or a stranger; 21% of the interviewed women reported having been victimized both in the family and outside (ISTAT, 2007). In up to 95% of cases, the violence was not reported to the police. The abuse was repeated in 67% of cases of violence by the partner and in 53% of cases of violence by a nonpartner.

In 2009, a state-funded program on stalking was started (Government legal decree no. 11, February 23, 2009), mainly aimed at punishing its most evident manifestations, with the hope that this would also reduce the risk of violence toward women. Other programs are active on domestic violence, but with minor emphasis and public awareness campaigns.

The role of mental disorders and substance abuse as risk factors for homicide is still poorly recognized, but greater attention is paid to mental

health issues than in the past. Indeed, the spreading of public services aimed at diagnosing and treating mental disorders, including those disorders attributable to alcohol and/or substance abuse, is expected to improve the quality of life of the patients and their families (Preti & Miotto, 2000b), although evidence that this is really occurring is sparse, and limited to local settings (de Girolamo et al., 2007).

Closing Remarks

Some authors have conceived homicide as a conflict assay (Daly & Wilson, 1997). When two creatures perceive their interests as discordant, their chance of experiencing conflict increases: homicide is the extreme manifestation of interpersonal conflict alongside a continuum from verbal argument to altercations, until fighting occurs. Since the circumstances of homicide are recorded, they can offer clues on many socio-demographic, relational, and situational determinants of interpersonal conflict, helpful to test hypotheses and elaborate preventative strategies.

Homicide is a poor solution to interpersonal conflict, since it burdens the offender with the load of social and institutional prosecution, with retaliation of the victim's relatives and friends (which was particularly common in the past), and with police investigation until court trial and conviction. Although the study of homicide can offer clues on what goes wrong in interpersonal conflict, human violence cannot be always considered pathological.

According to evolutionary psychology, marital violence can be conceived as arising from the conflict between male sexual proprietariness and female efforts to escape male control (Wilson & Daly, 1996). On the other hand, lethal violence outside the family is often of a competitive nature. Competition occurs when one party's possession of a mutually desired resource – such as a good, a receptive partner, or the means to access them, such as money – precludes another party's possession or use. Sometimes, competitive conflict arises from “status” or “face,” since “respect,” as a social resource, is something that gives access to other,

more tangible resources. Uneven distribution of material resources affects homicide rates, and since inequity can be influenced by social policies, it is a remediable cause of crime and violence (Wilkinson, 2000).

Available data on homicide in Italy still preclude testing of theory-driven hypotheses, since information is often limited to the most essential details (sex and age of the victim and of the offender, when identified). However, the study of homicide can offer important information on elements that affect the social and personal life in a country.

It is time to move beyond overly general structural and cultural theories, centered on social conditions (such as poverty) or values and norms that can foster involvement in crime and violence. The study of homicide must reach the sophisticated level of detail that currently informs the study of the biological, psychological, and social correlates of suicide (Hawton, 2005). To this aim, the creation of an international consortium is the first step to attract the financial resources necessary to start this endeavor.

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Introduction

By European standards, especially by Nordic and western European standards, Finland has been an exceptionally violent country since the early nineteenth century, if one measures violence by homicide rates. Although the national homicide death rate is currently only one third of what it was 50 years ago, it is still relatively high when compared with most other European countries. In 2005–2009, the average annual homicide death rate was 2.1 per 100,000 inhabitants, the sixth highest among the European Union member countries; the death rate of men was 3.0 and that of women 1.2 per 100,000, both the seventh highest in the European Union.

Background

Finland is a republic situated in the eastern half of the Fennoscandian peninsula and bordered by Sweden, Norway, the Russian Federation, and Estonia (across the Gulf of Finland). The country has close historical and cultural ties with Sweden, Estonia, and the other Nordic countries. Finland was part of the Swedish realm from the thirteenth century until 1809, and then an autonomous

Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire from 1809 to 1917. The country became independent in 1917. It has been a member of the European Union since 1995.

The country has a population of 5.4 million residents and is relatively sparsely populated with 18 residents/km². The only metropolitan area, Helsinki with its neighbouring cities, has 1.0 million residents; other main urban areas are Tampere (211,500), Turku (176,100), Oulu (139,100), Jyväskylä (129,600), and Lahti (100,900) (Statistics Finland, 2010a).

The population is fairly homogeneous ethnically, culturally, and by religious denomination. Ethnicity is defined primarily by the first language. The four legally recognized indigenous ethnic groups are Finns (90%), Swedes (5%), Roma (0.2%), and Sami (0.1%).¹ In 2009, the number of resident immigrants was 207,000 (4% of population); the largest groups being Russians (52,000), Estonians (25,000), Somalis (12,000), and Arabs (10,000). Most of the immigrants are of the first generation (in 1990 their number was only 25,000) (Statistics Finland, 2010b). The main religious groups are Evangelical Lutherans (82%), other Protestant Christian congregations (1.3%), Greek Orthodox (1.1%), Muslims (0.7%), and Jehovah's Witnesses (0.3%) (<http://users.abo.fi/tmartika/suomiuskonto/tutkimustilastoja.html>).

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¹Roma are mainly Finnish speaking; the historical ethnic groups also include Karelians (5,000), Jews (1,300), and Muslim Tatars (900).

Table 25.1 Some key social, demographic, and economic indices of Finland

	Total	Men	Women	EU27 ^a
Homicide mortality ^b	2.10	2.99	1.25	22nd
Population, 2009	5,351,427	2,625,067	2,726,360	19th
Population density, 2009	17.6 per km ²			
Life expectancy at birth, 2009 (CIA, 2010)		75.5 years	82.6 years	15th/5th
% of 15- to 64-Year-olds of the whole population, 2009 (%) (Statistics Finland, 2010a)	66.4	33.6	32.8	
% of 20- to 29-Year-olds of the whole population, 2009 (%) (Statistics Finland, 2010a)	12.5	6.4	6.1	
GDP PPP, 2007 (Statistics Finland, 2010e)	34,526 USD			9th
Unemployment rate, 2000–2008 average (Statistics Finland, 2010e)	8.3%	8.1%	8.6%	18th
UN Human Development Index, 2009 (UNDP, 2010)	0.959			6th
UN GINI index, 1992–2007 (UNDP, 2010)	26.9			6th
UN Gender-related Development Index, 2009 (UNDP, 2010)	0.954			5th
25- to 64-Year-olds with highest education, 2009 (Statistics Finland, 2010e)	36.4%			1st
EIU Democracy Index, 2006 (Kekic, 2007)	9.25			4th
TPI World Corruption Perception Index, 2009 (Transparency International, 2010)	8.9			4th
% of Population owning a firearm, 2005	38%			1st ^c
% of Population owning a hand-gun, 2005	6%			1st ^d
Alcohol consumption per person (15+), 2007 ^e	10.5 L of 100% alcohol			7th ^f

^a Ranking among the EU member countries; best ranking = 1st and worst = 27th

^b Per 100,000 inhabitants a year; the average of the years 2005–2009

^c Highest prevalence among the EU27

^d Highest prevalence among the EU27

^e <http://www.ecosante.org/oeecd.htm>

^f Seventh lowest consumption level among the European OECD member countries

Finland's population is one of the most rapidly ageing in Europe; 15- to 64-year-olds make up 66%, and over 65-year-olds 17% of the population, but according to estimates, in 2020, the percentage of over 65-year-olds will increase to 23%. The male/female ratio of population (0.96) is slightly lower than the EU15 average, and slightly higher than the EU27 average. The life expectancy at birth of women is one of the highest in the European Union while that of men is lower than the average. Compared with the other Nordic countries, the mortality of young and middle-aged men in Finland from external causes other than homicides is substantially higher, and many of these deaths are alcohol-related (Table 25.1; Statistics Finland, 2010a).

Basic education is compulsory and free between the ages of 7 and 16, and higher education is

mainly free. The adult literacy rate of men and women is 100% (CIA, 2010). In 2009, the combined gross enrolment ratio in education was the second highest in Europe (UNDP, 2010).

Finland has historically been part of Europe's north-eastern vodka zone, where most of the alcohol consumption has consisted of strong spirits and binge drinking. Binge drinking characterizes current drinking patterns, but strong spirits have lost their dominance (in 2009, spirits accounted 26%, beer 45%, and wines 16% of the consumption) (Päihdetilastollinen vuosikirja, 2009). The level of alcohol consumption has been increasing steadily since the 1960s and was in 2007, 10.5 L pure alcohol per capita among adult population; the current consumption level is a third higher than in 1980 and fourfold the one of 1960. Since 2005 alcohol-related causes of death

have been the most common cause of death among 15- to 64-year-old men and women (Päihdetilastollinen vuosikirja; <http://www.eco-sante.org/oced.htm>).

On the other hand, drug abuse is relatively rare. According to a survey carried out in 2006, 13% of the adult population had used or experimented with an illegal drug sometime in their lifetime. The most common substance used was cannabis – 3% of the adult population had used it during the previous year. Use of hard drugs was rare: 2% had used amphetamines, 1.5% ecstasy, and 1% cocaine in their lifetime (Päihdetilastollinen vuosikirja, 2009).

The gun ownership rate is one of the highest in Europe; 38% of households own a firearm and 6% a handgun. The firearm ownership prevalence was the highest and the handgun ownership prevalence the second highest among the European participant countries of the 1989–2005 International Crime Victims Surveys. Also, in the metropolitan area of Helsinki, firearm ownership was more common than in most European metropolises; Helsinki shared the highest overall ownership rate with Zurich and had the fifth highest rate of handgun ownership. However, according to the same surveys, the use of guns in robberies, sexual offences, or assault crimes was almost nonexistent in Finland (and in Helsinki) (van Dijk, van Kesteren, & Smit, 2007, p. 284).

Historical Studies on Homicide

Homicide research in Finland can be roughly divided into three major approaches: sociological, historical, and forensic (psychiatric and psychological).

Modern Finnish criminological research goes back to Veli Verkko, who wrote in the 1920s and 1930s several theoretical studies on homicidal crime. Verkko initiated the tradition of interpreting Finnish homicide rates with patterns of alcohol consumption. Internationally, he is perhaps best remembered because of the Verkko's laws based on his statistical analyses (Verkko, 1951). He also laid the empirical foundations of Nordic comparative homicide research by systematizing

and publishing the Swedish and Finnish historical cause-of-death data on homicides (Verkko, 1948). After Verkko, there was a relatively long gap before homicide studies were resumed. The new research could be described as empirical-induced or multiple factor approach which seeks to understand homicide by disaggregating it. This tradition (Kivivuori, Savolainen, Viljanen) describes how lethal violence is located in the socio-demographic structure of society as well as in the recurring temporal and spatial dimensions and rhythms of everyday life (Kivivuori, 1999). In the case of Finland, the central role of alcohol in criminal violence is often analyzed from this perspective. Much of the current sociological work examines change, and continuities behind superficial changes, within the homicide scene (Kivivuori & Lehti, 2010).

Finland has a relatively long tradition of historical homicide research. In fact, the distinction between sociological and historical analyses of homicide has been often blurry. Many analyses by sociologists extend far back in time while many historians use sociological theories in explaining historical transformations. The pioneer of Finnish historical criminology, Heikki Ylikangas, is a case in point. A historian by training, his work represents a combination of sociological theory and historical research. He does not only describe historical variation; he explains it by subsuming it under more general law-like propositions concerning human motivation and its embeddedness in structural and cultural conditions (Ylikangas, 1998). His research has mainly dealt with connections between economic processes and crime in preindustrial Finland. In the last 2 decades a new generation of scholars has emerged, many of them pupils of Ylikangas. The focus of the research of Karonen (2001), Koskivirta (2003), and Matikainen (2002) has been on the period from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, while the homicide trends of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been studied by Ervasti (1992), Lehti (2001), Pajuoja (1995), and Rajala (2004).

The beginnings of modern forensic psychiatric homicide research in Finland are to be found in

the late 1930s. However, systematic research work began only in the 1970s with Matti Virkkunen and his colleagues and pupils. The foundation of this research has been the Finnish forensic psychiatric examination system, which has existed since 1895 and produced a massive archive, covering over a century and containing detailed data on the mental and physical disorder history of homicide offenders, on their living-conditions, family backgrounds, and crimes. The scientific forensic psychiatric research of the last few decades has been concentrated in the state mental hospitals as well as connected university hospitals; most researchers have been colleagues or pupils of Virkkunen (Eronen, Hakola, Häkkänen, Laajasalo, Linnoila, Paanila, A. Putkonen, H. Putkonen, Tiihonen, Weizmann-Henelius), and their scientific work has been closely interconnected. One of the central themes of this research work has been biochemical aspects of violent behaviour (Kivivuori & Lehti, 2010).

Data Sources Used for This Study

The data in this chapter are based on three main sources: the Finnish Homicide Monitoring System (FHMS), the published police statistics of Statistics Finland (2010d); and the published cause-of-death statistics of Statistics Finland (2010c).

The FHMS is maintained jointly by the National Research Institute of Legal Policy, the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior, and the Finnish Police College. The database registers information on crimes investigated by the police under the Penal Code titles: *murha*, *tappo*, *surma*, *lapsensurma* (Penal Code 21:1-4) as well as involuntary manslaughters (*kuolemantuottamus*, *törkeä kuolemantuottamus*; Penal Code 21:8-9) committed in a single act with a voluntary assault crime (Penal Code 21:5-7). Attempted homicides are not included. It is based on information produced during preliminary investigations. The data are collected directly from the chief investigator of each individual homicide on a standard electronic form. The general crime reporting system of the police is used as a control

and follow-up instrument to make sure that the data are acquired from all registered homicides. Information is usually registered after the preliminary investigation has been closed. For crimes which are not cleared within a reasonable space of time, however, the available data are registered 1 year after the initiation of the investigation, provided that the case is still being investigated as a homicide. The FHMS uses victim-based data architecture. Each row of the data matrix corresponds to a homicide victim. For each case, only one offender is included. This offender is the main offender identified by the police. The database contains information on the main characteristics of the crime, on their regional and temporal distribution, on the socio-demographic background of both the victim and the main offender, and on their crime scene behaviour. The system also contains information related to the investigation of the crimes, and information on the behaviour of the suspects after the crime and during the investigation. The number of internal variables for each case is about 90. In addition, the National Research Institute of Legal Policy inserts external data on the prior crimes of the offenders and the victims, and also on the punishments received by the offenders.

If not otherwise mentioned, the information in this chapter is based on offences which were registered in the FHMS by the end of October 2010 and had been committed from 2003 to 2008: altogether 753 homicides (homicide victims),² 14 of which were registered as unsolved and did not include data on offender/s; the data covered all homicides of the period reported to the police by the end of October 2010.

Epidemiology of Homicides

During the last two centuries, homicide mortality has been considerably higher and more volatile in Finland than in western Europe. The difference

²751 were committed in Finland and two abroad (Russia and Estonia); both of the homicides committed abroad were between Finns with permanent residence in Finland.

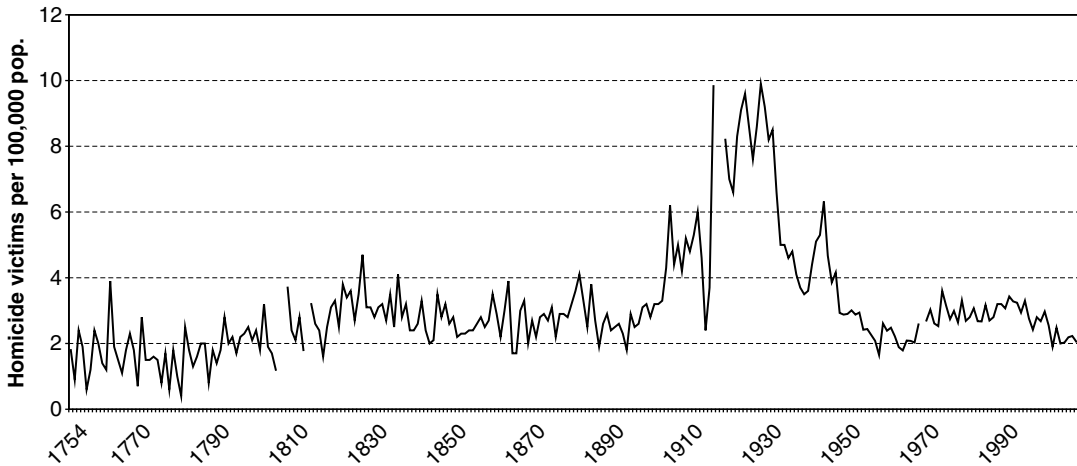


Fig. 25.1 Homicide death rate in Finland from 1754 to 2009 (infanticides, as well as the war and revolution years of 1808 and 1918–1919 are excluded from the figures. Sources: Verkko, 1948; Statistics Finland, 2010c)

emerged during the period of industrialization which was accompanied by a more or less permanent increase in violent crime in Finland; the most violent period lasted from 1905 until the early 1930s, when homicide mortality was 3 times higher than today. Also the late 1940s, the period following the Second World War, was characterized by exceptionally high homicide death rates. After the year 1947, when peacetime conditions³ returned, homicide rates started to fall. However, the decreasing trend came to an abrupt end in 1969, the year when the retail-trade of alcohol was liberalized after decades of strict regulation (Fig. 25.1).

The period from 1969 to the mid-1990s was characterized by a relatively high and stable homicide death rate (about 3 victims per 100,000 inhabitants a year). Since the mid-1990s the rate has been decreasing again, and the average annual homicide mortality of 2004–2008 was 2.2 victims per 100,000 inhabitants. In spite of the decreasing trend of the last 10 years, homicide mortality in Finland is still the sixth highest in the European Union, being surpassed only by Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania. The homicide mortality of Finnish women is currently the seventh highest in the European Union as is the mortality of Finnish men (Table 25.1).

³During the immediate post-war years, Finland was closely monitored by the Allied Control Commission.

Regional Distribution of Homicide Rates

During the last 50 years homicide rates have been substantially higher in the northern and eastern parts of Finland than in the western and southern parts; also, the decrease in the number of homicides of the last decade has concentrated mainly in the southern and western provinces (Fig. 25.2).

There are no significant differences between urban and rural homicide rates; in the eastern and northern parts of the country both urban and rural rates are higher than the average, and, similarly, in the south and the west homicide rates are lower than the average, independent of settlement structure. In 2000–2009, the annual average homicide rate for the Helsinki region was 2.4 per 100,000 inhabitants, 19% lower than the national average (Statistics Finland, 2010d).⁴

Incident Characteristics

In 2003–2008, the majority (80%) of homicide incidents⁵ comprised only one offender and one

⁴Based on the police statistics; according to the police statistics, the annual average national homicide rate in 2000–2009 was 2.95 per 100,000 inhabitants.

⁵ $n = 708$; Homicide incident=situation where one or more people are killed at the same time and in the same situation; homicide=each killed victim is a separate homicide.

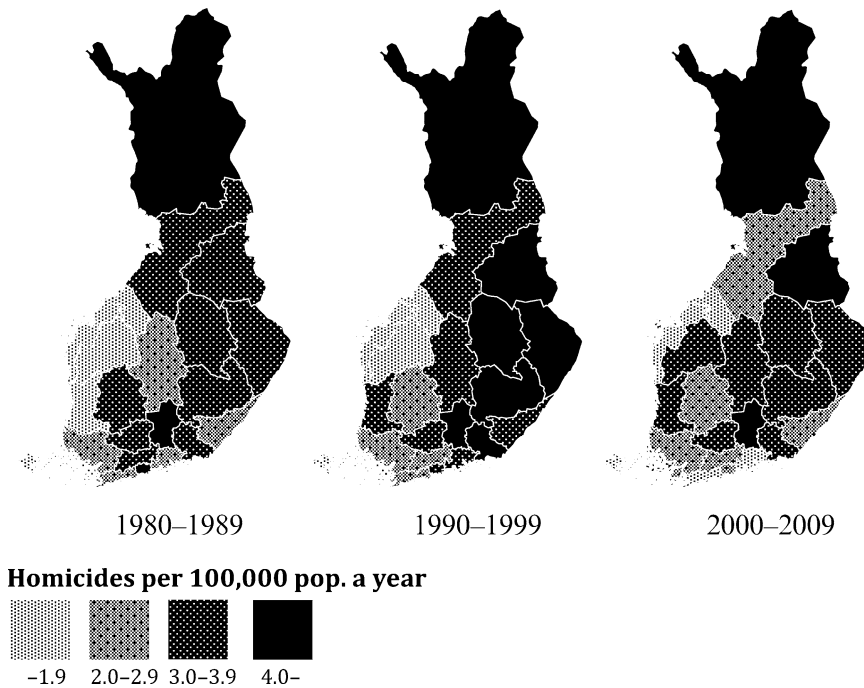


Fig. 25.2 Homicide rates by province in Finland in 1980–2009 (homicide victims per 100,000 population a year; figures based on crimes recorded by the police; Statistics Finland, 2010d)

victim. In 15%, there were multiple offenders and one victim, in 3% one offender and multiple victims, and in 1% multiple victims and multiple offenders.⁶ The highest number of fatalities in a single incident was ten⁷; the highest recorded number of offenders was nine.

Motive and Victim–Offender Relationship

The most common main motive⁸ (23%) for the crimes of the period was a drinking quarrel, i.e. the violence had not had any clear motive, but

had been considered by the police simply “alcohol related”. Other relatively common motives were mental disorder (11%), jealousy (11%), and domestic quarrel (10%); also, the two latter types of crimes were closely linked to situations where the persons involved had been drinking together and were heavily intoxicated. Economic gain was at least a partial motive in 9% of homicides (murder-robberies comprised 3% of the crimes). Organized crime-related homicides (1%) were rare in both number and frequency; they were mostly connected with killings between Finnish motorcycle gangs. All in all, the vast majority of homicides were impulsive acts related to various arguments and altercations between heavily intoxicated persons – acquaintances, intimate-partners, relatives, or strangers; the number and percentage of premeditated instrumental killings was small (Table 25.2).

The majority of homicide victims knew their killer; in only 11% of the homicides of the period, the offender and victim were strangers to each other. Children (under 15 years of age)

⁶In 1.7% of the incidents the number of offenders was unknown, in all these cases there was only one victim.

⁷In two incidents the number of fatalities was over three; in 2007, a young man shot eight of his school mates and teachers in a school, and in 2008, there was a similar case with ten victims.

⁸Out of homicides with a known main motive: For 55% of the homicides of the period only one motive was recorded in the FHMS, 24% had two motives, 12% three to seven motives, and 9% not a single recorded motive. A main motive was mentioned for altogether 630 (84%) homicides of the period.

Table 25.2 Homicides by type in Finland in 2003–2008

Type of homicide	%	Per 100,000 population a year	<i>n</i>
Domestic	34	0.8	257
Criminal	3	0.1	20
Argument/ altercation	35	0.8	265
Robbery	3	0.1	22
Sexual	0.3	0.0	2
Other	25	0.6	187
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>753</i>

were usually killed by their mother (61%) or father (30%).⁹ The majority of adult female victims were killed by a sexual partner or an ex-partner (65%); 22% of these killings took place during or after a separation process and 51% were the results of trivial arguments between two heavily intoxicated persons in a mutual drinking session. The majority of adult male victims were killed by an acquaintance (68%), and about 60% of these acquaintances were described as “drinking pals”. Female offenders killed mainly their sexual partners (35%) or children (26%), acquaintances made up 32% of their victims – one third of them being patients killed by nurses in hospitals or nursing homes. Male offenders usually killed drinking pals (32%) or sexual partners (22%) (Table 25.3).

Location

The majority (70%) of homicides took place in private apartments, 40% in the home of the victim. Although the crimes tended to be linked to drinking situations, relatively few (4%) were committed in public licensed premises such as bars, pubs, or restaurants. The number of homicides connected with street violence was small (6%). The majority (57%) of female victims were killed in their own home; the corresponding percentage of male victims was 32%. During the last 5 decades, Finnish homicides have moved indoors; still, in the 1960s and 1970s, the

majority of homicides took place in public or semi-public places. The change seems to be related both to urbanization and to changes in drinking patterns (Kivivuori & Lehti, 2010).

Modus Operandi

The most common method of killing was stabbing with a sharp instrument (39%), the most common weapon a kitchen knife.¹⁰ In 17% of homicides, death was caused by battering with bare hands and/or feet and in 7% by strangling with bare hands. Firearm homicides made up 18% of the total (handgun homicides 9%); the majority were committed with unlicensed weapons (57% of handgun and 54% of hunting weapon homicides). Thus, in spite of the high fire-arm ownership prevalence, fire-arms play only a minor role in Finnish homicides; and licensed guns an even smaller role.

Male offenders were more likely to assault their victims without weapons, by hitting, kicking, or strangling (25% vs. 10%). They were also more likely to use firearms (19% vs. 5%) and blunt instruments (9% vs. 2%). Female offenders again opted more often for sharp instruments (49% vs. 38%), poison (12% vs. 1%), burning (6% vs. 2%), or a soft instrument (4% vs. 0.5%). However, the vast majority of homicides involving sharp instruments or fire were committed by men; poison and soft instruments were the sole methods in which women outnumbered men in absolute numbers.

The number of wounds inflicted with a sharp instrument ranged from 1 to 130. One third of the victims killed by this method were killed by a single stroke; another third were knifed 2–9 times, while the final third were hit at least 10 times. Female victims were more likely to suffer multiple wounds than male victims (74% vs. 60%); while male offenders were much more prone to inflict multiple wounds than female ones (67% vs. 46%). Of the victims of gun violence, 60% died due to a single shot while the rest were shot at least twice.

⁹*n* = 33; 6% were killed by a sibling and 3% by a stranger.

¹⁰Weapon of killing in 26% of all homicides.

Table 25.3 Victim–offender relationship in homicides in Finland in 2003–2008

Victim was offender's	All victims		Adult male victims		Adult female victims		Male offenders		Female offenders	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Intimate partner	23.1	174	6.9	35	65.3	139	22.0	144	35.3	30
Spouse	13.4	101	3.0	15	40.4	86	13.1	86	17.6	15
Ex-spouse	3.1	23	1.0	5	8.5	18	2.8	18	5.9	5
Girlfriend/boyfriend	6.0	45	2.0	10	16.4	35	5.4	35	11.8	10
Homosexual partner	0.7	5	1.0	5	0.0	–	0.8	5	0.0	–
Child	5.2	39	1.2	6	1.4	3	2.6	17	25.9	22
Parent	3.9	29	3.0	15	6.6	14	4.1	27	1.2	1
Sibling	1.2	9	1.2	6	0.5	1	1.4	9	0.0	–
Other relative	1.5	11	1.4	7	1.9	4	1.7	11	1.2	1
Acquaintance	51.8	390	67.9	344	21.6	46	55.5	363	31.8	27
Stranger to offender	10.6	80	14.8	75	1.9	4	11.6	76	4.7	4
Relationship unknown	0.9	7	1.2	6	0.5	1	1.1	7	0.0	–
Crime unsolved	1.9	14	2.6	13	0.5	1				
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.1</i>	<i>753</i>	<i>100.2</i>	<i>507</i>	<i>100.2</i>	<i>213</i>	<i>100.1</i>	<i>654</i>	<i>100.1</i>	<i>85</i>

Alcohol and Drugs

Finnish homicides are closely related to alcohol consumption, intoxication, and drinking situations; this linkage is also one of the few characteristics which has been unchanged since at least the eighteenth century.

In 2003–2008, 82% of adult male offenders and 83% of adult male victims were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crime; corresponding percentages for adult female offenders (63%) and victims (53%) were lower but substantial. The states of intoxications were usually advanced with blood alcohol levels well over 1.5 per mille. All children involved in the homicides of the studied period were sober.

If we look at the participants' intoxication statuses by homicide, in an overwhelming majority (71%) of homicides between adults, both the offender and the victim were under the influence of alcohol; in 15% only one party was drunk, and in 10% both parties were sober.¹¹

Drugs and other non-alcoholic intoxicants played a lesser role; 20% of male and 21% of female offenders were under the combined influence of alcohol and psychosomatic drugs, but

only 4% of male and 1% of female offenders were under the influence of mere drugs. Corresponding percentages for adult male victims were 12 and 4%, and for adult female victims 12 and 3% respectively.

Prior Violent Interaction

In a substantial proportion of homicides, there had been prior violent interactions between the offender and the victim. In 23% of the homicides between adults, the offender had assaulted the victim, and in 19% the victim the offender, at least once before; in 35% of the crimes either kind of prior violence had been reported. There were significant differences between different types of crimes in this respect; the percentage of known prior violence was the highest in crimes in near relations¹²: in intimate partner-homicides against men (66%), in intimate-partner homicides against women (50%), and in homicides perpetrated by men against their male relatives (50%); in homicides between non-related men the percentage was 33%. If we combine the data on prior violent interactions with those on prior criminal justice

¹¹*n* = 719; in 3% of the cases the intoxication status of the participants was unknown.

¹²This could, however, reflect the fact that information concerning prior violence may have been more reliable in these types of crimes.

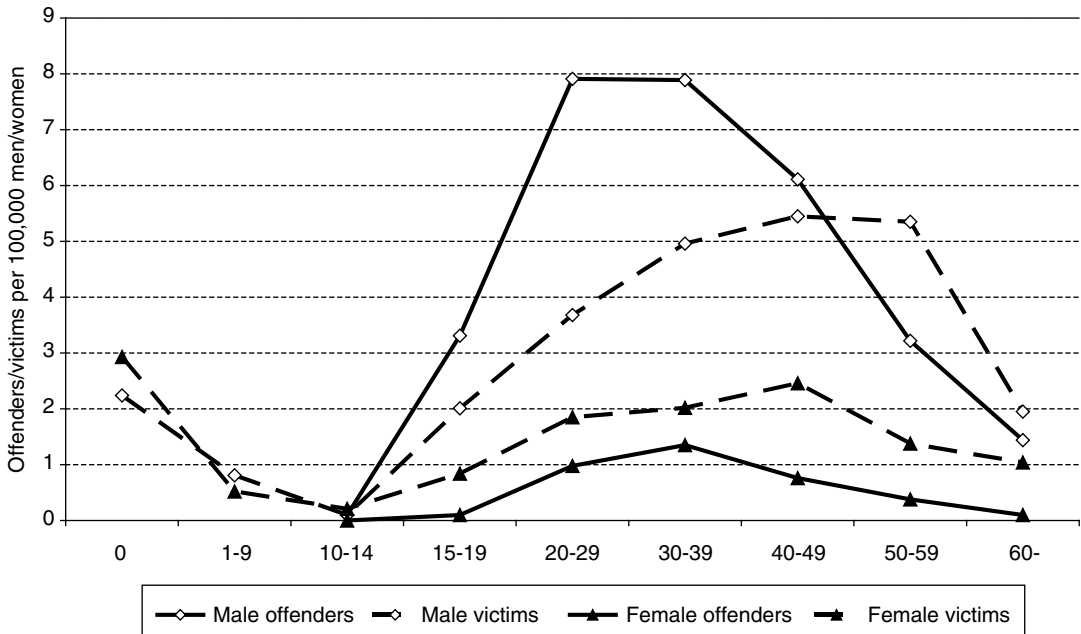


Fig. 25.3 Homicide mortality and offending rates by age group and gender in Finland in 2003–2008 (FHMS)

contacts and other “warning signs” registered in the FHMS, 54% of the homicides of the period had manifested at least one of the said “signs”; if cases with missing data were eliminated, the percentage was as high as 65%. Thus, in most homicides some “warning signs” had been observed, usually long before the crime was perpetrated.

Victim and Offender Characteristics

Altogether 753 persons, 525 men and 228 women, were killed in the years 2003–2008; 33 were under 15 years of age (18 boys and 15 girls). There were 691 known main offenders in these crimes, 614 men and 77 women.

Age and Gender

Men made up 70% of the homicide victims of the period. Their share has been stable since the Second World War, but has decreased in the long run (in the nineteenth century it was on the average 85%). Homicide mortality was at its highest among 40- to 49-year-old men and women (Fig. 25.3). The average age of male victims was

42.2 and of female victims 42.6 (male median age 44 and female median age 42.5). Among the working-age population, men’s homicide mortality was 2.6-fold higher than that of women.

Men’s share of homicide offenders was 89%. This share has also been fairly stable for decades, as it has varied between 90 and 95% since the 1890s when modern court statistics were started. Offending rates were at their highest among 21- to 24-year-old and 30- to 34-year-old men, and 35- to 39-year-old women (Fig. 25.3). The average age of male offenders was 37.8 and for female offenders 38.0 years; the median age for both genders was 37 years. Thus, homicide offenders were on the average younger than their victims; this is in spite of the fact that most homicides took place in drinking sessions between acquaintances and the share of instrumental crimes (e.g. murder-robberies) was small.

Nationality and Ethnic Background

Homicides were mainly crimes of the native population. This was due to the fact that there are no large immigrant communities in Finland, but also the homicide mortality and offending rates of

Table 25.4 Some characteristics of homicide victims and offenders in Finland in 2003–2008 (%)

	Adult male victims (%)	Adult female victims (%)	Male offenders (%)	Female offenders (%)
Employed	16.2	29.1	18.7	25.0
Unemployed	43.3	25.8	50.3	35.5
WDA pensioner	19.4	10.3	15.8	10.5
Housewife		4.7		13.2
Student	5.5	9.4	4.9	5.3
Old-age pensioner	5.7	15.5	4.1	2.6
Other/data missing	9.9	5.2	6.2	7.9
Substance abuser	69.8	41.8	64.3	42.1
Alcohol abuser	63.6	38.0	54.6	40.8
Drug abuser	17.4	9.9	29.0	15.8
Not culpable because of mental illness			6.8	3.9
Violent crime recidivist	26.9	7.2	72.6	57.9
Homicide recidivist	1.2	0.0	7.0	5.3
Criminal record ^a	38.8	11.4	59.6	35.2
Time served in prison	17.3	2.9	36.2	14.1
<i>n</i>	507	213	614	77

^aThe person has earlier unconditional or conditional prison sentences

resident immigrants¹³ and Finnish citizens¹⁴ were almost identical. Of both the homicide victims and offenders of the period, 99% were living permanently in Finland; 96% of victims and 95% of offenders were native Finnish citizens.¹⁵ The average homicide mortality of resident immigrants was 6% higher and their average homicide offending rate 15% higher than those of Finnish citizens. There were, however, substantial differences between different immigrant groups.

Employment, Substance Abuse, and Earlier Convictions

Long-term unemployment, alcohol abuse, and long criminal careers characterized both homicide offenders and victims irrespective of age or gender.

Most adults involved in homicides were non-working. Of all adult men, victims and offenders, 65% were either unemployed or on early

retirement pension, only 18% were employed. The working-life backgrounds of adult women were on the average slightly less marginalized: 29% of victims and 25% of offenders had a job. However, female homicide mortality and offending rates of unemployed working-age population were about tenfold higher than the rates of any other socio-economic group; for men, the offending rate of unemployed was over 22-fold higher than that of employed men (Table 25.4).

Homicides also had a close linkage with substance abuse: in 48% of those between adults all the persons involved were described by the police as substance abusers, in 73% at least one participant was an abuser. The majority of the abusers (89%) were alcoholics; however, the prevalence of drug abusers among victims and especially offenders was also considerable given the relatively low general level of drug abuse among the population.

A considerable proportion of both male and female homicide offenders were violent crime recidivists. Most of them also had other types of earlier criminal convictions, with 71% of male offenders and 54% of female offenders had been sentenced at least once in a criminal court during the last 5 years before their homicide; 30% of

¹³Foreign citizens living permanently in Finland.

¹⁴Finnish citizens living permanently in Finland.

¹⁵Finnish citizens belonging to the four recognized indigenous ethnic groups living permanently in Finland.

male offenders were described as habitual offenders. Also many adult male victims had criminal careers; 51% had been convicted at least once in a criminal court during the last 5 years before their death and 20% were described as habitual offenders. However, the percentage of violent crime recidivists among them was significantly smaller than among male offenders (or even female offenders); this is in spite of the fact that otherwise their backgrounds were very similar to those of offenders.

Explanations for Homicide Specific to the Nation

Modern criminological theory is often guided by the tacit assumption that high levels of lethal violence in contemporary societies stem from various combinations of poverty in urban ghettos, illegal drug markets, gun violence, youth gangs, and ethnic discrimination. However, these causes poorly characterize Finnish homicides. Finnish society is similar to other Nordic societies. The countries share a cultural and historical heritage, social policies have been to a large extent the same for many decades, and Finland gets more or less identically high markings in international welfare ratings. In spite of this, Finland is considerably more violent than her Nordic neighbours when measured by homicide rates.

Thus, the difference between the homicide rates of Finland and the other Nordic countries does not appear to be explicable in terms of economic and social policy-related factors, at least when whole nations are used as observation units. This conclusion can be drawn from the finding that Finnish youths are not more violent than young people in other Nordic countries (Kivivuori, 2007), a fact that casts also doubt on general cultural explanations. Finnish lethal violence is socially concentrated and patterned: violence among economically inactive and seriously alcoholized men largely explains why Finland is today an outlier in Nordic homicide rate comparisons. While this group is currently the primary carrier group of homicidal crime in all Nordic countries, it appears to be particularly violent in

Finland. From the peaceful Nordic-style Finnish teenagers, some processes filter out the extraordinary violent alcohol abusing marginalized middle-aged men (Kivivuori & Lehti, 2006; Lehti & Kivivuori, 2005). This dilemma could partly be a result of differences in the implementation of welfare policies in Finland and the other Nordic countries. It has been suggested that some features of the Finnish welfare policies inadvertently enable routine activities which in turn sustain alcohol-related lethal violence in specific sub-populations. The post-1960s move from particularistic and control-related social policies such as relief work to universalistic income transfers detached social policy from social control, a shift which may have removed some options to influence the homicide-prone population of seriously marginalized men. Similarly, the improving housing conditions of the lowest social stratum have moved homicides indoors, from public and semi-public places to private apartments. While these changes are positive as such, they may have had unintended consequences by shielding the most typical type of Finnish homicides from control interventions (Kivivuori & Lehti, 2006; Savolainen, Lehti, & Kivivuori, 2008).

In the present comparative context, this line of inquiry would imply that other Nordic countries have been better able to deliver universal benefits in an inclusive and participatory way, for example by means of active employment policies. However, the homicide rate cleavage between Finland and her Nordic neighbours has existed since the nineteenth century and even longer, long before modern welfare states with their social policies were created. Thus, if the above mentioned unintended consequences of welfare delivery patterns exist, they probably have only sustained a pattern that originally arose from different causes. If we look at the various socio-demographic indices of European countries, some country-level cultural indices seem to be more consistently related to Finnish outlier position in homicide rates (when compared with Scandinavia and western Europe) than standard economic and welfare state variables. One such variable is the male/female ratio in the population, suggesting that the high Finnish homicide

rate might reflect some more general factor increasing (young and middle age) male mortality. In fact, the rates of all types of violent deaths (also suicides and accidents) are higher in Finland than in the other Nordic countries. Other indices which manifest some consistency with the homicide rate include relatively low political participation, high gun ownership, and use of strong spirits. Taken together, these can indicate that there exist differences in some kind of more general social patterns and cultural currents which could have contributed to the homicide rate cleavage since the nineteenth century, and could also be related in one way or another to the excessive violence of the marginalized middle-aged Finnish male alcoholics of today (Kivivuori & Lehti, 2010).

Policies Specific to the Nation

The clearance and conviction rates of homicides are relatively high in Finland. In 2003–2008, of the homicides reported to the police, 2% could not be solved within the following year, and were entered as unsolved into the FHMS. In 85% of homicides,¹⁶ offenders were prosecuted, and in 76% convicted¹⁷; 93% of the convicted offenders were convicted of voluntary homicide. Thus, altogether 70% of the homicides of the period reported to police led to a homicide conviction (Fig. 25.4).

The Finnish Penal Code distinguishes between four types of voluntary homicide and two types of involuntary manslaughter (the statutes of involuntary manslaughter are used in the sanctioning of homicidal crime in combination with the statutes of assault crimes). The aggravated

form of voluntary homicide is *murha* (murder), the basic and most common form is *tappo* (voluntary manslaughter), and the mitigated form of voluntary manslaughter is called *surma* (voluntary manslaughter under mitigating circumstances). In addition, the Penal Code includes statutes concerning infanticide (*lapsensurma*).

The penalty for *murha* is life imprisonment; the penalty for *tappo* is imprisonment for 8–12 years; for *surma* imprisonment for 4–10 years; and for *lapsensurma* imprisonment for 4 months to 4 years. The penalty for involuntary manslaughter (*kuolemantuottamus; törkeä kuolemantuottamus*) is a fine or imprisonment up to 6 years. The median sentence imposed by the courts of the first instance for voluntary manslaughter is presently about 9 years of imprisonment; in practice this means an imprisonment of 4½ years before parole. The sentence for murder is life imprisonment, which in practice means 12–20 years before parole. Of all persons prosecuted and convicted of homicide (regardless of the statutes used) in 2003–2008, 94% were sentenced to unconditional imprisonment, the average length of the sentence being 9.2 years.¹⁸

The lengths of the nominal sentences for different legal types of homicide have changed only little during the last hundred years (during the validity of the current Penal Code); for example, in the 1910s the median sentence for voluntary manslaughter was 9.4 years of penitentiary (Lehti, 2001). However, the lengths of the actual sentences in all other types of homicides than murders have decreased substantially, especially during the last decade, because of changes in parole regulations. In 2005, the typical length of actual imprisonment was shortened from two thirds to a half of the nominal sentence except in life imprisonments; consequently, the length of the time served in prison decreased by more than one fourth in about 80% of homicide sentences. On the other hand, sentencing policies concerning murders (comprising about one fifth of homicide

¹⁶In 7% of the crimes, the offender committed a suicide, in 1% died of other reasons before the case was brought to court, and in one crime (0.1%) the offender was under 15 years of age and not prosecutable in a criminal court. At the end of 2009, prosecution and sentencing data were missing for 4% of the crimes.

¹⁷8% of the prosecuted offenders were found irresponsible for their actions and sent to mental hospital, and 3% were acquitted.

¹⁸Life imprisonments have been calculated here as 15 years in prison on average.

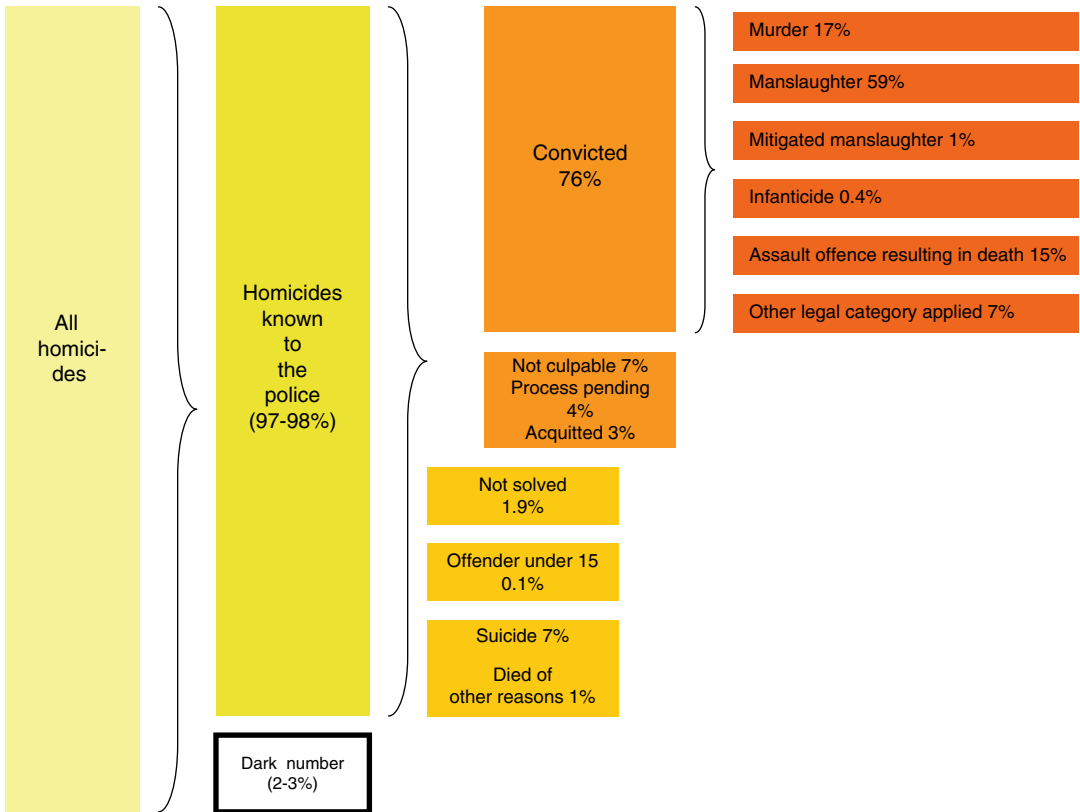


Fig. 25.4 Flow chart of the criminal justice process of homicide in Finland, 2003–2008. The percentages are counted from the number category indicated by the *brack-*

ets. “Dark number” refers to homicides which are not identified as such by the authorities, and the estimate (2–3%) is based on analyses of the missing persons register (FHMS)

sentences) have become more severe since the mid-1990s as a consequence of changes in the forensic-psychiatric paradigm. Before the mid-1990s a substantial percentage of life imprisonments were changed to fixed-period imprisonments in forensic-psychiatric examinations, since the mid-1990s this practice has practically ended leading to a significant increase in the actual time served in prison in murder sentences. There seem to be, at the moment, two partially conflicting opinions concerning homicide sentencing policies in Finland. The prevalent opinion among forensic psychiatrists and police authorities seems to be for longer imprisonments while the long-term policies of the Ministry of Justice have been the shortening of the average periods served in prison.

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Sven Granath

In Sweden, as in most other countries, homicide is considered the most serious of all crimes. It is one of very few crimes that renders the most severe punishment in Sweden: life imprisonment. It is also probably the one crime that receives the most attention in the media. Almost every single homicide in Sweden is in some sense reported in the news, not infrequently in the national news.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the trends and basic structure of homicide in Sweden in the 1900s and 2000s. Homicide is defined here as *criminal acts of intentional violence towards an individual causing the death of that individual*. This definition equals the term “lethal violence,” which is often used in social science in Sweden. With regard to the penal code, the definition employed covers the offences of *murder, manslaughter, infanticide, and involuntary manslaughter by assault*. Such a broad definition of homicide is necessary since cases of homicide can be defined as murder in one phase of the legal process, for example, and involuntary manslaughter by assault in the next. This is also the definition that best reflects the cause-of-death statistics, where the legal categories of murder, manslaughter, infanticide, or involuntary manslaughter by assault are not distinguished from one another. It is important to emphasize that cases involving

negligent manslaughter or cases of *attempted* murder or manslaughter are not included in this chapter.

Country-Specific Details

Sweden is Europe’s 18th most populous country with 9.3 million inhabitants in 2009 (Statistics Sweden [SCB], 2010). In relation to surface area, however, Sweden is one of Europe’s five most sparsely populated countries. Around 14% of the population were born overseas, with Finland, Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia representing the most common countries of origin. The proportion of residents who were born overseas is generally higher in the metropolitan counties.

The Swedish population is in total comprised of 50% males and 50% females, although males are in a slight majority (52%) in most age groups up to 65 years. Viewed from a global perspective, the Swedish population has a relatively high average age. The median age, i.e., the age that divides the population into two equal halves, was 41 years in the late 2000s, as compared with a world level of 28 years (CIA, 2009). The difference is more modest in relation to other European countries; however, the mean age for the European population as a whole is 39 years (United Nations, 2008). It can also be noted that the proportion of young people aged 0–14 is higher in Sweden (17%) than in Europe in general (15%).

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Given the central criminological finding that most criminal activities are more common among young people than among people of more advanced years, we might thus expect a homicide rate in Sweden that is lower than the global average – but not necessarily than the European average.

Literacy

As in most European populations, the level of basic literacy is high in Sweden. About 99% of individuals aged 15 years and over are literate, as compared with a world level of just over 80% (CIA, 2009). In addition, international studies have found the reading comprehension of Swedish 10-year-olds to be among the best in the world, although Sweden has fallen from the top position among the 42 countries studied in 2001 to sixth in 2006 (IEA, 2003, 2007).

Criminological research has found literacy to be inversely associated with homicide rates, both at the macro-level (Nadanovsky, Celeste, Wilson, & Daly, 2009; Stickley & Pridemore, 2007) and at the individual level (de Farias, 2009). Therefore, the high level of literacy in Sweden leads to an expectation of lower homicide rates than the global average, but a fairly similar level to that found in many other western European countries.

Alcohol and Drug Use

Sweden, like other Scandinavian countries, has something of a reputation for an alcohol culture of binge drinking. The fact is, however, that the total recorded adult alcohol consumption per capita of slightly under 7 L/year is well below the European mean of just over 10 L (WHO, 2008). Nor is the total prevalence of alcohol use higher among Swedish teenagers aged 15–16 years than among teenagers in other European countries in general (CAN, 2009). It is also important to note that Swedish mortality rates from alcohol use

disorders are slightly lower than the average for other European countries. On the other hand, according to WHO compilations of data from 2004, Sweden has a larger proportion of what are referred to as heavy episodic drinkers among youths aged 15–20 than most – but far from all¹ – European and non-European countries. These WHO compilations also show Sweden to be among the European countries with the highest rates of death by intentional injuries where alcohol was a direct or indirect contributor (WHO, 2004). In summary, the prevalence of alcohol use in the Swedish population is lower rather than higher than the average for other European countries in terms of total per capita consumption and effects on public health. Nonetheless, some of the available data point to a slightly higher incidence of so-called binge drinking and alcohol use-related social problems, as compared to many other European countries.

According to criminological research, the macro-level correlation between alcohol use and homicide rates is far from simple. Countries or world regions with high levels of alcohol use do not tend to have significantly higher homicide rates. Therefore, it is hard to predict the Swedish homicide rate in relation to other countries based on what we know about Swedish alcohol consumption. However, substantial changes in levels of alcohol consumption and drinking patterns *over time* would undoubtedly affect Swedish homicide trends to some extent.

The prevalence of *illicit drug use* (cannabis, heroin, cocaine, etc.) is quite low in Sweden compared to many other European countries and the USA (EMCDDA, 2009). For cannabis, the most common illegal drug in Sweden, the so-called last year prevalence was 6% in 2008 among 18- to 29-year-olds and 2% among adults of all other ages (CAN, 2009). In addition, international studies have found the proportion of 15- to 16-year-olds who have used illicit drugs to be

¹The countries with larger shares of heavy episodic drinkers among their youth were, in order of prevalence: Ireland, Poland, United Kingdom, Hungary, and Malta (see WHO, 2004, p. 33).

significantly lower in Sweden than in most – but not all – European countries (CAN). Although the prevalence of drug use is low in Sweden, the country also has a small, but certainly not decreasing, population of heavy drug abusers. The size of this subgroup in relation to the total population has been found to lie at about the average for Europe (EMCDDA, 2003).

The low prevalence of drug use in Sweden leads one to expect the numbers of homicides associated with the illegal drug industry to be relatively low, at least in a global perspective. Nonetheless, the existence of a population of heavy drug abusers that is of average size for European countries, in combination with relatively harsh drug legislation and a well-established ambition on the part of the police to “fight drugs,” does of course lead to the occurrence of drug-related serious violent crimes in Sweden, as in other European countries.

Private Gun Ownership

International studies from the 1990s found the proportion of households with guns in Sweden to be higher (15%) than in many other European and non-European countries, but lower than that in the USA, Canada, Norway, and Finland (Killias, 1993). A 2007 ranking of 34 countries around the world based on the number of civilian guns per 100 residents placed Sweden in ninth position (Krause, 2007). According to data from the Swedish National Police Board (RPS), approximately 620,000 (7%) of Sweden’s 9.3 million inhabitants were in possession of a registered civil firearm of some kind in March 2010. Around three-quarters of the registered firearms in 2010 were hunting weapons, which represents a similar proportion to that found in many other European countries. Finally, it can be noted that, according to data from the National Police Board, the total number of inhabitants who owned a registered gun has declined by about 15% in Sweden since the turn of the millennium.

Criminological research findings on the macro-level relationship between rates of firearm

ownership and overall homicide rates are mixed. Further, no studies have yet focused on whether it is high levels of *handgun* ownership and/or high levels of *long gun* ownership (as is the case in Sweden) that are associated with high national homicide rates. All in all, it is difficult to specify expectations about the Swedish homicide rate in relation to other countries based on the national prevalence of gun ownership.

Previous Studies on Homicide in Sweden

To date, only a few studies have focused on homicide per se in Sweden. Von Hofer (2008) has studied historical variations in the frequency of homicide in Sweden for the period 1750–2005. He shows that Swedish homicide rates reached a historical peak in the middle of the nineteenth century, and then starting decreasing sharply, reaching an all-time low in the 1930s and 1940s. As in many other European countries, homicide rates then increased again until the late 1980s and have subsequently remained relatively stable or have even declined slightly. Von Hofer finds the increase in homicide rates from the 1950s until the 1980s to be strongly associated with an increase in alcohol consumption and other serious crimes.

Rying (2000, 2007, 2008) has studied the epidemiology of homicide in Sweden during the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s, focusing on, among other things, women victimized by their male partners. He finds the frequency and structure of homicides in Sweden to have remained largely unchanged over the last two decades, although the number of women killed by their partners is slightly lower in the 2000s than it was in the 1970s (Rying, 2007, 2008). The most common method of attack in Swedish homicides is stabbing with a knife, and a major part of all killings in Sweden occur within close relations, within the family, between partners, or within subgroups of alcohol or drug abusers (Rying, 2000). The clearance rate is high, but has decreased slightly between the 1990s and 2000s (Rying, 2008).

Data Sources for the Current Study

Data

This study uses data from a database on homicide compiled by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå). The database contains detailed information on all cases of completed homicide in Sweden that were known to the police or other justice system agencies during the periods 1990–1996 and 2002–2008. The data have been compiled by means of reviewing and coding all police reports (around 100 per annum) and court decisions (around 70 per annum) relating to homicides during these years. The data include both cases where no perpetrator has been suspected or charged and cases where one or more perpetrators have been charged and prosecuted. The database also includes cases where a body has never been found but which have nonetheless been classified as homicide by the police. Thus, the data should include all cases of homicide in the form of murder, voluntary manslaughter, infanticide, or assault leading to death that are known to the Swedish authorities in any way. Altogether, the database includes a total of approximately 1,300 cases.

The inclusion of assaults leading to death in the homicide data might distinguish the Swedish data from homicide data in several other countries. The reason for including cases of assault in the Swedish homicide data is that the proportion of homicides legally classified as assault leading to death and murder or manslaughter, respectively, varies over time as a result of changes in the legal system and legal practice.² It would therefore not be possible to properly study the trends and structure of homicide in Sweden if cases of assault leading to death were excluded.

As a means of quality control in relation to the overall levels of homicide displayed by the Brå data, the study also uses *data on causes of death coded in the ICD 10 system* by the health sector. The data on causes of death are also used to

quality control the structure of the methods of killing displayed by the Brå data. In one part, the present study also uses *data on court decisions on homicide attempts 1980–2006*. These data have been gathered in a special study by Brå, and contains detailed information on every second court decision on attempted murder or manslaughter in the period 1980–2006.

Time Line

The time line for the present study focuses on the periods 1990–1996 and 2002–2008. The Brå database on complete homicides still lacks some data for the years 1997–2001 as a result of administrative problems. Since the database includes two 7-year periods, however, it is still possible to study trends in both levels and the structure of homicides. In addition, the data on causes of death can be used for the years 1997–2001, as can excerpts from previous studies. Most of the analyses are based on summaries of the data from 1990 to 1996 and 2002 to 2008, respectively.

The Epidemiology of Homicide in Sweden

Recent Trends in Homicide

As reported in previous research, the frequency of homicide in Sweden has remained relatively stable or has declined somewhat over the last two decades. According to the data sources at hand, there was an average of 102 homicide victims/year during the years 1990–1996, an average of 97 for the years 1997–2001 and 92 for the years 2002–2008 (see Fig. 26.1). Viewed in relation to the population trend, this means that the annual homicide rate has declined from 1.2 victims/ 100,000 inhabitants in 1990–1996, to 1.1 in 1997–2001 and 1.0 in the period 2002–2008. Slight decreases in the homicide rates since the mid-1990s have been noted in several other European countries, including the Netherlands, France, and Finland (Mucchielli, 2008; Nieuwbeerta & Leistra, 2002; Savolainen, Lehti, & Kivivuori, 2008). Possible

²In 1990–1996, 17% of all homicide cases in the data were legally defined as assault leading to death. In 2002–2008, the corresponding proportion was 9%.

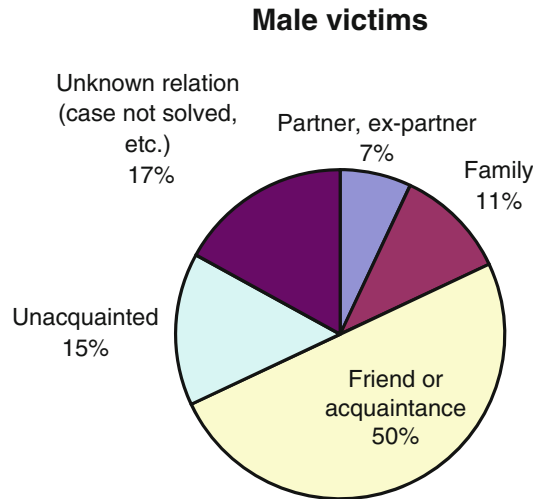


Fig. 26.1 Annual number of homicide victims in Sweden 1990–2008, according to Brå database (time span: 1990–1996 and 2002–2008), and the national cause-of-death statistics (time span: 1990–2008)

reasons for the decline in Sweden are discussed in later sections of this chapter.

Regional Distribution of Homicide Rates

Homicide rates in Sweden are fairly evenly distributed between different regions. Of the 644 homicides committed in Sweden in 2002–2008, a total of 342 (53%) occurred in the three metropolitan counties around Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö. This proportion is very reflective of the proportion of the total population living in these three counties. The lack of a generally higher homicide rate in the metropolitan counties distinguishes homicide from other serious crimes in Sweden. In the case of robbery, for example, about 75% of all reported crimes are committed in the metropolitan counties according to official crime statistics.

If the homicide rate in Sweden is studied on the basis of NUTS2 regions (a unit that all EU countries are divided into), the Stockholm region shows a significantly higher homicide rate than the other regions – both in 2002–2008 and in 1990–1996 (Table 26.1 - see Appendix, pg. 490 or online at [extras.springer.com](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-5444-4_26)). It can also be noted that the Stockholm region is at least 3 times as densely populated as any other region. However, with the exception of the Stockholm

region, there is no significant correlation between a region's population density and its homicide rate, at least not when both the period 2002–2008 and the period 1990–1996 are taken into consideration.³ Nor is there any pattern in homicide rates in relation to the geographic location of different regions. That is, the northern regions tend not to have significantly lower or higher homicide rates than the southern regions.

Incident Characteristics

Motives, Relations, and Types of Homicide

Earlier research on homicides in Sweden has found a majority of the homicide incidents to be characterized by so-called expressive motives (Granath, 2007; Rying, 2000, 2008). In other words, in a majority of the incidents, the lethal violence is a “goal in itself” from the perpetrator's

³When the Stockholm region is excluded, a bivariate analysis of the homicide rate and population density at the NUTS2 level for the years 2002–2008 and 1990–1996, as displayed in Table 26.1, produces a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.255 (no significance at the 0.05 level). When the Stockholm region is included, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient increases to 0.689 (significance at the 0.01 level).

Table 26.3 Distribution (%) of victim–offender relationships in homicide cases in Sweden, 2002–2008 ($N=644$) and 1990–1996 ($N=719$)

	2002–2008	1990–1996
Partners or ex-partners	22	20
Family (child-parent, etc.)	14	14
Friends or acquaintances	38	39
Unacquainted	12	13
Unknown relation (case not solved etc.)	14	10
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

perspective. Examples of this kind of motive include a person killing another out of jealousy or as a result of a spontaneous outburst of rage in an argument between people who have been drinking. A minor, but certainly not inconsiderable, proportion of homicides have been found to be characterized by so-called instrumental motives (Rying, 2000, 2008). This means that the principal motive is to obtain valuables, status or sexual benefits, and that the killing in itself is only a secondary motive. Examples of this kind of motive include homicides committed in connection with robbery or burglary, as well as fatal showdowns between criminals, where the place and method of the attack have been decided in advance.

In almost two-thirds of the homicides in the Brå data, the motives have been coded as expressive (Table 26.2 - see Appendix, pg. 490 or online at extras.springer.com). Spontaneous arguments are the single most common motive in both 2002–2008 and 1990–1996. When comparing the years 1990–1996 with the years 2002–2008, however, we can see that the proportion of incidents characterized by instrumental motives is higher in the later period. This is due to the fact that the overall decline in homicides between the two periods is concentrated to incidents characterized by expressive motives. The total number of homicides with expressive motives declines from 489 in the years 1990–1996 to 399 in the years 2002–2008. The total number of incidents characterized by instrumental motives, on the other hand, is about exactly the same in 2002–2008 as in 1990–1996 (116 and 115, respectively). Thus, when looking to explain the declining trend in homicides in Sweden, the focus should probably be directed at homicides based on expressive motives and at the circumstances that characterize these types of homicide. Example of such

circumstances may include alcohol consumption and the victim’s possibilities of receiving professional emergency health care.

The *victim–offender relationships* in the Swedish homicides are characterized by a large proportion of close relationships. According to the Brå data, the perpetrator was a partner, ex-partner, or a family member of the victim in over one-third of the homicides (see Table 26.3). Another third is comprised of friends or acquaintances of the victim. The victim and perpetrator were previously unknown to one another in only about 12% of the homicide cases. When comparing the periods 2002–2008 and 1990–1996, it can also be noted that the structure of the relationships found in the Swedish data is very stable over time. The proportion of cases where the nature of the relationship is unknown has increased somewhat over time, however, which seems logical given the slight decrease in the clearance rate mentioned earlier.

In order to further describe the homicides and their motivations, the motive, relationship, and other contextual variables can be combined to form a “type of homicide” variable. Such a categorization, which produces six distinct categories of homicide, shows that so-called domestic homicides are the single most common type of homicide in Sweden. The second most common involves homicides resulting from arguments or altercations (Table 26.4 - see Appendix, pg. 491 or online at extras.springer.com).

There is no major change in the distribution of homicides between the two periods studied. The proportion of “criminal homicides” has increased somewhat, while that of “homicides resulting from arguments or altercations” has declined. This change is in line with earlier findings showing a decline in homicides characterized by expressive motives.

Location

About two-thirds of all homicides in Sweden occur in private homes (Table 26.5 - see Appendix, pg. 491 or online at extras.springer.com). This is not surprising, since a large proportion of the homicides in Sweden occur within close relationships and are characterized by expressive motives. The second most common type of location is a street, road, on public transport or in some other public place usually associated with an urban outdoor environment. It indicates that the proportion of all homicides occurring on a “street, road, or public transport” has increased somewhat from the 1990s to the 2000s. A closer look at the data indicates that this is due mainly to the moderate increase in criminal homicides. Unsolved cases or cases with an “unknown” victim–offender relationship – two categories that may reasonably be assumed to be overrepresented in homicides related to disputes in criminal environments – together account for one-third of the increase in homicides located on streets, roads, or public transport.

There has also been a slight decrease in homicides located in private homes. This is somewhat surprising since the proportion of homicides involving partner or family relationships has remained stable (see Table 26.3). A further analysis of the data shows, however, that the decrease in homicides located in private homes largely relates to homicides between acquaintances (friends, etc.) – usually males. The number of homicides located in private homes involving a male victim acquainted with a male perpetrator has declined by almost 30% between the two periods, whereas homicides located in private homes and where the victim was a partner or family member (of either sex) of the perpetrator has only declined by 8%.

Modus Operandi

Previous research has found knife wounds to be the most common cause of death among homicide victims in Sweden since the mid-1970s (Rying, 2000).⁴ The Brå data also show knife

⁴In the 1950s and 1960s, beating was the most common cause of death in Swedish homicides.

Table 26.6 Types of violence (%) resulting in the death of homicide victims in Sweden, 2002–2008 ($N=644$) and 1990–1996 ($N=719$)

	2002–2008	1990–1996
Stabbing with knife (or similar instrument)	42	42
Firearm	18	17
Beating with blunt instrument	11	13
Beating or kicking without weapon	9	10
Strangling, suffocation	8	12
Other	6	4
Type of violence not determined	6	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

wounds to be the most common cause of death among the victims of violence, followed by gunshot wounds (see Table 26.6). The distribution of the types of violence which resulted in the deaths of the victims is very similar between the two periods studied, although cases of “strangling, suffocation” have declined somewhat. This moderate trend has also been found in earlier research and seems to have been ongoing since at least the late 1970s (Granath, 2007; Rying, 2008).

Data on causes of death from the Swedish health department very much confirm the structure displayed in Table 26.2. Further, these data show the structure to be very much the same during the period 1997–2001.⁵

The dominance of homicides involving knives distinguishes Sweden from the global average, where firearms represent the most common method of homicide (FBI, 2008; WHO, 2002). It is hard to explain why knives dominate the homicides in Sweden but not in several other western countries. It is plausible, however, that the high proportion of killing involving knives in Sweden is correlated with the high proportion of homicides

⁵Of victims of homicide recorded in the cause of death statistics, 41% were killed by knives during the period 1997–2001 and 44% in 2002–2008. The corresponding figures for firearm wounds were 23% in 1997–2001 and 19% in 2002–2008. Deaths resulting from the use of blunt instruments: 8% in 1997–2001 and 7% in 2002–2008. For beating or kicking without weapon: 8% in 1997–2001 and 7% in 2002–2008. And for strangling/suffocation: 9% in 1997–2001 and 8% in 2002–2008.

located in private homes. A closer analysis of the Brå data provides support for this hypothesis. Regardless of the nature of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, the proportion of homicides involving knives is greater among those located in private homes than among those located outdoors or in other places. These differences are statistically significant.⁶

Victim Characteristics

The data include a total of 1,363 homicide victims. These are distributed across 1,273 cases, producing an average of 1.07 victim/case. Ninety-four percent of the cases involved a single victim, 6% involved two victims, and there were three or more victims in less than 1% of the cases.

Age

The victims of homicide in Sweden are fairly evenly distributed across different age groups. The two exceptions are the very young (aged 0–14) and the elderly (aged 60 or over), which both account for a disproportionately low number of victims (Table 26.7 - see Appendix, pg. 491 or online at extras.springer.com). In 2002–2008, the number of victims/100,000 inhabitants was 0.3 among 0- to 14-year-olds, 1.3 among those aged 15–29, 1.2 among 30- to 44-year-olds, 1.1 in the age range 45–59, and 0.8 among those aged 60 or over. In other words, the risk for homicide victimization is lowest in childhood and highest in the teenage years and during young adulthood. It decreases slowly in middle age and then more sharply after the age of 60.

The proportion (and the number) of child victims has declined since the 1990s. Earlier research has found a trend toward fewer child homicide victims since the 1950s as a result of social reforms in the area of maternity welfare and birth

control (Jansson, Moniruzzman, & Hjern, 2007; Rying, 2004). The decrease in the 1990s has been found to be concentrated to suicide-homicide cases. Better control of mentally ill parents has therefore been noted as a possible explanation (Rying, 2004, 2008).

Gender

Most of the victims of homicide in Sweden are males. The proportion of victims accounted for by males in the Swedish data is 66% for both 2002–2008 and 1990–1996. Historical research on Swedish crime statistics has found the proportion of male victims to have declined to approximately 50% at the times when the homicide rate was at an all time low, more specifically in the 1940s and 1950s (von Hofer, 2008) (see Appendix, pg. 491 or online at extras.springer.com).

There are significant gender differences when it comes to the nature of the victim's relationship with the perpetrator, as well as in relation to the location of the crime and the modus operandi. As in many other countries, female victims in Sweden are more often the victims of homicides committed by a partner or family member than are males (Figs. 26.3 & 26.4 - see Appendix, pg. 493 or online at extras.springer.com). Male victims, on the other hand, are more often killed by a friend or acquaintance, or by a stranger or unknown perpetrator, than are females. This pattern is very stable over time, although the proportion of male victims whose relationship to the perpetrator is unknown (mostly unsolved cases) has increased from 12 to 17% between 1990–1996 and 2002–2008. Among the female victims, this proportion has remained stable at 8%. Thus, the increase in unsolved cases seems to be concentrated to male victims.

When it comes to the location of the homicides, female victims are more often killed in a private home than males (75 and 57%, respectively, in 2002–2008). Male victims, on the other hand, are more often killed in the street or on public transport (28% as compared with 13%). The type of violence causing the victims' death differs in the sense that females are more often

⁶For example, for non-partner or family-related homicides, there is a significant correlation between the likelihood that a homicide will have involved a knife and the location of the homicide (private home or in some other place); $\chi^2=5.61$, statistically significant at the 5% level.

than males killed by strangulation or suffocation (14% as compared with 5%), whereas males are more often killed by firearms than females (21% as compared with 12%). These gendered patterns in relation to location and modus operandi seem fairly logical, since female victims of homicide are more often killed by a family member or partner.

Offender Characteristics

The Brå data include a total of 1,397 homicide offenders. These offenders either have been charged with homicide or are otherwise known to the prosecutor handling the case.⁷ Since the data include a total of 1,182 cases, there is an average of 1.2 offenders/homicide case in Sweden. Approximately 85% of the cases involve a single offender, approximately 9% two offenders, and there are three or more offenders in about 6% of cases.

Age

Almost half of the offenders are aged between 15 and 29 years. The offenders of homicide are thus concentrated to the teenage years and early adulthood to a larger extent than the victims. However, the median age for the offenders is approximately 31 years, since a relatively large proportion of offenders are also found in the age range 30–44 years. It can also be noted that the concentration of offenders to the teenage years and young adulthood is less marked than for many other types of serious crime in Sweden, such as robbery or aggravated assault for example (Estrada, 2008; Granath, 2008). One reasonable explanation for this difference is that homicides are more often linked to domestic violence or mental illness than other serious crimes, which are in turn problems that are not concentrated to younger age groups.

⁷Those that have not been charged have committed suicide, are dead for other reasons, are suspected but are yet to be arrested, or are too young to be prosecuted.

The small changes over time in the age distribution displayed in are rather difficult to interpret, since the structure of the changes may be biased by a trend among Swedish prosecutors to charge an increasing number of offenders in connection with the same case (Granath, 2007).

Gender

As with most other serious crimes, males account for an absolute majority of homicide offenders in Sweden. The Brå data show males to account for 90% of offenders in both 2002–2008 and 1990–1996. Previous homicide research has found the proportion of male offenders to have been stable at approximately 90% for several hundred years (von Hofer, 2008).

The only type of homicide in Sweden which is not dominated by male offenders is child killings.⁸ In general, homicides involving female offenders are more concentrated to the family and partner sphere than are those involving male offenders.⁹ A further gender difference is that a larger proportion of female offenders compared to males have been diagnosed as mentally ill.¹⁰

Explanations for Homicide Specific to Sweden

Sweden's per capita homicide rate is low from a global perspective, but is quite similar to the rates found in most other countries in the northwest region of Europe. This should be understood in relation to the fact that Sweden, like most of her neighbors, is a welfare country with a relatively large gross national product and a high level of economic equality, an on average relatively elderly population and a high level of literacy.

⁸In 2002–2008, females committed nearly 50% of all homicides on victims less than 10 years old.

⁹Of all female perpetrators in 2002–2008, 48% had a partner relationship to the victim and 32% had a family relationship to the victim. The corresponding shares for male perpetrators were 18 and 12%, respectively.

¹⁰In 2002–2008, 25 and 11%, respectively.

As has already been noted, all of these factors have been associated with low national rates of homicide in cross-national comparative studies (see e.g., LaFree, 1999). Perhaps one should also add strict weapons laws as a factor contributing to the internationally low rate of homicides in Sweden. Access to handguns is tightly regulated in Sweden, though relatively large numbers of people have licenses for long guns, since hunting is something of a popular movement in non-urban parts of the country.

Another factor that probably contributes to the low homicide rate, viewed from an international perspective, is the fact that Sweden is a sparsely populated country with only a few large urban areas. The growth of large urban areas is otherwise emphasized as a significant factor in the increase in homicide rates in most European countries since the 1950s (Speierenburg, 2008). In line with this, the present analysis showed that the Stockholm region, which has a population density that is more than double that of any other NUTS2 region in Sweden, also has a significantly higher homicide rate than the country's other NUTS2 regions. It should be borne in mind, however, that research findings are rather mixed in relation to the issue of the macro-level associations between urbanization, population density, and homicide rates (LaFree, 1999). It is also important to note that the difference in homicide rates between the Stockholm region and the other regions of the country are very much smaller than the differences in levels of population density.

The Significance of Alcohol

National research on homicides in Sweden has stressed alcohol consumption and the misuse of alcohol as important factors in relation to the occurrence of homicide. This is true at both the macro- and the individual level. Von Hofer (2008) has noted a historical covariation in Sweden between homicide rates and total registered per capita alcohol consumption for the period 1850–2000. Lenke (1990) noted a year-by-year covariation between homicide rates and the rates of

alcohol misuse, as indicated by deaths from cirrhosis of the liver, for the period 1921–1984. At the individual level, studies by the Swedish Prison Board have found that almost half of all offenders sentenced to life imprisonment for murder during the period 1965–2007 were classified as alcoholics at the time of the crime (<http://www.accentmagasin.se/2009/04/>). In line with these earlier findings, the current Brå data demonstrate that over one-third of all offenders during the period 2002–2008 show clear signs of alcohol misuse. The Brå data also show that about 45% of the offenders and 41% of the victims in 2002–2008 were drunk at the moment of the homicide. These proportions were even higher in 1990–1996.

The high prevalence of alcohol use in homicides in Sweden may contribute to the previously noted finding that Sweden, like England and Wales, has a higher proportion of knife-related homicides than several other countries – although the distribution of victim–offender relationships does not differ from that of other countries to the same extent. A closer examination of the Brå data shows that the proportion of knife homicides is higher among those incidents where the offender was drunk than among those where the offender was sober – even when the type of relationship between victim and offender is held constant. For homicides committed both outside and within the family or partner sphere, these differences are statistically significant for both 2002–2008 and 1990–1996. This correlation appears to be even stronger than that noted earlier between knife use and the location of the crime.¹¹

Perhaps one should then expect an even lower homicide rate in an international perspective, given that per capita alcohol consumption is lower in Sweden than in many other countries. It is important, however, not to *over-estimate* the significance of alcohol. The historical covaria-

¹¹For non-partner or family-related homicides in 2002–2008, there is a significant correlation between the likelihood that a homicide will have involved a knife and whether or not the perpetrator was drunk at the time of the incident ($c^2=8.76$, statistically significant at the 0.01 level).

tion between alcohol consumption and Swedish homicide rates noted in existing research is only visible until the early 1980s (Lenke, 1990; von Hofer, 2008).¹² The current Brå data also demonstrate that the proportion of homicides in which the offender and/or the victim were drunk has decreased between the 1990s and the 2000s. Previous research indicates that this has been a trend since at least the 1980s (see von Hofer). Thus, differences in the characteristics of lethal violence registered in Sweden, together with changes in alcohol culture, may suggest that the association between alcohol consumption and homicide is no longer as strong as it used to be in Sweden.

The Decline in Homicide Rates Since the 1990s

Although not a uniquely Swedish phenomenon, the slight decline in homicide rates since the early 1990s is an interesting one to discuss and analyze from a national perspective and on the basis of national data. The decline may not take the same form in all countries, and the underlying factors may differ.

Since the time frame is relatively short and the decline is rather modest, it would not seem to be fruitful to attempt to analyze the trend in relation to major social changes in Swedish society. Nor do theories based on possible changes in the general level of strain or economic equality seem relevant as a point of departure, at least not within the confines of this chapter. It can further be noted that there are no indications of any general decline in violent behavior in Sweden. School surveys show that the proportions of Swedish teenagers who report participating in violence or having been exposed to such crime have been very stable since the mid-1990s (Brå, 2010). Surveys among adults also show a stable level of exposure to violent crime (Estrada, 2008).

It would therefore appear to be more fruitful to focus on three situational factors that might

possibly contribute to explaining the decline in homicide rate: demographic changes, new alcohol consumption patterns, and improvements in emergency health care.

Demographic Changes

As stated earlier in this chapter, offenders of homicide are disproportionately often found to be aged between 15 and 29, whereas very few are aged 45 or over. This is not surprising since it is well known from criminological research that most types of criminal offending are most frequent in the teenage years and young adulthood, and are least frequent in early childhood and after the retirement age. It is therefore likely that major changes in the demographic composition of a nation's population will exert some effect on national homicide rates. A significantly "aging" population, in which the proportion of middle-aged people is increasing quickly, might then possibly explain why homicide rates are declining.

This does not seem to be the case in Sweden, however. As was mentioned earlier, the proportion of people of retirement age has increased in Sweden since the 1990s – but so has the proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds. The median age is therefore only slightly higher in the mid-2000s than it was in the mid-1990s. Further, the median age increased more substantially between the mid-1970s and the beginning of the 1990s. During this period, the homicide rate also increased, going against the expectations implicit in the "demographic" hypothesis. Therefore, changes in the age structure of the Swedish population do not seem to have had any major impact on the trend in homicide rates.

Further, a closer look at the Brå data shows that the decline in homicides relates to offenders in all age groups. Homicides in which the principal offenders all were aged 15–29, for example, decreased from a total number of 235 in 1990–1996 to a total of 219 in 2002–2008. This might appear to be a small change in total numbers, but while the proportion of 15- to 29-year-olds in the Swedish population has increased between these two periods (see earlier sections of this chapter) the

¹²In the 1980s, the homicide rate continued to increase while the level of total alcohol consumption declined. In the 1990s, on the other hand, the homicide rate started to decline while total alcohol consumption increased.

offending rate has declined in this age group to the same extent as in the others. Thus, demographic changes do not seem to be the main explanation behind the decline in the homicide rate in Sweden.

Changing Patterns of Alcohol Consumption

Although the total recorded per capita consumption of alcohol has not declined since the 1990s, it is still possible that changes in alcohol consumption patterns might explain the decline in homicide rates. As has been stated earlier, the decline in homicides in Sweden is most significant (besides the small category of child killings) among the expressively motivated incidents (homicides resulting from arguments, etc.) and among incidents located in private homes where the offender is a male who is acquainted with the male victim. These represent types of homicides where alcohol may be assumed to play a crucial role. Not surprisingly, we have also found a significant decline in the proportion and numbers of homicides where the offender and/or the victim have been drunk at the time of the crime. In addition, the Brå data show that the proportion of homicide offenders with a documented alcohol abuse problem has declined from 46 to 36% between the two periods studied. The same trend is found among the victims. All in all, there seems to be good evidence that the decline in homicide rates is largely concentrated to the alcohol-related homicides.

Available data on alcohol consumption patterns over time in Sweden reveal some interesting trends over the last three decades. First, although recorded per capita sales of wine and beer were higher in the 2000s than in the 1990s, recorded per capita sales of *hard liquor* were on average almost twice as high during the period 1990–1996 as they were in 2002–2008.¹³ Second, the number of alcohol-related deaths¹⁴ among Swedes up to the ages of 49 years has declined slowly but

surely during the entire period of 1980–2008 (see CAN, 2009, p. 84). The annual number of alcohol-related deaths in age groups under the age of 50 was thus on average approximately 600 in 1990–1996 and 450 in 2002–2008. In summary, it seems that the most dangerous forms of drinking in Sweden (in social as well as in medical terms) have been on the decline since the beginning of the 1980s. It is not unreasonable to hypothesize that such a trend may have had an impact on the declining homicide rates in Sweden, not least since the decline seems to be concentrated to alcohol-related incidents.

There are a number of problems with this explanation, however. First, the decline of alcohol-related deaths and hard liquor sales started as early as the early 1980s – almost a whole decade before the decline in homicide rates. There is no immediately apparent reason why the impact on homicide rates should have been delayed in this way. Second, there is no evidence of a *causal* relationship between changes in alcohol consumption patterns and decreases in the homicide rate between the 1990s and 2000s. The fact that a declining proportion of offenders and victims had alcohol abuse problems and/or were drunk at the time of the homicide need not in itself be of any more significance than if the offenders and victims had systematically changed their eating habits. The drug habits of homicide offenders might also change without this having anything to do with the trend in the overall rates of drug consumption. As a matter of fact, the decline in the proportion of offenders with documented alcohol abuse problems is larger than the overall decline in homicide rates. There is also an increase in the proportion of offenders with documented illicit drug abuse (29% in 2002–2008 as compared with 22% in 1990–1996). Third, the fact that there is also a simultaneous decline in homicide rates in several other western European countries leads one to be a little suspicious of an explanation that focuses exclusively on alcohol. Even if it is clear that the decline in Sweden is largely concentrated on alcohol-related homicides, there may nonetheless be other underlying factors that have actually caused this impact on the declining homicide rate. One such factor might be improvements in emergency health care.

¹³ Almost 2 L/inhabitant/year as compared to just over 1 L/inhabitant/year (see CAN, 2009, p. 56).

¹⁴ Alcohol poisoning, cirrhosis of the liver, alcohol psychosis, or alcoholism.

Improvements in Emergency Health Care

Some criminological research has stressed that there has been an increase in the likelihood of surviving serious violence in Western countries over recent decades as a result of improvements in emergency health care (see Chon, 2002; Harris, Thomas, Fischer, & Hirsch, 2002). However, the empirical support for this hypothesis is rather mixed. In Sweden, for example, Granath (2007) found no support for any impact of such improvements on trends in lethal youth violence during the period 1980–2005, since the violence that resulted in the victims' deaths in these cases had not tended to become more severe over time, and since the proportion of victims who died in the hospital had increased rather than decreased over time.

However, the Brå data provide further opportunities to test the healthcare hypothesis. The data contain a variable indicating whether the victim of a homicide died before, during, or subsequent to coming under professional medical care. As both Harris et al. (2002) and Granath (2007) have reasoned, if there is an impact on the homicide rate of improvements in emergency health care, then the proportion of all homicide victims who die without coming under any professional medical care should increase over time. The Brå data show the opposite trend, however. It is actually the proportion of victims who die subsequent to coming under professional medical care that has increased. This might indicate that the infrastructure of emergency health care has been improved in some way (perhaps, amongst other things, by the prevalence of cell phones among the general public), but that this development has had no major impact on homicide rates. Further, the high proportion (both in 1990–1996 and in 2002–2008) of victims who have died without having received any emergency health care indicates that the possibilities for improvements in emergency health care to affect the homicide rate are rather limited.

Policies Specific to Sweden

Since homicide is a very small category of crime, there are no policies in Sweden aimed specifically at reducing the rate of homicide per se.

However, there are policies and measures that, amongst other things, have the purpose of preventing certain types of serious violence. One such policy is the establishment of women's shelters and the introduction of new stricter legislation in relation to domestic or intimate partner violence. According to Rying (2007), it seems likely that these measures played a part in the decline in the number of women killed as a result of domestic violence witnessed between the 1970s and the 1980s. Further, one of the explicit objectives associated with the strict regulation of the sale of alcohol in Sweden (e.g., Saturday closing of the state liquor stores between 1982 and 2000) has been that of preventing interpersonal violence. As has been noted above, these measures appear to have had an effect on rates of violence and homicide at least until the early 1980s.

When it comes to the agencies of the justice system, homicide is a high priority crime. It is certainly one of the crimes that police make the greatest effort and allocate the most resources to solving. The clearance rate is therefore still relatively high. About 80% of all homicides were cleared up in 2002–2008 in the sense that the offender has been convicted, found dead but guilty, disappeared abroad, or is too young to be prosecuted. As was mentioned earlier, homicide is also the only crime that results in the most severe punishment in Sweden: life imprisonment. The most common sentence for murder in 2002–2008 was imprisonment for 10–14 years, however. For voluntary manslaughter, the most common sentence was imprisonment for 6–8 years, and for involuntary manslaughter by assault, imprisonment for 3–7 years. Figure 26.4 (see Appendix, pg. 494 or online at extras.springer.com) Displays the distribution of sanctions for all offenders convicted of completed homicide in 2002–2008 and 1990–1996, respectively. A majority of these homicide offenders (66%) were convicted of murder.

The Swedish penal system may be rather unique in the sense that offenders are charged and convicted of homicide irrespective of their psychiatric status. The proportion of offenders sentenced to psychiatric care (15% in 2002–2008) may also be low in an international perspective. Since the mid-1970s, this proportion has been in continuous

decline (Rying, 2008), amongst other things as a result of changes in the legislation. Indicate a trend toward harsher sanctions, in the sense that the proportion sentenced to life imprisonment has increased between the two periods studied. It may be noted that the maximum length of fixed-term sentences for murder was expanded to 18 years in prison in 2009. The objective, however, was to reduce the use of the life-term sanction (SOU, 2007, p. 90).

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Introduction

Homicide is a topic of particular interest in Estonia since the level of violent deaths is well above the European average. From 2006 to 2008, the average rate per 100,000 population in Estonia was 6.6, the second highest rate in the EU after Lithuania in these years. At the same time, Estonia has experienced a rapid decrease in homicide during last 15 years – the rate of homicide used to be more than four times higher in the middle of 1990s.

High rate of violent death is not something that has evolved during the last decades; it has been a problem through very different state orders and social conditions, including the Soviet era from the 1940s to 1980s. In the broadest sense, lethal violence in Estonia should be analyzed in relation to alcohol consumption behavior and cultural traditions. Estonia shares high drinking patterns with its neighbors Finland and Russia, and it also has a remarkable immigrant population whose rates of homicide and violence in general have been and are still higher in comparison to Estonians.

The problems that arise from heavy drinking are also visible in other areas where unnatural

deaths occur: Estonia has been one of the leading countries in the EU rankings of fire deaths and deaths caused by drowning and traffic accidents.

Despite high rates of homicide, it has not become a topic of special interest for the public in Estonia. Although, on average, each week, a person or two are being killed in recent years, media covers only a few exceptional cases during the year. This has probably contributed to rational criminal policy but has not drawn enough attention to social and economic policy areas such as alcohol policy.

Country-Specific Details

The Republic of Estonia is situated in the Baltic region of northern Europe; it is bordered to the north by the Gulf of Finland, to the west by the Baltic Sea, to the south by Latvia, and to the east by the Russian Federation. Estonians are a Finnic people; Estonia is a democratic parliamentary republic and is divided into fifteen counties. The capital and the largest city is Tallinn.

In the beginning of eighteenth century, Estonian territory became part of Russian Empire, but after national awakening period in nineteenth century, Estonian Declaration of Independence was issued in 1918. As a result of World War II, Estonia was annexed by the Soviet Union and regained its independence in 1991; last Russian troops left Estonia in 1994.

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Population and Literacy

Estonia is one of the least populous members of the European Union. It has a population of 1.34 million inhabitants. Estonians constitute 68.7% of the total population, 25.6% are Russians and 5.7% are of other nationalities (Statistics Estonia, 2010). The population structure in Estonia is similar to those found in EU member countries in general. The share of children (age 0–14) in the Estonian population is 15%, working-age population (15–64) consists of 67%, and older population 18% of population (CIA, 2010).

After the country's independence in August 1991, the total population started to decrease. This process was most intensive in the first half of the 1990s, but slowed down in following years. The causes for this decrease in population are low fertility, high mortality, and migration out of the country (Eesti Inimvara Raport, 2010).

The period of population increase took place from 1950 to 1990, when the population increased from 1.10 to 1.57 million inhabitants. The share of the urban population also increased from 31% in 1934 to 71% in 1989. An essential factor supporting those developments was large-scale immigration from the other parts of the Soviet Union, particularly from the late 1960s until the mid-1980s. Most of the immigrants were young (20–30 years old) and they were mainly accommodated in Tallinn and the Ida-Virumaa county. About two-thirds of these immigrants settled in Estonia permanently (Lehti, 1997).

The adult literacy rate in Estonia is 99.8%, but school enrolment may vary by educational levels (CIA, 2010). Although the percentage of individuals with high levels of education is greater among immigrants than among the native Estonian population, immigrants tend to be more often unemployed than the native population (Statistics Estonia, 2009).

Alcohol and Drugs

Estonia is characterized by high levels of alcohol consumption as well as an increasing use of certain types of drugs, particularly among the youth.

Alcohol consumption was relatively low when Estonia became part of the Soviet Union and up to the 1950s (less than 5 L of pure alcohol per capita), but increased rapidly in the 1960s and reached the level of 11 L of pure alcohol per capita by the end of the 1970s. Despite anti-alcohol consumption campaigns in the 1980s and 1990s, the consumption level remained between 5.5 and 6.8 L per capita (Ahven, 2000). After Estonia regained independence, alcohol became more easily available. At the same time, a liberal alcohol policy was introduced. The consumption level started to increase and reached 10 L in late 1990s. The highest level so far was reached in 2007: 12.6 L per capita, which was higher than most European countries (Eesti Konjunktuuriinstituut, 2010).

The most popular alcoholic beverages in recent decades have been beer and vodka. In the 1980s and 1990s, vodka accounted for about a half of total pure alcohol sold (Ahven, 2000). In 2009, the share of beer was 39% of pure alcohol sold, followed by vodka with 33% and wine with 9% (Eesti Konjunktuuriinstituut, 2010).

To conclude, Estonia and other neighboring countries can be described by high levels of binge drinking (Popova, Rehm, Patra, & Zatonski, 2007), which in turn has been shown to have an effect on the level of violence (Bye, 2008).

Drug consumption shows a similar trend. Drug abuse was very limited in Estonia during the Soviet period due to strict control and few possibilities for traveling outside the Soviet Union. Since the late 1990s, it has become an acute problem, particularly in the north-eastern part of Estonia (Ida-Virumaa) and Tallinn. Ida-Virumaa is bordered by Russia, and the smuggling of heroine from Russia intensified substantially in the second half of 1990s. The target group was relatively young, and this has in many cases caused severe drug dependency at an early age. In the following decade, smuggling from (cannabis, stimulants, etc.) and to the European countries (stimulants) became more significant, and drug abuse also spread to the other regions.

In the recent years, amphetamine-type stimulants, cannabis, and synthetic opiates have been the most widely used drugs in Estonia. A severe

problem has been a high proportion of drug injectors (particularly among young people) that has facilitated the spread of HIV/AIDS. Russian speakers constitute the majority of opiate users, while Estonians seem to prefer cannabis and stimulants.

The Estonian drug policy has been strict and there is no distinction between soft and hard drugs. Still, illegal use or possession of a small amount of drugs for personal use is classified as a misdemeanor, not as a criminal offense.

Some drug-related problems in Estonia are more severe than those in most of the other European countries: relatively young drug users' population, a large number of injecting drug users, popularity of strong synthetic opiates that are particularly dangerous in the case of an overdose, continuous increase of drug abuse among juveniles, and high HIV/AIDS prevalence.

Private Gun Ownership

Private gun ownership in Estonia has traditionally been related to hunting (shotguns, rifles). Handguns for self-defense (pistols, revolvers) were practically prohibited during the Soviet time period and they only became available in the 1990s. The Estonian gun law has been rather strict and the number of legally owned firearms is not high in comparison to the other European countries.

According to the victimization surveys, about a half of guns in the possession of private households have been shotguns and another half handguns. The surveys have shown that the prevalence of gun ownership has remained at approximately the same level since 1993 when the first survey was carried out. The share of households with firearms has varied between 6.5% in 2009 and 8.3% in 1995. One can still observe a decline in the share of households that stated that they hold a gun for defense against criminals: these households comprised 4.8% in 1993 but only 2.5% in 2009 (Salla, 2010).

Estonians possess all types of weapons more than other ethnic groups, particularly shotguns for hunting. The 2009 survey indicated that 8% of Estonian households and 3% of households of

other ethnic groups owned at least one firearm (Salla, 2010). The percentage of shotgun owners has been the highest in rural communities (dominated by Estonians), where 10.5% of households owned such a weapon in 2004. Ownership of handguns has been related to the income level of households. In 2004, 10% of households of the highest income group owned a handgun, but only 1% of households in the lowest income group did.

Previous Studies on Homicide

The most comprehensive analysis of homicides in Estonia, carried out by Finnish researcher Martti Lehti in 1996–1997, aimed at exploring the structure of homicides and the causes of radical changes that took place in the homicide levels in the 1990s (Lehti, 1997).

Lehti analyzed the motives and background factors of 713 cleared offenses committed from 1994 to 1996, which accounted for 76% of all registered intentional homicides (including attempts) in the same period. The main source was information collected by the police during preliminary investigations. Lehti also described long-term trends in the homicide level since the 1920s and compared them to the trends in Finland and some other countries. He paid particular attention to the demographic development during the Soviet period that has significantly influenced the homicide rate since the 1960s.

Data Sources Used for This Study

Three data sources are used in this analysis: police recorded statistics, mortality statistics, and court verdicts on completed manslaughter and murders. The two first sources are used in the discussion of trends and geographical patterns of homicides whilst the court verdicts from January 2007 to June 2010 are used throughout the article particularly for characterizing homicides' offenders and victims. Police recorded statistics are from 1993 to 2009 and mortality statistics from 1947 to 2009.

In Estonia, no special homicide monitoring system has been developed, so the primary data

source has been a general crime registration system of the Ministry of Justice. There is some inaccuracy in this data since the qualification of the offense and other circumstances frequently change in the course of the criminal investigation – the registration-based system does not reflect these changes.

In an attempt to overcome these inaccuracies, the current analysis is based on court verdicts on completed manslaughter and murder cases: a total of 105 cases, of which 77 were qualified as manslaughter and 28 as murder. The use of this type of data improves mainly the quality of data on the offender as we now speak about convicted persons and not about random suspects. Also, the information that the prosecution has gathered by the time of court procedure is more comprehensive and reliable than the data at the time of crime registration. In addition to verdicts, we collected information about the cases where homicide was followed by suicide – these cases do not reach the court and the procedure is normally ended by the prosecutor.

One must be aware, however, that the use of court data leaves out some of the cases: mainly unsolved cases, but also some cases that are solved but, for some reason, do not result in a court verdict, for example, the cases where the perpetrator has died before the hearing.

Between 2007 and 2010 in 105 cases with 107 victims, 120 persons were found guilty of homicide. Murder in Estonian law is defined as manslaughter that is characterized by one or several of the following characteristics: it is committed by someone who has been convicted of homicide before; against two or more persons; in connection with a robbery or for the purpose of personal gain; in order to conceal another offense or facilitate the commission thereof; by using an explosive device or explosive substance or it is committed in a matter that is torturous, cruel, or dangerous to the public. Crime statistics reveal that manslaughter is much more common than murder. During the last 8 years, the proportion of murders from the total number of homicide has varied between 11 and 48%, the latter being exceptional (Kuritegevus Eestis, 2009, 2010). In this analysis, we do not make distinctions between

manslaughter and murder, we refer to both as homicide.

Manslaughter in a provoked state, infanticide, and negligent homicide are excluded from this analysis. The first two are rarely registered and can be therefore described as exceptional cases. Negligent homicide is frequently attributed to accidents, such as traffic accidents or accidents on construction sites.

Epidemiology of Homicide

Trends in Homicide

Long-term trends in homicides are described both on the basis of the police statistics on completed homicides and the statistics on causes of death (mortality statistics). The latter has not been influenced by changes in criminal legislation and crime registration practice, and provides a more consistent basis for describing overall trends, particularly in the Soviet period.

Developments in the homicide level in Estonia have to a great extent been associated with major historical events and their long-term consequences (the World Wars, annexation to the Soviet Union, regaining of independence). The homicide rate increased rapidly in the period of serious difficulties (during and immediately after the wars and Soviet repressions) or quick changes in society (economic reforms in the early 1990s).

Immediately after the First World War and in the early 1920s, the rate of completed homicides was about 7–8/100,000 inhabitants (Susi, 1926). By the mid-1930s, it decreased to the level of about 5/100,000 inhabitants (Raid, 1939; Riigi Statistika Keskbüroo, 1937). There are no exact data on the early 1940s, but according to some estimates the homicide rate increased again and was about 6–7/100,000 inhabitants. These figures' comparability to the previous period and the mortality statistics is not known.

Since 1947, we have relied on mortality statistics that give a more adequate picture of the level of intentional violence, particularly during the late 1940s and the early 1950s – although the

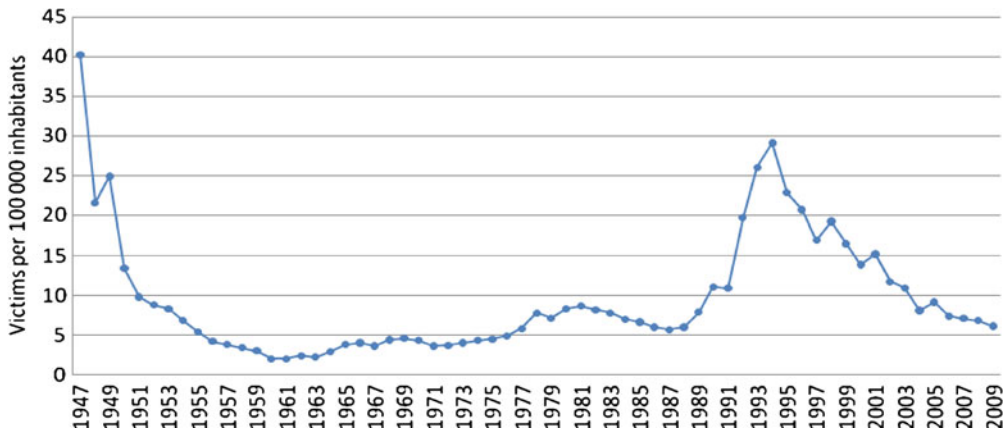


Fig. 27.1 Homicide victims according to mortality statistics 1947–2009

data for those years include a relatively large number of violent deaths recorded without a clearly defined reason. This period was very violent due to armed conflicts between the Soviet authorities and the anti-Soviet partisans in forests, but it seems that the official crime statistics on homicides did not count most victims of such conflicts. For example, the mortality statistics indicate that in 1947 the homicide rate was extremely high (about 40/100,000 inhabitants) and it remained high (22–25/100,000 inhabitants) during next 2 years. According to the militia statistics on registered homicides (including attempts), the average annual rate of such crimes was about 10/100,000 inhabitants during the years 1946–1950 (Leps, 1991) (Fig. 27.1).

In the 1950s, the homicide rate decreased substantially (more than five times) and in 1960 reached the lowest level known in Estonia so far: 2/100,000 inhabitants (24 victims). This trend follows the stabilization of the society and a reduction in repression after Stalin's death in 1953.

The number of homicides began to grow again in mid-1960s, and continued to rise until the end of the 1970s. One of the reasons for the growth was the increased migration from other Soviet republics, as the offense rates for homicide have been 3 times higher for non-Estonians than for Estonians (Lehti, 1997). This trend also coincides with an increase in alcohol consumption.

The homicide rate temporarily decreased in the 1980s. There were no essential changes in society, but the imposed alcohol policy restrictions in 1985–1987 may have had some influence on this decrease (there was also a decrease in the numbers of traffic accidents, alcohol poisonings, and overall recorded crime). At the end of the 1980s, the homicide rate began to rise quickly, and in 1990, it exceeded the 1960s lowest rate by more than five times.

After regaining independence in August 1991, large-scale reforms were initiated, which influenced the whole of Estonian society. Political, legal, and economic reforms were carried out simultaneously with comprehensive reorganization in many areas (including the criminal justice system and border control). At the same time, the state resources to improve people's well-being were very limited.

Such circumstances were favorable for the profiting from various kinds of illegal activities, while the state was not able to effectively control crime, including organized criminal groups (Urvaste, 1995).

Saar, Markina, Ahven, Annist, and Ginter (2003) indicate that during the first half of the 1990s, Estonia was characterized by "the crumbling of the old criminal justice system," while the new structures planned to replace it were still on the way. After independence, the previous

system of police, courts, and prisons experienced rapid changes. Links between changes in a country's political and socio-economic structural conditions and crime have long existed in the international literature (e.g. Kim & Pridemore, 2005; Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997). In Estonia, these changes generated conditions that triggered violence (for a review of the structural changes in Estonia in the 1990s, see Ceccato, 2008) but they were not the only ones. Increased alcohol availability could also have contributed to the rise of violent crime (Bye, 2008). Radical changes produced difficulties for the most vulnerable groups. Alcoholism and other social problems intensified rapidly in the first half of the 1990s, and mortality statistics showed a rapid increase in homicide and other causes of death.

While conflicts in the criminal underworld were also considered a cause of the increase in homicide at that time, later analyses have shown that such conflicts accounted for less than 20% of homicides. Nearly two-thirds of homicides in Estonia in the 1990s were committed by acquaintances or family members after drinking together. Even before independence, demographic distortions affected levels of violence, particularly those related to differences in violence rates between Estonians and Russian immigrants. In the 1990s, ethnic Russians living in Estonia were three times more likely to be guilty of or become victims of homicides (Lehti, 1997).

In 1994, the homicide rate reached its highest level after the year 1947: 29.1/100,000 inhabitants (426 victims). The rates of suicide, alcohol poisoning, traffic accidents, and other accidental deaths also reached their peaks since 1950 (Ahven, 2000; Statistics Estonia, 2010).

According to mortality statistics, the homicide rate has substantially declined and reached the level of 6.1/100,000 inhabitants in 2009, which is close to the rate in 1988.

Despite the continuous decline in the homicide rate in Estonia in the 2000s, the country shows relatively high levels of lethal violence compared with other EU countries. The other Baltic countries, Latvia and Lithuania, have also had significantly higher homicide rates than other countries in the European Union throughout the last two

decades. Compared to Russia, however, in the last 50 years, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania had relatively low homicide rates (Stickley & Mäkinen, 2005). Historical differences between Baltic countries and the rest of Europe concerning levels of violence have already been discussed in the section "Regional variation in Europe between homicide and other forms of crime, violence, and mortality" by Aebi and Linde in this book.

Among the Baltic countries, Estonia has historically shown higher homicide rates than its Baltic neighbors (Lehti, 2001), but inconsistencies in the way data are reported may explain part of these regional variations. According to the European Sourcebook (2003), homicide rates vary significantly between countries, even when attempted homicide is excluded. Other variations in definitions (for example, murder and manslaughter) may influence homicide rates but do not, by themselves, explain these differences.

As the number of homicides has been falling since 1994, the number of less serious violent offenses has been rising. For example, between 2003 and 2008, the number of violent crimes registered by police rose 36% in Estonia (Salla & Tammiste, 2009). This rise, though, has mainly been contributed to changes in law that abandoned private indictment in criminal procedure (*ibid*).

There is evidence that the violent nineties have been followed by a much more peaceful period for both homicide and violence in general in Estonia. According to victimization survey, prevalence rate of assaults and threats declined remarkably between 1999 and 2003 (Salla & Surva, 2010). In the 1990s the percentage of the population that was victimized by violence was between 5.0 and 6.3. That made Estonia a country with one of the highest levels of violence in the International Criminal Victimization Survey (ICVS). The survey conducted in 2004 showed that victimization had fallen by 2.7% and that was below the average (3.1%) in the ICVS (van Dijk, van Kesteren, & Smit, 2007).

Regional Distribution of Homicide Rates

Homicides, like any other type of crime, tend to be clustered in space. In Estonia, regions with larger cities or towns tend to have more homicide

cases than rural areas, but there are exceptions to the rule. Although rates might be similar between rural and urban areas,¹ three-fourths of murders were committed in urban areas and one-fourth in rural areas (Lehti, 2001).

This urban–rural proportion is still similar today. According to crime statistics (Kuritegevus Eestis, 2009, 2010), between 2003 and 2009 the highest number of homicides (including attempts) was registered in the Harju County (mostly in Tallinn), followed by the Ida-Viru County (north-east Estonia, 70% in Narva and Kiviõli) and the Tartu County (central Estonia, two-thirds in Tartu city). No homicide was registered in the counties of Saare, Hiiu, Järva, and Valga. Counties such as Lääne-Viru, Pärnu, Jõgeva, and Põlva registered less than ten cases in the last 6 years. This spatial pattern is to a certain degree stable but not identical over time. A more nuanced picture is revealed when cases of homicides are analyzed as a function of the total population of each county (rates) and when the population of Estonia as a whole is taken into account (ratios). We will now discuss regional variations of homicide between 1993 and 2009 looking first at *rates* and later at *ratios*. (Whilst in rates, crime totals are divided by the total population of a region only, ratios take into account both crime and total population of the whole of Estonia² in each ratio of homicide for a region, providing a more reliable measure of risk than rates) (Fig. 27.2 – see Appendix, pg. 495 or online at extras.springer.com).

The county of Ida-Viru shows the highest homicide rates between 1993 and 2009 in Estonia – Ida-Viru’s rates were higher than those found for the country as a whole. In 1993, Ida-Viru’s rate (40.7) was followed by high rates in the

counties of Harju (18.6), Tartu (17.7), Järva (16.2), Rapla (12.6), and Jõgeva (7.1). In 2009, the county of Ida-Viru was still on the top of the list of homicide rates, but to a much lower degree (11.2/100,000 inhabitants), showing a decrease of 70% in nearly two decades. The homicide decay is experienced in all regions, but regions with initially high rates tended to have higher decreases than the ones with lower rates. For instance, the city of Tallinn and counties of Rapla, Tartu, Pärnu, and Järva showed a reduction of more than 80%, whilst Jõgeva and Põlva counties decreased by a quarter or a half of the rates of the early 1990s.

Interestingly, the increase in homicides in the 1990s was also very regionally uneven. According to Lehti (1997), the increase took place first in Ida-Viru and in the area of Tallinn. Homicides in the 1990s would seem to have increased both in the regions that have benefitted from the reforms and in those that have suffered from them, but not everywhere. Western Estonia (especially the islands) has remained almost untouched by the increase in violence, despite the fact that the social change has swept over it as well.

Standardized homicide ratios were calculated in order to identify counties in Estonia that run a relatively high risk for homicide, taking into account the overall distribution of murders in Estonia. Shifts occurred in the geography of homicides between 1993 and 2009. In Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, the observed number of homicides was lower than expected in ten out of 17 years. Remember that Tallinn has experienced one of the largest reductions in homicides since the early 1990s and that ratios are dependent on what happens in the rest of Estonia (Fig. 27.3).

As expected, the county of Ida-Viru shows levels of homicide that are higher than expected during the whole period. Ida-Viru is the only area in Estonia that had a relative risk twice that to be expected given the population of the county (standardized homicide ratios were more than 200) during the whole period 1993–2009. Exceptions occurred in 1997 and 2004 when ratios were lower but still above that expected (185 and 125, respectively). Inhabitants of the counties of Jõgeva and Põlva run a higher risk for

¹The definition of rural and urban differs from country to country or even within countries. Comparisons in homicide rates between rural and urban areas should therefore be taken cautiously.

²Thus, the standardized offense ratio (SOR) for region i is the ratio between the observed number of offenses $O(i)$ and the expected number of offenses $E(i)$. In this analysis, an average offense rate was obtained by dividing the total number of offenses by the total size of the population. For each area i , this average rate is multiplied by the size of the chosen denominator in area i to yield $E(i)$.

homicide in the 2000s than in the 1990s. Note also that these counties have experienced the smallest percentage decrease in homicide rates since 1993. Although the risk of homicide is higher in relation to Estonia as a whole, homicide rates in these counties are stably low (around 5/100,000 inhabitants).

Regional differences in homicide rates in Estonia are traditionally related to differences in the population's demography and ethnic composition. The non-Estonian population is, for instance, overrepresented in Ida-Viru. Lehti (1997) indicates that the age structure of Russians in Estonia differs from that of the native population, which affects the propensity and vulnerability of these two groups to be involved in homicides (either as offenders or as victims). However, the author also suggests that the fact that two-thirds of homicides in Estonia are committed by non-Estonians cannot be accounted for by demography alone, since the overrepresentation of non-natives among the offenders is too great. Differences in lifestyle and culture should also play a role (Lehti, 1998).

Incident Characteristics

According to court case materials from the years 2007 to 2010, homicide incidents in Estonia are characterized by close relations between victims and perpetrators and no clear motive from the side of the perpetrator. They are usually committed in homes during alcohol-drinking events involving both the offender and the victim.

One hundred and five analyzed cases showed that approximately in nine out of ten cases, the perpetrator, victim, or both parties were under the influence of alcohol. In the remaining cases, it was either known that both the perpetrator and victim were sober or the information about intoxication was not available. The share of cases where both parties were intoxicated was 68%. In addition, there were the cases (19% of total) where the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol (the victim was sober or the intoxication was unknown). There was also one case where the victim was drunk and the perpetrator was sober.

Pridemore and Eckhardt (2008) have found that alcohol-related homicides are significantly more

likely to occur in the context of acute arguments and less likely to be pre-mediated or profit oriented. This conclusion is something that cannot be overlooked when analyzing the context of the incident and the motives of perpetrators. We also found it applicable to Estonian cases, but our data suggest that alcohol plays an important role in profit-oriented homicide cases as well.

Type of Incidents According to Motive and Victim–Offender Relationship

The situations where homicide incidents took place were categorized as domestic, criminal, argument based, robbery, sexual, other, and unknown. In our dataset, the highest share of events were argument based (47%), which were followed by domestic homicide cases (21%) that were also mostly preceded by heated arguments. The overall share of robbery-related homicides, unclassified cases, and cases classified as other were equally 11%. We did not find cases that could be classified as sexual or criminal.

Argument-based homicides ($N=49$) were almost exclusively committed by male perpetrators; there was only one case with two perpetrators and one of them was female. The victims of these cases were also more likely to be male; females accounted for 10% of the victims.

According to the analysis, it is a rare exception when homicides preceded by arguments do not involve alcohol abuse. There were no cases where both the victim and the perpetrator were known to be sober and there was only one case where the intoxication was unknown for both parties.

This type of homicide also only rarely involves strangers; in the majority of cases, the victim knew the perpetrator and, as stated above, it was likely they were drinking together before the incident. In most cases, it was hard to define why the argument grew to violence, as the testimonies of witnesses and perpetrators were ill-defined and the only thing that the perpetrator could often say was that he regrets what happened and he has no idea why it did happen. This is most likely explained by blind drunkenness – in these cases, large quantities of strong alcohol such as vodka

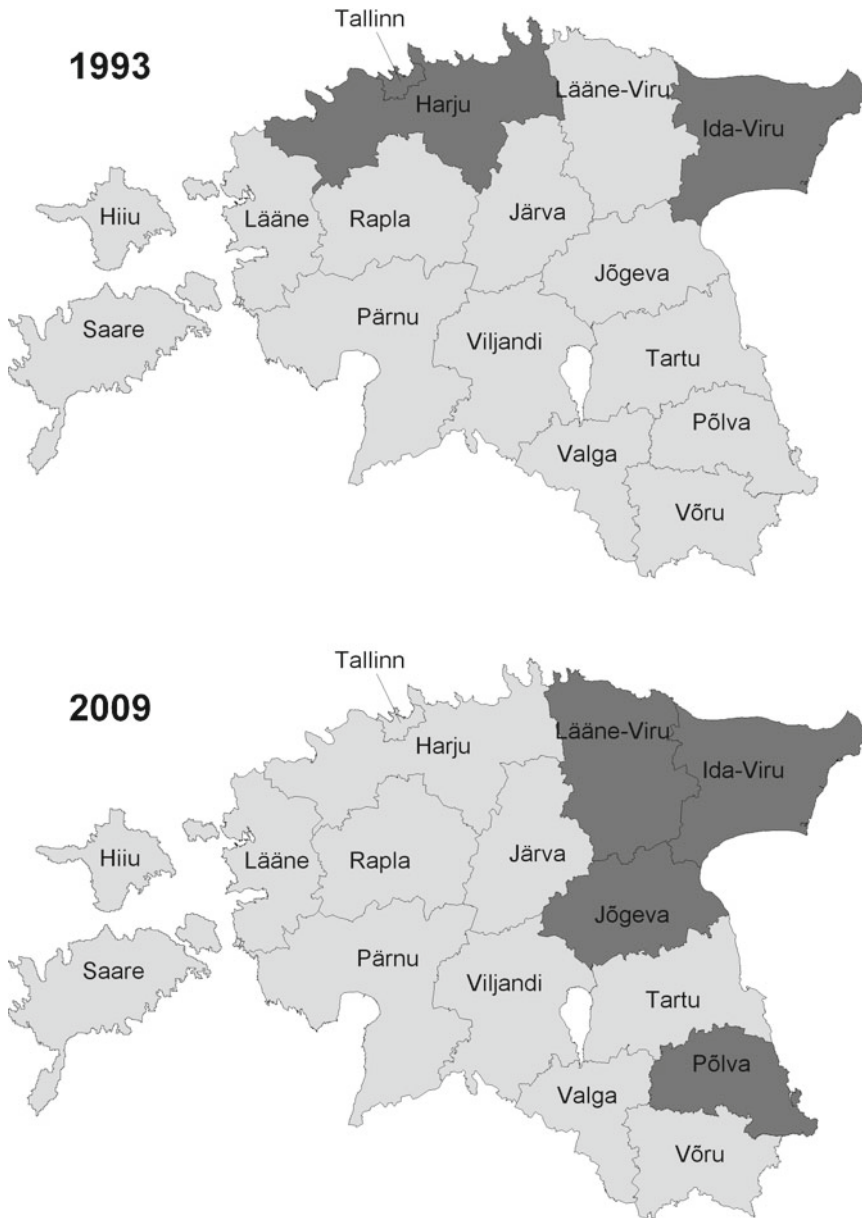


Fig. 27.2 Standardized Homicide Ratios (SORs) in 1993 and 2009. Dark grey show where the expected values of homicides are higher than the expected ones in Estonia, $E(i) > O(i)$

are often being consumed. Perpetrators often claim that they became aware of what had happened only after becoming sober in jail.

In a minority of cases, the reason for the argument was either revenge or a demand of debt, but evaluating these cases, it seemed that killing or hurting the victim was not the initial intention of the perpetrator, it was more likely to be *some-*

thing that happened because of low self-control under the influence of alcohol.

Domestic homicide ($N=22$) mostly takes place at the victim's home. There were nine killings of intimate partners, including three male and six female victims. Five assaults were directed against parents, all of them committed by male perpetrators. In four cases, the mother-in-law was killed

and in the remaining cases there were the killings of brothers, a daughter, and a grandmother of the intimate partner. Several cases showed a long history of continuous violence between parties; in these cases, there were testimonies that showed that violence was an accepted way of problem solving in these relationships.

Domestic homicide is not likely to be pre-mediated; most cases are very similar to argument-based homicide cases that grow out of gatherings where strong alcohol is consumed. But not only intimate partners drink together, but larger circles of family that include grandparents, mother-in-laws, brothers, and sisters are also involved. These homicides often occur in poor social conditions where it is rather unusual for participants to work or be involved in social life in general.

In three-fourths of cases where some information could be gathered, both the victim and the perpetrator were drunk at the moment of killing; in the remaining cases, the perpetrator was intoxicated and the victim was either sober or his or her intoxication was unknown. Ironically, it should be added that in a few cases, the reason for the argument was the initial claim by one party that the other one drinks too much alcohol.

There were twelve robbery followed by death cases; all of them were committed by male perpetrators. A total of 17 persons were convicted and 13 killed in these crimes. Most of the killings were committed by one perpetrator but there were two with two and one with four perpetrators.

Robbery homicides committed by strangers are rather rare in Estonia: there were only two cases that were categorized as such; most killings were committed by persons who knew their victims in some way. The closest relationship was identified in a case where a young male killed his grandmother.

As a distinction from domestic and argument-based homicide cases, most of the robberies followed by death cases occur in public or semi-public places. Still, the role of alcohol remains important for these cases: in half of the cases, both the victim and perpetrator were drunk; in two cases, the perpetrator was drunk and the victim sober; and in three cases, both parties were sober.

Other cases in our dataset, not classifiable as domestic, argument related, or robbery related, were still similar to those already described: they were mostly single perpetrator – single victim cases that involved alcohol and were committed between males who knew each other.

Homicide-Suicide

Between 2007 and 2010, there were four homicide-suicide cases³ in Estonia. They were all committed by male perpetrators and they all included the killing of the intimate partner. The intimate partner was the sole victim in two cases, but in one case, the perpetrator also killed his two daughters, and in one case, also a daughter and his wife's friend.

Alcohol did not play a role in one of the cases, but for two cases, the victims had been drinking alcohol, and in one case, the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the killing. All of the killings took place in apartments and in only one case, the perpetrator killed himself some hours later elsewhere. The modus operandi included stabbing (2 times), strangulation, and shooting.

Location

In Estonia, homicide rarely takes place in public space. Most of the incidents occur in apartments, summer cottages, or other dwelling houses. This includes victims' and perpetrators' houses and houses of their relatives, friends, or acquaintances.

Homicide in public space is usually committed on streets by stabbing or beating but even in this case, the victim and perpetrator often knew each other as was previously described in the case of robberies. Each year, there are cases where homicide is committed in a dormitory or other social housing estate, also not very random are the cases where homicide is committed in abandoned buildings where homeless people gather. The poor living conditions probably go hand-in-hand with other social problems.

³ Homicide-suicide cases were not included in court data as these cases did not reach the court because there was no one to accuse and therefore the proceedings were ended by the prosecutor.

Modus Operandi

Among the methods of killing, the most common is stabbing; very often a kitchen knife is used for that purpose. Stabbing was a method of killing in 44% of cases. This refers to the expressiveness and randomness of the events, as people rarely carry a knife on themselves, but during an argument in an apartment and while intoxicated, an accidentally found knife or other sharp instrument may seem to be an easy way to end the quarrel. Stabbing is often preceded by beating.

Stabbing used to be the most common way of killing in the middle of the nineties, when it accounted for 37% of killings (Lehti, 1997). The increase to 44% is relative and mainly caused by diminished usage of other methods (e.g., shooting).

Beating is the second most common way of killing (28%); it often involves more than one perpetrator. While with beating it is harder to cause lethal damage, it is more common in these cases that a victim is left dying as the perpetrator does not understand the level of damage he has caused. In these cases, there has sometimes been a previous history of violence between the perpetrator and the victim, and the use of violence as a method of conflict resolution has been considered normal by both parties.

After stabbing and beating, a wide array of blunt instruments, from spades to chairs, are used (14%). Killing with firearms (6%) has become rather unusual in comparison with homicides in the 1990s when there were 32% of homicides committed with firearms and the proportion of killings with the motive for robbery or revenge was also higher (Lehti, 1997). The diminished number of guns in private ownership has probably played a role in this reduction, but it is more likely that general societal changes have had a bigger role.

The share of killings by strangulation or suffocation was 6%; homicides through setting a victim or a house on fire accounted for 3%.

Victim Characteristics

Mortality statistics give a historical overview of homicide victims' gender and age. Data we have gathered have a shorter timeline but provide more detailed information about the victims of homicides in Estonia.

The data on mortality from the last two decades show that males constitute between 70 and 80% of homicide victims. Before and after the years of extremely high homicide levels in the 1990s, the age structure of homicide victims has been relatively stable, with no clear peaks (Fig. 27.4 - see Appendix, pg. 495 or online at extras.springer.com).

In the first half of the 1990s, victimization among males in the age range of 20–49 years increased drastically but decreased substantially by the end of the decade, according to mortality statistics. One of the reasons for this increase was high criminality and frequent conflicts between criminal groups. According to Lehti (1997), during the years 1994–1996, every fifth male victim in his 20s or 30s was killed due to conflicts among criminals. Middle-aged men have most often been killed in the course of impulsive conflicts, usually family and drinking quarrels. As shown before, the conflicts between criminal groups have become very rare, and, at the same time, the mortality rates of young males have become lower as well. Now, differences in the rates of mortality between age groups are almost nonexistent. Changes in female victimization rates are limited and the differences between age groups are much smaller and inconsistent than in the past (Fig. 27.3).

Slavic-origin males are more likely to be victims of homicide when compared to Estonians according to the data from 2007 to 2010. As many as 75% of homicide victims were male, with 25% of victims being female. Based on nationality, we found 64% to be of Russian or other Slavic background; Estonians accounted for 34% of victims, and other nationalities, 2%.

Excluding the victims whose intoxication was unknown, 80% of victims were intoxicated when they were killed. The share of intoxicated victims was higher among males (85%) and Slavic-origin victims (86%).

Perpetrator Characteristics

In Estonia, as elsewhere, homicide is a male-dominated offense. During the period 2007–2010, there were, in total, 113 males and 7 females convicted of homicide. Most of the homicides took place between males (69%); killings where a male kills a female account for 23%. In comparison

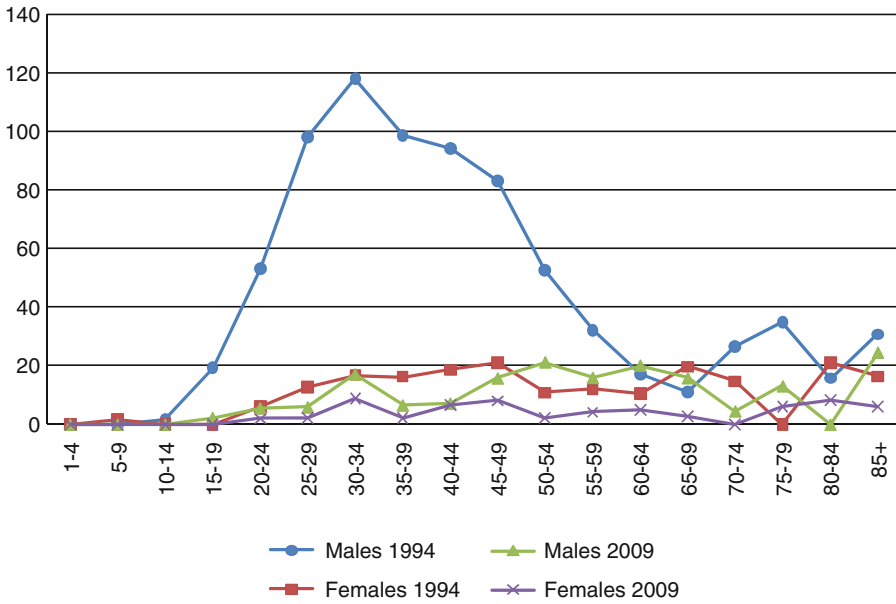


Fig. 27.3 The age structure of male and female homicide victims according to mortality statistics in 1994 and 2009, per 100,000 inhabitants

with previous decades, the proportion of females among perpetrators has diminished. In 1997, Lehti noted that from the 1960s (until the mid-1990s), females accounted for 10% of homicide perpetrators, while between 2007 and 2010, they accounted for only 6%. All known female homicides in our dataset were either domestic or argument-based homicides, in four cases, a female perpetrator killed a male, and in two cases, a female, victim.

The average age of perpetrators was 35 years, the age at the time of offense varied between 16 and 79. There were seven young offenders who committed their offenses while they were less than 18 years of age.

Immigrant nationals, mostly of Russian or other Slavic origin, are overrepresented and constitute more than half of the perpetrators (58%). Since the 1980s, the proportion of homicides between Estonians and other nationalities has not changed a lot, and it can still be concluded that different national groups tend to kill their counterparts. In 75% of homicides, the nationality of the perpetrator and the victim was the same, but there were twice as many killings among Russians

than among Estonians. The remaining 25% were homicides between different national groups and there were more cases where an Estonian killed a Russian-origin person than vice versa. We also noticed that, among immigrants, there were more previously convicted perpetrators and their average age was higher in comparison with Estonians.

Although the share of immigrants is higher among homicide perpetrators, there are no differences between national groups in terms of the motive; the share of domestic homicide is almost equal between Estonians and Russians. The same observation was made by Lehti (1997) and it can be argued that the lifestyle and habits of different national groups are similar in Estonia, but due to several reasons, the number of non-Estonians who have economic and social difficulties is higher. This is reflected in the fact that Estonians perceived economic well-being to have been higher for more than a decade; in 2008, for example, 42% of Estonians and 60% of non-Estonians stated that they have great difficulties with everyday subsistence (Statistics Estonia, 2010). Statistics also show that men have more difficulties with

subsistence in Estonia and the difference between the sexes is bigger for non-Estonians (Statistics Estonia).

Those who commit homicide tend to be less educated; more than half of perpetrators had 9 or less years of schooling. Even more problematic was the situation with employment – 80% of perpetrators did not work. Apart from problems arising from the low social status in general, we found that in most of the cases, the perpetrators were single (77%) and had a previous conviction (61%).

These characteristics give a portrait of socially deprived, middle-aged men, of whom a large proportion have been convicted before, and, as mentioned previously, might struggle with alcohol abuse.

Explanations for Homicide Specific to Estonia

Mechanisms linking long-term socio-economic deprivation to social exclusion, combined with hazardous drinking patterns seem to be the main risk factors for deadly violence in Estonia. Perpetrators and victims of homicide coincide largely as a group in Estonia. A middle-aged, Russian-speaking, unemployed and poorly educated man from Tallinn or from an economically deprived area of north-east Estonia was the most frequent portrait in analyzed court case materials.

Economic and social turmoil following the collapse of the Soviet Union and radical transformation of society in the beginning of the 1990s changed the lives of all inhabitants. Immigrants who had enjoyed privileges during the Soviet time were suddenly facing a situation where they did not have citizenship of any state and their opportunities to find work were diminished as many of the big industries were shut down. Although the economic and social well-being of ethnic minorities, mainly Russians, has continuously improved since the 1990s, it has not reached the level of Estonians. The population of Russians in Estonia has clustered in certain areas where they often constitute the majority. This has been

an obstacle for integration and therefore the social lives of Estonians and Russians mostly do not coincide. It is also reflected in the fact that most of the homicides are intra-ethnic.

At the same time, it is still obvious that homicide is a crime of non-Estonians: whilst they are responsible for 60% of violent deaths, the share of non-Estonians in population is only 30%. As the majority of non-Estonians are Russians, one should take into account the fact that in Russia, during the last decade, the homicide rate has been more than twice as high in comparison to Estonia (Federal State Statistics Service, 2011).

In relation to alcohol use, Estonia resembles other Eastern-European countries, including Russia, where in comparison to many Western-European countries, drinking habits are more hazardous (Bye, 2008; Perlman, 2010). People are more prone to drink strong spirits in large quantities and this is more likely to result in drunkenness that substantially decreases a person's ability to control his actions. In this chapter, we have shown that most of the homicides have an expressive nature, occur as a result of disputes, and are likely to be unintentional. Being unconscious of one's actions does not lessen the tragedy of the event or the responsibility of the perpetrator, but this pattern of homicide shows that for society in general, the problem of homicide is concentrated to a specific vulnerable group and might be prevented at least to some extent by restrictions on alcohol consumption.

The risk of becoming a victim of homicide in public space by a stranger is very low in Estonia. Whilst the majority of people are safe in terms of risk of being a victim of homicide, there seems to be a part of society that has drifted. From court materials, we noticed that heavy drinking, violence as a method of communication embedded in poor living conditions, and a lack of social interaction beyond immediate family or friends lead to lethal violence. At an individual level, this goes hand-in-hand with unemployment, previous criminal records, lack of educational skills, and addiction to alcohol and drugs. Although all these factors play a role in people's decision to commit violence, the unique common factor on the incident-level is alcohol – if the perpetrators hadn't been

drinking, a large share of homicides would never have taken place.

Policies Specific to Estonia

There is, for the time being, no specific program devoted to the reduction of homicide in the country. Homicide was more often in the agenda of the government in the 1990s, when there were more instrumental killings that took place in public places and therefore generated public fear.

In 2009, the government adopted a strategy for violence reduction, but it focused on topics that are only partly connected to the prevention of lethal violence, such as the use of restraining orders and the helping and empowerment of the victims of violence. Guidelines for the development of criminal policy also refer to the topic only indirectly.

The government policy agenda for diminishing alcohol consumption and alcohol-related deaths has been rather liberal. Alcohol is easily available throughout the country and alcoholism is seen more as a consequence of social problems, not as a problem per se. This may change in the near future because of a growing concern about alcohol-related injuries due to traffic accidents, fires, and drowning.

The clearance rate for homicide has been 80% on average in recent years; it used to be less in the 1990s due to the more complex nature of offenses and resources available to police.

The penal policy is not very strict on homicide; although there is a minimum sentence for homicides, there are no sentencing guidelines. The possible length of imprisonment is 6–15 years for manslaughter and 8 years to life imprisonment for murder. There is still a possibility for a judge to impose a sentence below the minimum set by law, but these cases are very exceptional. There has been one case in recent years when the sentence for manslaughter was below the minimum. Maximum prison sentence for manslaughter has been imposed once during recent years. For murder, maximum sentences in recent years have reached 20 years of imprisonment. Life sentences for murder have been rare; one has to kill

several people in order to be sentenced to life. At the end of the year 2010, there are 36 homicide offenders serving their life sentences in Estonian prisons (Ahven, 2010).

The average prison sentence given by the court is 7 years of imprisonment for manslaughter and 12 years for murder. In reality, the perpetrators serve less time in prison, since many of them are released prematurely under parole. Although there have been cases when a prematurely released homicide offender kills another person while free, the rates of re-arrest during the year after release have been low (around 10%) in comparison to other violent offenders released from prison (Ahven, Salla, & Vahtrus, 2010).

As the problem of homicide is concentrated to a small segment of society (often the poor and excluded) and incidents that come to the attention of media and public are exceptional, it is unlikely that a policy directed to prevent lethal violence in the near future will take place in the country. If the scenario changes, policy initiatives should incorporate both the role of long-term socio-economic exclusions of certain groups in society and lifestyle factors (particularly, alcohol consumption, and abuse) that directly affect homicide levels in Estonia.

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Introduction

Background

Lithuania is a relatively small Eastern European country in terms of both population and land area: approximately 3.4 million persons and 65,000 km². Lithuania is one of the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) and is bordered by Russia, Belarus, Latvia, Poland, and the Baltic Sea. Within the Baltic States, however, Lithuania is the most populated and geographically largest country, divided into ten counties and sixty municipalities.

Classified as a transition economy, Lithuania declared independence from the Soviet Union in March 1990. This declaration was followed by significant economic adjustment that was classified as one of the worst decreases in standards of living at that time (Grennes, 1997; Jakubauskas, 2000). The Lithuanian economy recovered during the late 1990s with significant economic growth. And since the late 1990s, Lithuania has increasingly become part of the global economic community: associate member of the European Union (EU) in 1998, a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, and a member of

the EU in 2004 (Ceccato, 2007; Jakubauskas, 2000). At this time, Lithuania is considered a liberal market democracy, with the majority of its international trade being with the EU.

Lithuania joining the EU is far from a non-trivial event. Over time, accession to the EU involves the standardization and/or synchronization of laws that govern international trade in goods and services, the free movement of factors of production (capital and labour), common (economic) development policies, and a common currency. Because Lithuania is at a significantly different level of economic development than the core of the EU, there is the potential for significant economic, social, and legal change. As discussed below, accession to the EU has had an impact on homicide in Lithuania.

Country-Specific Details

Turning to social, demographic, and economic characteristics,¹ Lithuania has a predominantly urban population (67%) that has a large proportion of its population at working ages (15–64 years), 69.6%; 14.2% of the population is 0–14

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¹These data are obtained from CIA – The World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.

years; and 16.2% of the population if 65 years and over. The median age of the Lithuanian population is 39.7 years (37.1 years for males and 42.3 years for females). With a birth rate of 9.11 births per 1,000 population, 11.18 deaths per 1,000 population, and a negative net migration rate, Lithuania's population is slowly decreasing.² Dominantly composed of ethnic Lithuanians (83.4 %), the most prominent ethnic minorities are Polish (6.7%) and Russian (6.3%); similarly, Lithuania is dominantly composed of Roman Catholics (79%), followed by Russian Orthodox (4.1%) and Protestant (1.9%). Literacy (those aged 15 and over who can read and write) is 99.6% and school life expectancy is 16 years–15 years for males and 17 years for females.

The rate of civilian private gun ownership in Lithuania is very low: 0.1 firearms per 100 persons. Of 179 countries, this makes Lithuania ranked 160. For a comparison, in the United States (ranked number 1), there are 88.8 firearms per 100 persons (Karp, 2007; UNODC, 2005, 2006, 2008).

Most criminogenic conditions within Lithuania have been improving in recent years, 2001–2008. Average monthly incomes, measured in constant Lithuanian litas, have doubled (982–2,152); the unemployment rate in 2008 (5.8%) was almost one-third of the unemployment rate in 2001 (17.4%); and the percentage of the population with a university degree has increased significantly (11.6–16.1%). Not all aspects of Lithuanian society have fared so well, however.

The consumption of alcohol per capita in Lithuania, a common co-variate of homicide (Pridemore & Eckhardt, 2008; Rossow, 1996; Wells & Graham, 2003), has increased in recent years: a slow but steady increase from 10 (2001) to 11.4 L of absolute alcohol (2008). Though such an increase may not appear to be problematic, this does represent a 14% increase in absolute alcohol consumption and a 57% increase in

the per capita sales of alcoholic beverages.³ Moreover, there has been a sharp increase in alcohol-related mortality in Lithuania, 2001–2008. Alcohol-related mortality has increased for males and females in both urban and rural areas. Curiously, this increase appears to coincide with accession to the EU in 2004. Such an increase in alcohol-related mortality is not a surprise given the increase in alcohol consumption and does not bode well for crimes such as homicide. However, as shown below, homicide has had a downward trend over this same time period. Consequently, this increase in alcohol consumption and alcohol-related mortality is likely a result of increased (disposable) income that also increased sharply at the time of Lithuanian accession to the EU.

Previous Studies of Lithuanian Homicide

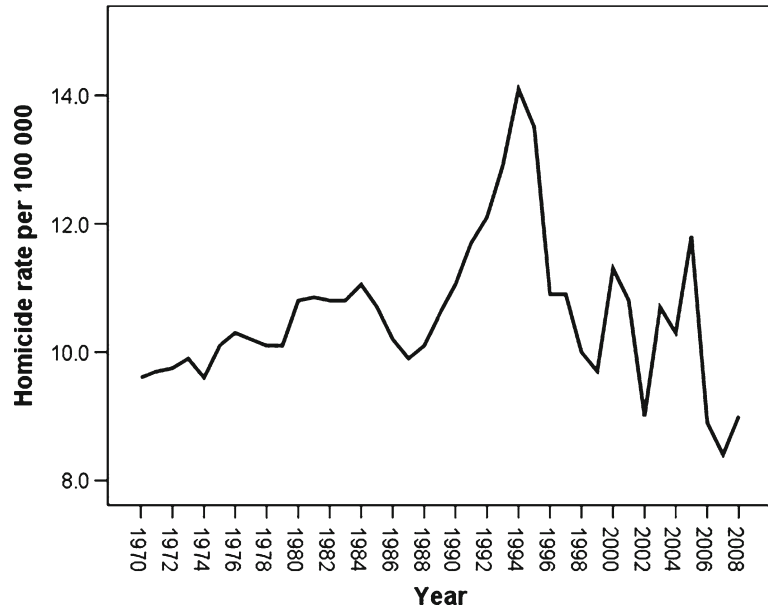
Aside from the research on recent trends in Lithuanian homicide discussed below, Värnik, Tooding, Palo, and Wasserman (2003) considered Lithuanian homicide in an historical perspective in addition to investigating the effect of sociopolitical and economic conditions on homicide and suicide in the Baltic States. They undertook this study considering two sociopolitical periods: (1) 1970–1984, a period of stagnation under the Soviet Regime and (2) a period of democratic reforms that began in 1985, then the move to a market economy in 1989, and subsequent stabilization, 1994–1998.

The authors found, as shown in Fig. 28.1, that Lithuanian homicide in the first period (1970–1984) increased, though slowly. Immediately following the first democratic reforms (1985), the homicide rate fell to the level it was 10 years before. At the time Lithuania moved toward a market economy, the homicide rate rose sharply until 1994 when stabilization began to occur and the homicide rate decreased to its pre-1989 level. Needless to say, the homicide rate in Lithuania has been rather volatile over the past 40 years.

²Life expectancy at birth is currently 74.9 years for the total population, 69.9 years for males, and 80.1 years for females.

³In this context, absolute alcohol refers to the equivalent of 100% alcohol.

Fig. 28.1 Homicide in Lithuania, 1970–2008. *Source:* Värnik et al. (2003), Ceccato (2008), and Statistics Lithuania



Data Source and Measurement Methodology Used for This Study

The data used for this study, including the alcohol-related statistics reported above, are all from Statistics Lithuania.⁴ The time line for most data is 2001–2008. This time line is used for reasons of data consistency. Data prior to 2001 are not used because of territorial boundary changes that occurred in 2000. Consequently, municipal-level homicide data necessary for investigating the regional distribution of homicide are not consistently available (or reliable) pre-2001; after 2008, not all data are available.

Before the discussion turns toward homicide in Lithuania, a brief note is important regarding the measurement of homicide. The most common

form of measuring homicide, or any crime for that matter, is a crime rate. The crime rate is calculated in order to control for the size of the underlying population: a larger country is expected to have more crime (homicide) simply because of its size. Though crime rates are known to have limitations (Andresen & Jenion, 2010; Boggs, 1965; Harries, 1981), particularly within the context of nationally measured homicide (Andresen, Jenion, & Jenion, 2003), the standard crime rate is used in this chapter. This calculation is undertaken using the entire population of Lithuania as the population at risk.

In order to complement the use of a crime rate, the location quotient is also employed here. The location quotient was introduced to criminology by Brantingham and Brantingham (1993, 1995, 1998) and has been used by a number of scholars since (Andresen, 2007, 2009a; McCord & Ratcliffe, 2007; Ratcliffe & Rengert, 2008; Rengert, 1996). The location quotient is a geographical measure that may be used to calculate the “specialization” of an activity in an area that is within a larger region – Lithuanian municipalities

⁴See <<http://www.stat.gov.lt/en/>>. I would like to thank Danguole Bikmanaitė (IT and Communications Department under The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania) for the provision of data.

within Lithuania, for example. The location quotient is calculated as follows:

$$LQ = \frac{C_{in} / C_{in}}{\sum_{n=1}^N C_{in} / \sum_{n=1}^N C_{in}}, \quad (28.1)$$

where C_{in} is the count of crime i in municipality n , C_{in} is the count of all crimes in municipality n , and N is the total number of municipalities. In the present context, the location quotient is a ratio of the percentage of homicide in a municipality relative to the percentage of homicide in all of Lithuania. If the location quotient is equal to one, the municipality has a proportional share of homicide; if the location quotient is greater than one, the municipality has a disproportionately larger share of homicide; and if the location quotient is less than one, the municipality has a disproportionately smaller share of homicide. Consequently, if a municipality has a location quotient of 1.20, that municipality has 20% more homicides than expected given the percentage of homicides in Lithuania – that municipality then “specializes” in homicide. Miller et al. (1991) provide the following classifications that are used in the maps below: very underrepresented areas, $0 \leq LQ \leq 0.70$; moderately underrepresented areas, $0.70 < LQ \leq 0.90$; average represented areas, $0.90 < LQ \leq 1.10$; moderately overrepresented areas, $1.10 < LQ \leq 1.30$; and very overrepresented areas, $LQ > 1.30$.

Lastly, in the investigation of the regional distribution of Lithuanian homicide, two statistics of spatial autocorrelation are used to measure the presence (or lack thereof) of clustering in municipal homicide rates to answer the following question: do municipalities with similar homicide rates and location quotients cluster together? The first is Moran’s I that is a global measure of spatial autocorrelation that provides an indication of Lithuanian municipality homicide rates clustering. The second is local Moran’s I that is a local measure of spatial autocorrelation. Local Moran’s I provides an indication of each Lithuanian municipality’s homicide rate or location quotient being similar to that of its immediate neighbours (Anselin, 1995). This latter measurement of spatial

autocorrelation is instructive because even if there is no global indication of clustering centred on one municipality, for example, there may still be spatial autocorrelation present around a small number of municipalities – this type of spatial autocorrelation simply gets “washed out” at the national level. All LISA calculations are performed using GeoDa 0.9.5i (<http://geoda.uiuc.edu>), a spatial statistical freeware package.⁵

Epidemiology of Lithuanian Homicide

Recent Trends in Lithuanian Homicide

According to data from the United Nations Development Programme,⁶ Lithuania has the 21st highest homicide in the world – only South Africa, Russia, and countries in Central and South America have higher homicide rates. The World Health Organization⁷ has also ranked countries based on their homicide rates and places Lithuania above much of Africa and the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, South America, and a small number of countries in East Asia (Cambodia, North Korea, Myanmar, and the Philippines). Lastly, according to EUROSTAT,⁸ this trend continued up to 2008 in the European context. Currently, Lithuania has seven times the average homicide rate in the EU-27.⁹

Needless to say, the levels of homicide do not flatter Lithuania in an international context.

⁵This software was developed by Luc Anselin and his co-workers in the Department of Geography, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; they are now located at Arizona State University.

⁶This ranking is based on 2000–2004 data. See <<http://www.undp.org/>>.

⁷These results are based on 2004 data supplied to and independently calculated by the WHO. See <<http://www.who.org/>>.

⁸See <<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/>>.

⁹Please see Chapters 4 and 5 in Part 1 of this *Handbook* for more details regarding national variations in homicide rates.

However, it is possible that there is simply more crime in Lithuania, per capita, than in most other countries. Consequently, Lithuanian society may not be more violent than other countries, *per se*, Lithuania just has more of *all* crime. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Based on EUROSTAT data, in Lithuania, homicides accounted for 0.42% of all crimes in 2007. This is the highest for all EU-27 countries, doubling the next highest proportion of homicides, Latvia. Within the EU-15, homicides accounted for 0.02% of all crimes in 2007.

Though organized crime activities increased subsequent to Lithuania's independence from the former Soviet Union and likely contributed to Lithuania's high homicide rate, Lithuania is not the only country to have such issues (Juska, Johnstone, & Pozzuto, 2004). There is indeed something unique to Lithuania that has led to its international ranking in homicide. Needless to say, from an international perspective, Lithuania has both a high homicide rate and an overrepresentation of homicides.

Despite this negative reporting of homicide statistics, the Lithuanian homicide situation has been improving in recent years. From 1970 to the late 1980s, there was a slight increasing trend that spiked in 1994 during the time of severe social, political, and economic adjustment after the collapse of the former Soviet Union. However, as shown in Fig. 28.1, there is a clear downward trend in Lithuanian homicide, 1994–2008. There are two noteworthy spikes in 2000 and 2005, but the homicide rate is currently down by approximately one-third in the years immediately following its independence from the former Soviet Union. Moreover, the homicide rate calculations in Lithuania were changed in 2004. Prior to 2004, the homicide rate included homicide attempts. As such, one would expect there to be a drop in homicides at this point in the time series. Though there was a slight drop from 2003 to 2004, as just mentioned, the homicide rate increased again in 2005. Consequently, the change in the definition of the homicide rate by Statistics Lithuania does not appear to have had much of an impact on the trend of Lithuanian homicide. This claim is substantiated through

inspection of attempted homicide counts, post 2003: attempted homicides are a very small proportion of total homicides.

Regional Distribution of Homicide Rates and Location Quotients

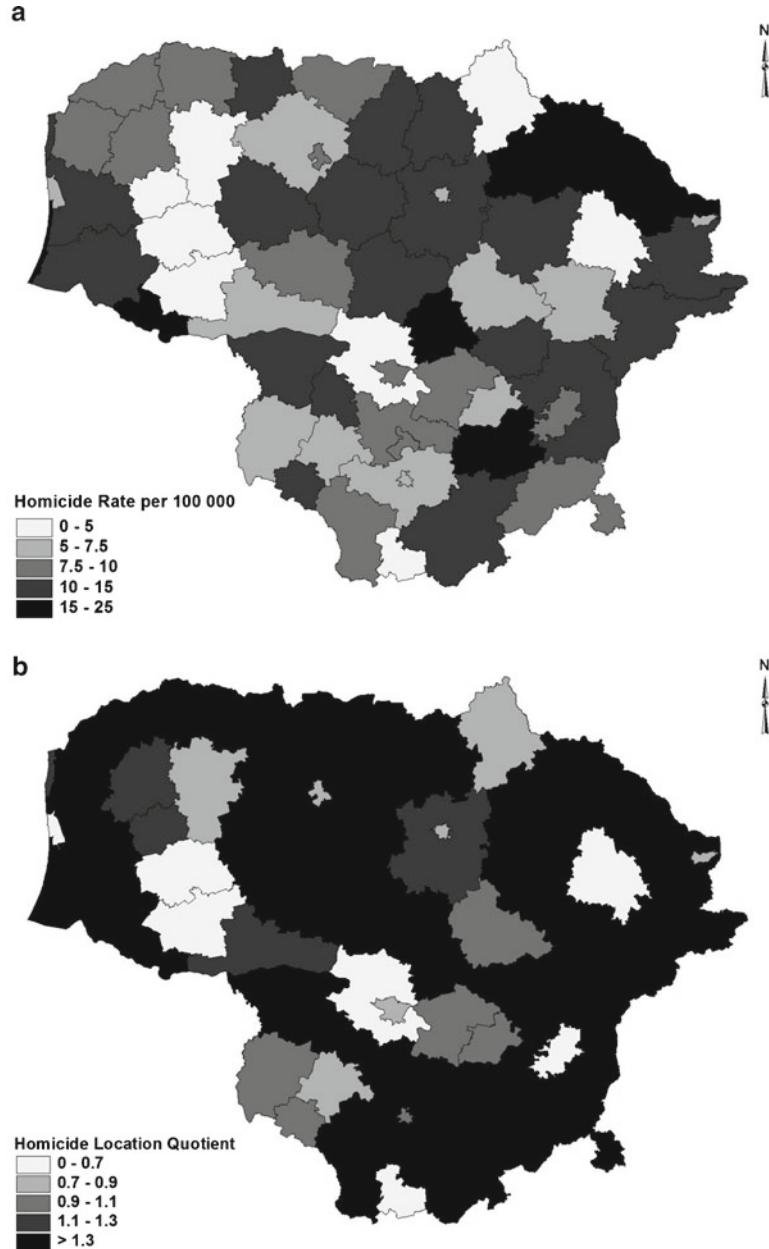
Considering the nation as a whole, Lithuania has a high homicide rate. However, this is not true for all regions within Lithuania. The regional (municipal) distribution of homicide rates (2007–2008) is shown in Fig. 28.2a. Immediately evident is that there is significant variation in homicide rates across the Lithuanian landscape. During the 2001–2002 period, all but one municipality (Neringa municipality) had homicide rates greater than the EU average, but ten municipalities have homicide rates less than or equal to the average in the United States. Investigating the regional distribution of homicide rates in Lithuania reveals that not all Lithuanian municipalities have a particular problem with homicide.

There is little evidence of a spatial pattern to homicide in 2001–2002. There does appear to be greater rates of homicide in Kaunas and Vilnius counties, but the highest legend category on this map (15–25 homicides per 100,000) is represented in a number of municipalities that are not clustered together. Consequently, there is a need for the use of spatial statistics to identify the presence (or lack thereof) of homicide clustering at the municipal level.

The global Moran's I for this map is statistically insignificant indicating that there is no spatial autocorrelation. Therefore, this result indicates that there is no global evidence of municipalities clustering together that have similar homicide rates. However, a local Moran's I analysis reveals some minor clustering of high homicide rate municipalities in Kaunas and Vilnius counties. As such, there is some evidence to support clustering of homicide rates at the municipal level.

Figure 28.2a shows the average homicide rates from 2007 to 2008. Though there are fewer municipalities in the highest legend category,

Fig. 28.2 Regional variations in homicide, Lithuania, 2007–2008. (a) Homicide rate per 100,000. (b) Location quotient. *Source:* Statistics Lithuania



little has changed regarding the number of municipalities within each of the legend categories. Regarding the spatial pattern of homicide rates, it appears as though the municipalities with higher homicide rates (though not the highest) have moved north to Panevezys, Klaipeda, and Siauliai counties.

Similar to the 2001–2002 results, Moran's I is statistically insignificant. With a negative value of Moran's I , this suggests that negative spatial autocorrelation is present to some degree. This claim is supported through a local Moran's I analysis. However, statistically significant clustering is only present for seven municipalities.

Aside from showing that the regional distribution of homicide rates is not uniform across the Lithuanian landscape, nothing particularly interesting is present with the municipal-level homicide rates. The same cannot be said for the homicide location quotients.

Similar to the homicide rates for the same time period, the homicide location quotients appear to cluster in Kaunas and Vilnius counties. The global Moran's I for 2001–2002 is statistically significant indicating there is positive spatial autocorrelation: $I=0.11$, p -value=0.07. However, the local Moran's I reveals very little spatial clustering for the homicide location quotient.

Despite a lack of spatial clustering, the homicide location quotients clearly show that a specialization in homicide is taking place. Moreover, that specialization is taking place in the same areas that have the highest homicide rates. And as would be expected, approximately one-half of the municipalities have homicides as a percentage of all crime that is below the national average.

Turning to the homicide location quotients for 2007–2008, Fig. 28.2b, a very different pattern has emerged.¹⁰ Though there is little evidence for spatial clustering ($I=-0.12$, p -value=0.11) and very few municipalities exhibiting local clustering when considering local Moran's I , there appears to be a shift in the spatial pattern.¹¹ Further spatial statistical testing is necessary to substantiate any such claims and is beyond the scope of this chapter, but homicide specialization appears to be moving toward most of the border municipalities. Additionally, less than one-third of Lithuanian municipalities have homicides as a percentage of all crime that is below the national average. This clearly shows the utility of using other measures than the crime rate to assess change.

Though homicide rates have been falling in Lithuania in recent years, this result does not

bode well for those (new) municipalities with specialization in homicide. Though regional level data are not available to this author, an investigation into alcohol-related mortality and homicide in these municipalities is in order.

Homicide Incident Characteristics

There are a number of variables available that show trends in homicide incident characteristics including juvenile homicides, male vs. female victims of homicide, urban vs. rural residence location of the victim¹² (not necessarily if the homicide itself was urban or rural), the specific location of homicide, and the modus operandus. Statistics regarding these variables are reported in Table 28.1, for the period 2004–2008.¹³

Homicides committed by juveniles are a relatively small percentage of the total. This comes as no surprise as homicide typically has a later peak in its age–crime curve. Notable, however, is the increase in juvenile offenders. The three most recent years do exhibit a decrease in juvenile offenders, but all of these 3 years are greater than the first 2 years of available data. With such a short time series, it is difficult to discuss any (changing) trends, but the appearance of an increase in homicides committed by juveniles definitely deserves future research attention as more data become available.

The percentage of male offenders charged with homicide is also no surprise. Most homicides, indeed most crimes, are committed by males (Boyd, 2000). With approximately 90% of those charged for homicide in Lithuania being male, there is nothing unique regarding this char-

¹⁰The regional (municipal) distribution of homicide location quotients (2001–2002) map is available from Springerlink: www.extras.springer.com.

¹¹The local Moran's I maps for municipal homicide location quotients are available from Springerlink: www.extras.springer.com.

¹²The information provided in these data do not state whether or not the homicide itself was committed in an urban or rural area. Unfortunately, this is not resolved in the specific locations of homicide, as both urban and rural areas contain these specific locations.

¹³Statistics are also available for homicides involving juveniles disaggregated by male female and urban rural. However, the number of observations is low and the corresponding statistics for youth are quite volatile with very little that can be said. Consequently, these more detailed juvenile data are not discussed here.

Table 28.1 Homicide incident characteristics, 2004–2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Gender and urban characteristics</i>					
Juvenile homicides (%)	6.2	5.4	9.3	8.8	7.6
Homicides, charged males (%)	89.9	91.9	91.9	93.0	90.6
Homicide, percent male victim	62.9	70.1	71.5	69.1	73.5
Homicide, percent urban	61.4	45.9	58.7	60.9	60.7
Homicide, percent male victim and urban	63.4	44.7	60.1	61.3	58.9
Homicide, percent female victim and urban	58.1	48.6	55.2	60.0	65.5
<i>Modus operandus characteristics</i>					
Torture (%)	1	1	0	1	0
Strangulation (%)	6	4	4	3	1
Drowning (%)	0	0	0	0	0
Beating (%)	32	30	27	30	30
Firearm (%)	4	3	5	3	3
Strabbing (%)	17	14	1	16	22
Other (%)	41	48	64	48	43

acteristic. Similarly, males are most often the victim of a homicide. When comparing 2004–2008 data, one may be tempted to state an increasing trend in this data series. However, the most recent 4 years of data are relatively constant.

Homicide in Lithuania is an urban phenomenon. Aside from aberrations in the 2005 data, homicides are consistently occurring in urban areas 60% of the time. Additionally, when either males or females are victims of homicides, approximately 60% of those victims reside in urban areas. Though caution must be taken with interpretations of these short time series, it does appear as though there are trends in the data: there appears to be a slight decrease in homicides involving urban males, and a moderate increase in homicides involving urban females.

The specific types of locations at which homicides occur have no variation over this short time frame, so they are not shown in Table 28.1. The majority of homicides (51%) occur within a residence, followed by public/open areas (37%), nonresidential living areas such as cottages, hotels, etc. (5%), other places (4%), and public/interior areas such as hospitals, banks, and restaurants (2%).

Lastly, the modus operandus of homicides (Table 28.1) does exhibit some moderate variation

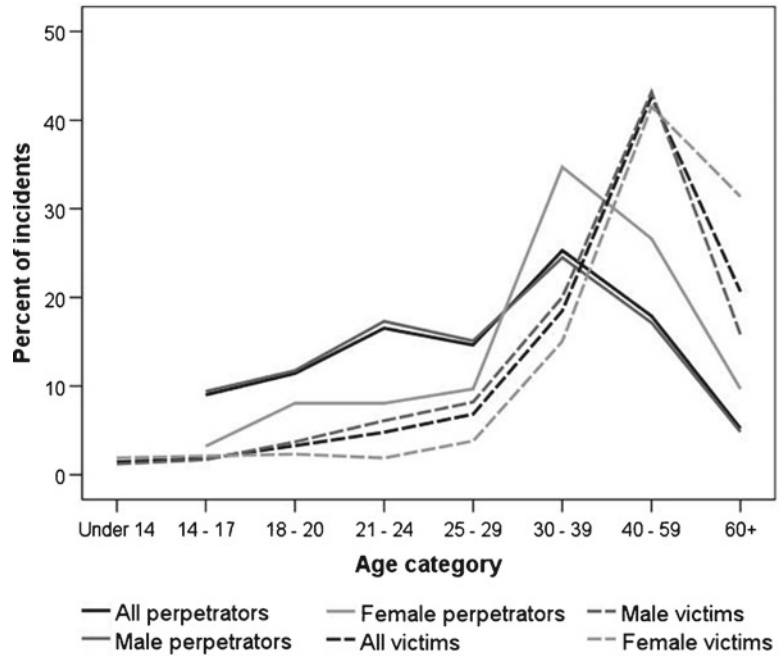
over the time frame. In all years, the most common form of homicide is classified as “other.” Unfortunately, no greater detail is available regarding this classification. Of those homicides with details provided, beatings are the most common, followed by stabbing, firearm, strangulation, torture,¹⁴ and drowning. The low incidence of firearm homicide is also documented in other research (Karp, 2007; UNODC, 2005, 2006, 2008) and is likely a function of the low level of firearms ownership in Lithuania.

Homicide Victim Characteristics

The age breakdown of homicide victims in Lithuania is shown in Fig. 28.3 for all victims, male victims, and female victims. Overall, females are victims of homicide in approximately 31% of the incidents. With females having such high representation in victimization, it is no surprise that all victims, male victims, and female victims have almost identical trends across the age categories. Clearly evident is that the percent of homicide incidents increases with the age categories, the

¹⁴Unfortunately, no details regarding the nature of torture are provided.

Fig. 28.3 Suspect and victim characteristics.
 Source: Statistics Lithuania



highest being those aged 40–59 years. However, this increase is partially artificial because the age categories in the data provided successively include more years.

Homicide Perpetrator Characteristics

The age breakdown of homicide perpetrators in Lithuania is also shown in Fig. 28.3 for all perpetrators, male perpetrators, and female perpetrators. Overall, females are only perpetrators of homicide in approximately 8% of incidents. This result is consistent with previous research on this subject (Boyd, 2000). For perpetrators, females and males have a slightly different pattern. In the case of males, 78% of perpetrators are younger than 40 years, whereas only 64% of female perpetrators are younger than 40 years. Regardless, the majority of homicide perpetrators are less than 30 years of age. The same limitation regarding age categories is also present here for homicide perpetrators, but it is less pronounced because of the dominance of younger male perpetrators.

Explanations for Homicide in Lithuania

The above discussion regarding homicide in Lithuania has been descriptive. Though descriptive statistics may be instructive, inferential analyses are necessary to uncover explanations for a phenomenon such as homicide. Though there is very little research on homicide in Lithuania, two recently published studies are reviewed below. The first covers those years almost immediately after Lithuania declared independence from the former Soviet Union, 1993–2000 (Ceccato, 2008), and the second covers more recent years assessing the impact of Lithuania’s accession to the EU, 2001–2006 (Andresen, 2010).

Similar to the discussion above, Ceccato (2008) finds that Lithuania has had relatively low homicide rates for the past 50 years when compared to Russia, but has had a significantly higher homicide rate than other European countries, particularly during the 1990s. Within the Baltic States, Estonia has historically had higher homicide rates

than Lithuania. Though organized crime is often cited as being behind increases in crime, in general, and homicide, in particular, these only account for approximately 20% of homicides. Almost two-thirds of homicides involve friends or family members and alcohol. This does not bode well for Lithuanian society based on the increased alcohol consumption and alcohol-related mortality discussed above. Though homicide rates are falling (more than 30% during the 1990s), this may prove to be problematic in the future.

With regard to the regional distribution of homicide rates, Ceccato (2008) finds that Lithuanian homicide is higher in urban areas, particularly in the counties and municipalities mentioned above. These are the most densely populated areas and relatively affluent. The similarities in the regional distribution of homicide rates in Ceccato (2008) and presented above bodes well for ecological stability and inferential explanations for homicide in Lithuania at the municipal level.

In the inferential/explanatory analysis of homicide in Ceccato (2008), all Baltic States are analyzed collectively using a spatial statistical regression approach. The analysis is performed on 2000 data. Although the results presented by Ceccato (2008) are general for all of the Baltic States, specification tests were performed in order to identify statistically significant differences in the results. Only the results that are applicable to Lithuania are discussed here.

Ceccato (2008) puts forth a number of hypotheses to test with regard to homicide. She expects that reductions in population, signs of deprivation and social isolation, low levels of social care, higher divorce rates, and low voter turn-out lead to increases in homicide. These hypotheses are operationalized using the following set of explanatory variables: Divorce rate, deaths under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births, hospital beds per 1,000, gross domestic product per capita, foreign direct investment per capita, proportions of males 15–29, proportions of non-native population, natural (population) increase, net migration, voter turn-out, border regions, and population density.

The most important aspect of the analysis performed by Ceccato (2008) is the reliance on

Western theories of crime to explain homicide in a transition economy. Many of these variables may be classified within social disorganization theory (Shaw & McKay, 1931, 1942) and are commonplace in ecological analyses of crime in Western contexts. Though not all variables are shown to be statistically significant, the explanatory power of these variables, discussed below, reveals that homicide in transition economies follows similar patterns as their Western counterparts – Pridemore (2005), Pridemore and Kim (2007), and Pridemore and Shkolnikov (2004) have also found that similar variables perform well in ecological analyses of homicide in transitional Russia.

The explanatory power of the homicide model still leaves much variation unaccounted for ($R^2=0.232$), but a number of key results manifest from the analysis. First, the divorce rate is found to vary positively with homicide in Lithuania. Second, the increased presence of young males leads to increases in homicide. And third, the increased presence of non-native populations leads to increases in homicide.

Ceccato (2008) suggests that increases in divorce lead to increases in homicide because of the strain on families that resulted from the transition from a planned to a market economy. Recalling the proportion of homicides that involved family members and alcohol, this is a plausible explanation. However, it may also be the case that the standard social disorganization theory explanation applies: areas with higher divorce rates have more difficulty establishing a community that can repel crime – a socially organized area. This difficulty arises because more divorces usually mean more single-parent families and less time to interact with neighbours. The increased presence of young males is easily understood within the age–crime curve and the overrepresentation of males in criminal activity (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Steffensmeier & Allan, 1996). And the presence of non-native populations may be tied back to social disorganization through ethnic heterogeneity; areas with greater levels of ethnic heterogeneity have greater difficulty establishing social organization because of difficulties communicating or long-standing

ethnic conflicts leading to higher levels of crime (homicide).

Lastly, Ceccato (2008) finds that the divorce rate, young male population, and non-native population are more powerful in explaining homicide than other variables such as foreign direct investment and geography (border regions). This bodes well for the use of Western theories in transition economies for understanding homicide.

Turning to the second study, Andresen (2010) focuses solely on Lithuanian municipalities. In his analysis, Andresen (2010) discusses homicide, rape, and robbery, but only the homicide context is discussed here. Methodologically, Andresen's (2010) analysis takes a different approach than Ceccato (2008). Rather than analyzing a spatial cross-section, Andresen (2010) makes use of a panel data set: 59 Lithuanian municipalities across time, 2001–2006.¹⁵ Through the use of a panel data set and the appropriate statistical procedure (fixed effects estimation), a better indication of causality may be garnered from the results. When using a spatial cross-section, the research question one is implicitly asking is whether the spatial distribution of one variable coincides with the spatial distribution of another. This allows for the following type of question to be answered: is the homicide rate high in the same places that the divorce rate is high? Though instructive, the explanatory power (in terms of causality) is limited. In a panel data analysis, the investigation involves asking: Do changes in one variable lead to corresponding changes in another variable?

Andresen's (2010) research context is an investigation of the impact of accession to the EU on violent crime in Lithuania. Though the transition to membership in the EU is not as abrupt as the transition from a planned to a market economy, it is a transition nonetheless that is expected to disrupt aspects of society. Andresen (2010) takes an explicitly Western theoretical approach, invoking variable selection from social disorganization theory and routine activity theory (Cohen

& Felson, 1979; Felson & Cohen, 1980, 1981): population density, average monthly income, relative income,¹⁶ divorce rate, unemployment rate, high school graduates, university graduates, and number of police per 1,000 population.¹⁷

The explanatory power of the model for homicide is moderate (Adjusted $R^2=0.36$). More importantly, variable retention and the corresponding interpretations for the homicide model are far superior to the rape and robbery results. He finds that increases in population density, income, unemployment, and university graduates lead to increases in the homicide rate. Though some of these relationships are not expected within the theories put forth, Andresen (2010) explains these results are relating to urban environments. As discussed above, and found in Ceccato (2008), Lithuanian homicide is an urban phenomenon. Population density is a proxy for urbanization and higher incomes and university graduates are more likely to be found in urban areas. He also finds that increases in relative income and divorce rates lead to decreases in the homicide rate. The negative relationship between relative income and homicide is an expected result, but not for the divorce rate – Ceccato (2008) found a positive relationship between divorce and homicide, as discussed above. However, Andresen (2010) explains this result appealing to levels of religiosity in Lithuania. In Lithuania, religiosity decreases with income; as such, municipalities with higher levels of income have higher levels of divorce and lower rates of homicide. This is consistent with social disorganization theory.

Turning to the results for the impact of accession to the EU, the trend in the homicide rate was decreasing before accession to the EU (see Fig. 28.2) and decreased at a faster rate after accession to the EU. However, there was an abrupt upward shift in the homicide rate at the time Lithuania

¹⁵One municipality is excluded because of data availability, Alytus town municipality.

¹⁶Relative income is measured as the ratio of the municipality's average income to national income.

¹⁷Andresen (2009b) uses a similar set of variables in an investigation of property crime in Lithuania. The theoretical construct, however, is Cantor and Land's (1985) model of unemployment and crime.

joined the EU similar to when Lithuania began the transition to a market economy (Värnik et al., 2003). Consequently, a faster decrease in the homicide rate post-EU is a good finding for Lithuanian society, but it comes at a cost of a sharp one-time increase in the homicide rate. This is interpreted as capturing changes in social organization and routine activities that are not captured in the list of explanatory variables.

Overall, Andresen (2010) is able to show that Western ecological theories of crime are able to be used successfully in the transition country of Lithuania, confirming the previous work of Ceccato (2008) on Lithuania and Pridemore (2005), Pridemore and Kim (2007), and Pridemore and Shkolnikov (2004) on transitional Russia. As such, homicide in Lithuanian municipalities may be (partially) explained using Western ecological theories of crime. This is an important finding because new or altered theoretical frameworks do not need to be generated to understand homicide in this transition economy.

Concluding Remarks

Homicide in Lithuania is an interesting case study, because it is so high in an international context. Moreover, because Lithuania is now a member of the EU that has some of the lowest homicide rates in the world, it will prove interesting how Lithuania adjusts to its now social, political, and economic reality. With so little information known about transition economies with regard to homicide and the availability of data from Statistics Lithuania, it is expected that Lithuania will become a research interest for many scholars in the future.

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Introduction

This chapter discusses homicide in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Given its greater population, geographic size, geopolitical presence, and more readily available data, we focus on Russia, though where possible we also provide information about Ukraine and Belarus. For a number of reasons, these post-Soviet countries deserve special attention when considering homicide in Europe. First, the social, economic, and political turmoil experienced by many former Soviet countries following the collapse of the Soviet Union was accompanied by a sharp rise in all-cause mortality. In particular, deaths from homicide increased sharply in many of these nations. In 2003, the Russian homicide rate of over 21/100,000 residents annually (MVD RF, 2010) was the highest in Europe (World Health Organization, 2010a) and one of the highest in the world (Krug et al., 2002). Even though Ukrainian and Belorussian homicide rates are lower than in Russia, they are still very high relative to other countries in the European Region (6.46 and 8.53/100,000, respectively, in 2005) (Tenth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, 2005–2006). Further, despite much greater politi-

cal and economic stability in these nations over the last several years compared to the mid-1990s, homicide rates have not decreased as drastically as they increased during that earlier period.

Second, given the sweeping scale of socio-economic and political change in the 1990s in Russia and Ukraine, and to a lesser extent Belarus, these nations may serve as natural experiments for testing various sociological and criminological theories, especially those related to anomie, as potential explanations for the increase in homicide rates (Kim & Pridemore, 2005; Pridemore, Chamlin, & Cochran, 2007; Pridemore & Kim, 2006). Recent research also revealed several other factors that help to explain the variation of homicide rates in these countries, including specific historical conditions, hazardous alcohol consumption, social structural factors like poverty and family instability, and individual-level factors like education and marriage (Andrienko, 2001; Chervyakov, Shkolnikov, Pridemore, & McKee, 2002; Pridemore, 2002, 2004, 2005; Pridemore & Shkolnikov, 2004; Stickley & Pridemore, 2007).

Third, a few specific characteristics of homicide in these three nations require special consideration and explanation when compared to other European nations. These include the low proportion of homicides committed by firearms, the higher homicide rate in rural relative to urban areas, vast regional differences in homicide rates (e.g., in Russia, regional homicide rates range from a low of around six per 100,000 in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria to over

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130/100,000 in the Republic of Tyva), and the changing nature of homicide in contemporary Russia (Chervyakov et al., 2002; Pridemore, 2006a).

Finally, the legacy of the Soviet era – when crime data were strictly controlled and often falsified when made public – and the ongoing lack of clear and transparent homicide reporting systems in these countries, raise serious concerns about the veracity of the official homicide statistics (Pridemore, 2003a). Hence, the comparability of the two main sources of homicide estimates in Russia, crime data from the Ministry of the Interior and mortality data from the vital statistics, registration system will be examined.

Background

Political Structure

The Russian Federation (RF) came into existence in 1991 after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Ukraine became an independent state after a referendum on December 1, 1991. The Republic of Belarus' Declaration of Independence was signed in July 1990. Each of these countries is a Presidential republic with executive, legislative, and judicial branches and, to varying degrees, democratic elections. There are, however, essential differences in political climate between these nations. Ukraine has had stronger democratic tendencies over the last decade, demonstrated by intense political struggle between different political parties. The Russian Federation, on the other hand, has essentially turned to a “one party state” with one political party, United Russia, that enjoys the unabated support of the Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and that has consolidated enormous political power by suppressing its competitors. While Belarus is formally a democratic presidential republic, it is in fact a “mild type” of dictatorship with Alexander Lukashenko as dictator (CIA, 2010).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, there was a sweeping transition from a command economy toward a free-market democracy, during which the citizens of each of these

three nations experienced swift, widespread, and profound political, economic, and social change. It was a time of emergence of new economic and political philosophies and newfound individual freedoms, as well as a period of disruption of formal social control and conventional social institutions and a time of multiple social problems, including high levels of poverty, unemployment, increasing inequality, and a mortality crisis (Kim & Pridemore, 2005; Walberg, McKee, Shkolnikov, Chenet, & Leon, 1998). During the 1990s, there was growing economic polarization of the population, with an impoverished majority and a *nouveau riche* minority (the “New Russians”) that is a source of continuing social conflict (Gilinskiy, 2005). According to official data, the ratio between the incomes of the bottom 10% and top 10% increased from 1:4.5 in 1991 to 1:15 in 1999. In the opinion of some experts, the actual ratio between the incomes of the highest and lowest 10% is as high as 25 to 1 in Russia (Human Development Report in the Russian Federation 1999; Just and Unjust Inequality in Contemporary Russia 2003) and 60 to 1 in Moscow (Gilinskiy, 2005).

Population

The Russian Federation occupies one of the largest territories in the world, with over 17 million square kilometers. The population of these three former Soviet republics, including Russia, has steadily declined since the early 1990s. The Russian Federation grew from 103 million residents in 1951 to 149 million in 1991, then declined to 139 by 2010, which translates to a negative population growth rate of -0.47% annually (CIA, 2010). The most rapid depopulation has taken place in Ukraine, which had a population of 45 million in 2010 and was experiencing a population growth rate -0.62% . Belarus has about ten million residents and a population growth rate of -0.37% (CIA).

Among these three former Soviet countries, Russia has the most uneven population distribution over its enormous territory. Russians predominantly (78% of the population) live in the

European part of the country (west of the Ural Mountains), with less than one-quarter of the population living in the vast Asiatic sector (west Siberia, east Siberia, and the Russian Far East). About 75% of the population of each of the three nations lives in urban areas, and the sex ratio – 46% men and 54% women – is nearly the same in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Police

There are two branches of the executive power in each of these three countries dealing with homicide: the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD in Russian) and the office of the public prosecutor (*Prokuratura* in Russian). The Criminal Militia Department of the MVD is in charge of registering and investigating homicides. In addition to supervising the execution of the law, the office of the public prosecutor in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus also investigates homicide on its own. This incongruous practice, left over from the Soviet era, serves as one of the factors conducive to the distortion and confusion of the criminological statistical data, including homicide (Luneev, 2005: 301).

Due to the legacy of the Soviet era's extended police network on the one hand and the current paramilitarization of the police (Galeotti, 2010) on the other, the already inflated staff of the MVD is constantly growing despite President Medvedev's call to decrease its size by 20% by 2012. The number of MVD personnel in Russia is estimated at nearly 1.4 million, resulting in a high ratio of one militia staffer for about every 100 citizens (Galeotti). According to Galeotti's (2010) estimates, however, the true officer-to-citizen ratio may be 1:267 for Russia (compare to 1:429 in the UK and 1:380 in the US) because of the large number of bureaucrats, which may comprise nearly 870,000 of the overall number. Belarus has the largest number of law enforcement staff per capita among the post-Soviet states, with about 1,400 militia members per 100,000 residents (Belarus Leading in Number of Militia Staff, 2010). According to the same survey, Russia is ranked second with 976 law

enforcement officers per 100,000 residents. Despite such an inflated militia staff and growing paramilitarization of the police, Russian citizens tend to express growing distrust toward the police, which has been exacerbated by a large number of killings by police officers (Levada Center, 2004; Luneev, 2005).

Alcohol Use

Since heavy population drinking has been shown to be strongly associated with cross-sectional and temporal homicide rates in Russia (Pridemore, 2002; Pridemore & Chamlin, 2006), we briefly describe the main patterns and trends in alcohol consumption in Russia and also in Ukraine and Belarus. Alcohol-related harm is considered by many to be a national disaster in Russia (Denisova, 2010a; Leon et al., 2007; Leon, Shkolnikov, & McKee, 2009; Nemtsov, 2002; Pridemore, 2004; Zaridze et al., 2009). Following artificially low levels of consumption during the anti-alcohol campaign of the mid-1980s (officially 3.9 L per person, with Nemtsov's (2006) estimates of 10.6 L per person), drinking increased following the campaign, increased again during and after the collapse of the Soviet Union in early 1990s, and again at periods during the last decade. In 2008, annual consumption was estimated to be nearly 18 L of pure ethanol per person (Shuster, 2009). Illegal alcohol, non-beverage alcohol surrogates, and home-produced alcohol have made up a substantial proportion of overall consumption for the last 20 years (Kalabekov, 2007; Kharchenko et al., 2005; McKee et al., 2005; Nemtsov, 2004; Tapilina, 2007; Zaigraev, 2009). In spite of recent proportional increases in beer consumption (Denisova, 2010b; Tapilina, 2007), Russians still prefer distilled spirits, mainly vodka, to wine and beer, and exhibit a pattern of heavy episodic binge drinking, both of which likely increase alcohol-related harm (Leon et al., 2007; Pridemore, 2002, 2006b). The age at which Russians begin consuming alcohol has been decreasing and the proportion of women who drink alcohol has been increasing (Tapilina, 2007; Zaigraev, 2009). There is a growing body of

empirical evidence that reveals a strong association between heavy drinking and wide variety of harm in Russia, including family disruption, reduced economic productivity, alcohol dependence, alcoholic psychosis and poisoning, traffic accidents, assaults, criminal behavior, unintentional injury, and homicide and suicide.

While Russian levels of consumption and alcohol-related harm are exceptional relative to other European nations, some neighboring nations share similar patterns. The average rate of hard alcohol consumption is nine liters and above per person in Belarus and Ukraine. Data on high rates of unregistered alcohol consumption (WHO, 2004) and alcohol poisoning (Levchuk, 2009; Stickley & Razvodovsky, 2009) in these countries provide further proof of the similarities in alcohol consumption in these former Soviet states. However, in comparison to Russians, Ukrainians drink somewhat less recorded alcohol, but consume more unrecorded alcohol (Global Status Report on Alcohol, 2004), though alcohol-related problems appear to be somewhat lower in Ukraine relative to Russia when measured by the amount of alcohol consumed and the consequences for population health (Levchuk, 2009). Still, while these neighboring nations share similar alcohol-related problems, Russia stands out. The hazardous drinking pattern scores developed by Rehm et al. (2002), for example, show Russia and Belarus with the highest scores.

Firearms

Post-Soviet countries traditionally have very low firearm availability and hence much lower gun homicide rates and proportions of all homicides committed by guns (Pridemore, 2006a). For example, the percentage of intentional homicides committed with a firearm in Ukraine and Belarus was around 3.5 and 1.3% in 2005, respectively (Tenth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, 2005–2006). In Russia, knives and other sharp instruments are the most common weapons used in homicides, with firearms being the primary means of assault in fewer than 10% of cases,

which is consistent with other countries in the region, including Poland.

Sources of Homicide Data

During the Soviet era, access to data on crime and violence in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus was heavily restricted. Raw data were simply unavailable to the public, and the information released by authorities was notoriously elliptic and often falsified (Butler, 1992; Godek, 1998; Pridemore, 2003b). Today, information on homicide is available from two main official sources in Russia, crime data and vital statistics data (Pridemore, 2003a).

Data about crime and homicide in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus are available from the police agencies (MVD) in each nation. These are often provided in annual MVD publications and show rates for the various provinces, by weapon type, under the influence of alcohol, etc. There are several serious concerns about the police data that likely result in a large underenumeration of the true homicide rate (Chervyakov et al., 2002; Godek, 1998; Luneev, 2005; Pridemore, 2003a). In his yearly speech in 2005 to Russian prosecutors, General Prosecutor Vladimir Ustinov stated that only about 25% of all decedents received an autopsy, and often a forensic physician is not called to the scene of an apparent homicide (Ustinov, 2005). Police officials have a vested interest in lower homicide rates, and Gilinskiy (2005) points out that since 1993–1994, there has been a massive cover-up that has prevented a large number of crimes from being officially recorded (see also Luneev, 1997). One piece of evidence that points to this cover-up is the suspiciously high clearance rate. Further, some criminological studies show that the ratio between the actual and recorded number of assaultive crimes in 2002 was 1.17 for homicide and 1.18 for grievous bodily harm (cited by Gilinskiy, 2005).

Another concern about the specificity of the police data on homicide in Russia comes from the peculiar way it is registered by official police agencies. The crime reporting system, for example, includes attempted homicides. Without

access to unpublished MVD data, there is no way to extract the number of attempts (Luneev, 2005; Pridemore, 2003b), though attempts appear to consist of between 5 and 10% of the overall number of homicides reported annually (Pridemore, 2005), with 9.1% in 2000 (Luneev, 2005: 419). In addition, intentional homicide of two or more people in Russia is registered as one crime committed under aggravated circumstances (Luneev, 2005: 408). In other words, the crime reporting system in Russia registers *events* and *not victims* (Luneev, 2005: 409). According to this, homicide of tens or hundreds of people resulting from a bomb explosion would be recoded as one crime, as defined in paragraphs “a” and “e” of Part 2 of Article 105 of the Criminal Code (homicide of two or more people committed in the way dangerous for the community).

Another difference of defining and registering homicide in Russia relative to other countries is how long after the violent act the death occurs. For example, in the United States, a criminal homicide is defined as “any death caused by injuries received in a fight, argument, quarrel, assault, or commission of a crime is classified as Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter (1a)” (Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook, 2004: 15). This is not the case in Russia. If the person died not during the attack but later, the event would be registered as intentional grievous bodily harm leading to death (Part 4 Article 111 of the Criminal Code) and would not be included in the homicide category. Nearly 70,000 intentional grievous bodily harm crimes are annually registered in Russia, about one-third of which end with the death of the victim and are not registered as an intentional homicide (Luneev, 2005: 409). In addition, 25,000 people are declared missing every year, and a nearly comparable number of unidentifiable corpses are discovered every year. In the military, from 5,000 to 6,000 die every year, excluding those involved in warfare. Many of these decedents die due to accidents related to military service, suicide, and violent unregulated hazing rituals (*dedovshina*) and abuse of power by older soldiers that often takes sadistic forms (Gilinskiy, 2005; Spivak & Pridemore, 2004). Luneev (2005: 409) estimates that adding all this

up would result in the true homicide rate in Russia being 4–5 times higher than the officially recorded rate.

An alternative source of information on homicide is provided by vital statistics data. The vital statistics reporting system includes legal interventions, executions, and justifiable homicides by civilians. Even in a well-functioning system, the crime rate as measured by victimization surveys is three or four times as high as the recorded crime rate (Gilinskiy, 2005). Though data from population-level victimization surveys are not available in Russia, medical statistics provided to the World Health Organization by the Russian Ministry of Health support this assumption. The WHO and police recorded homicide rates for Russia in 1992 were 22.9 and 15.5/100,000 residents, respectively; in 1993, 30.4 and 19.6; in 1994, 32.3 and 21.8, in 2002, 30.8 and 22.5, in 2003, 29.5 and 22.1 (cited by Gilinskiy, 2005: 272; see Pridemore 2003a, for a detailed comparison of homicide estimates from the crime and vital statistics reporting systems). Vital statistics data also contain error. For example, there may be accidental or purposeful misclassification of cause of death, especially when human, medical, and monetary resources are limited (Pridemore). But despite some inevitable flaws of the vital statistics, the mortality system still reports many more homicides in the country than the crime system.

Patterns of Homicide

In the early twenty-first century, the Russian homicide rate was the highest in Europe and one of the highest in the world (Krug et al., 2002; World Health Organization, 2010a, 2010b). However, the homicide rate had varied greatly during the most of the twentieth century. The mean regional homicide victimization rate during 1909–1911 in the 50 provinces of “European” Russia was 7.9/100,000 residents. There was considerable variation during this period, with the rate ranging from a low of 3.2 in the province of Courland (in the Baltic region) to a high of 18.6 in Novgorod Oblast (see Stickley &

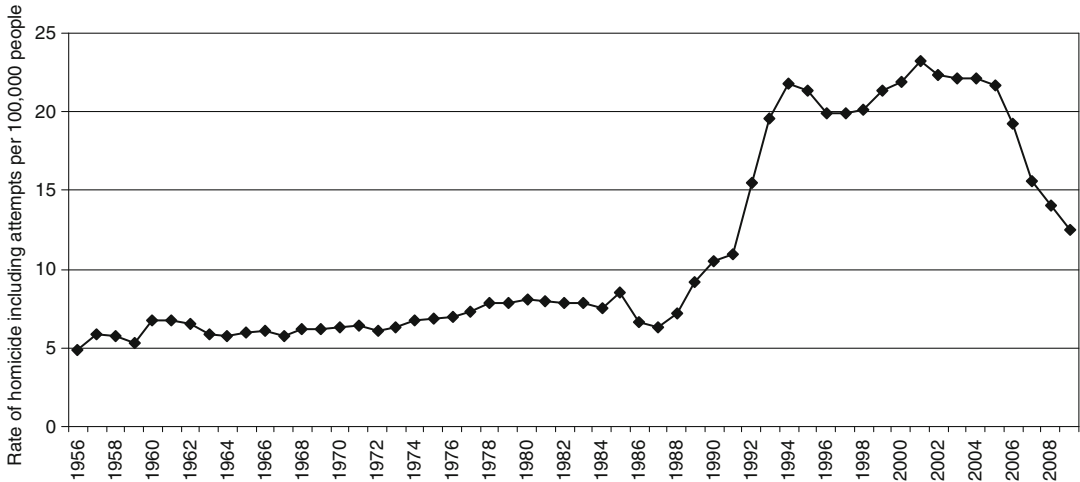


Fig. 29.1 Police-recorded homicide (including attempts) rate per 100,000 residents in the USSR (1956–1984) and the Russian Federation (1985–2009). *Source:* Data for the

USSR (1965–1984) come from Luneev (2005: 413–414) and for Russia (1985–2005) from Gilinskiy (2006), 2006–2009 (MVD, Official site, 2010)

Pridemore, 2007). The overall rate of about 8/100,000 resident at that time was very similar to recent estimates of the US homicide rate around 1910 (Eckberg, 1995). At the beginning of the 1930s, the Soviet authorities for different reasons decided to withhold all statistical information relating to crime and “unacceptable” causes of death including homicide (Godek, 1998; McKee & Leon, 1994; Stickley & Pridemore, 2007), and hence patterns, trends, and rates of homicide in Russia remained hidden for the most of the twentieth century. Political changes at the end of 1980s resulted in the eventual release of criminal justice and vital statistics data on homicide (Gilinskiy, 2005; Luneev, 2005; Pridemore, 2003a).

In the post-WWII period until “perestroika” in 1987, the rate of police-recorded homicide fluctuated between 5 and 8 homicides per 100,000 residents (Pridemore, 2003b), which was comparable to the corresponding level in the US for the same period (Fox & Zawitz, 2003) and well exceeded the homicide rate in the developed European countries (Eisner, 2001). Earlier data suggest that the high homicide rates observed in the post-war period may have been the continuation of a relatively high rate that was in existence at the end of the nineteenth century (Eisner, 2003)

and that continued over to the Communist period (Stickley & Mäkinen, 2005). Figure 29.1 shows that the homicide rate (including attempts) grew considerably during the transition period after 1987 and reached its peak at 22 police-recorded homicides per 100,000 population in 1994, and then again peaked at 23 in 2001. There is a notable decline in the police-recorded homicide rate from 19 in 2006 to 13 in 2009, which some Russian criminologists consider as an artificial tampering with the statistical data (Gilinskiy, 2005; Luneev, 2005). For example, professor and former colonel of militia Babaev has openly stated that he does not believe any number published officially by the MVD, calling crime statistics in Russia an unscrupulous lie (Babaev versus Veller, 2009). He argues that there is no possible realistic explanation for such an unprecedented decline in homicide rate, and at the same time he points out the rise in the number of the unidentified bodies (Babaev versus Veller, 2009). Moreover, there was an unofficial instruction from above to register homicide (article 105 Criminal Code of RF) only if the person dies at the crime scene. In all other cases (e.g., the victim died later in the hospital), the event is to be registered as heavy injuries leading to death (article 111, part 4) and hence not included in the official homicide statistics

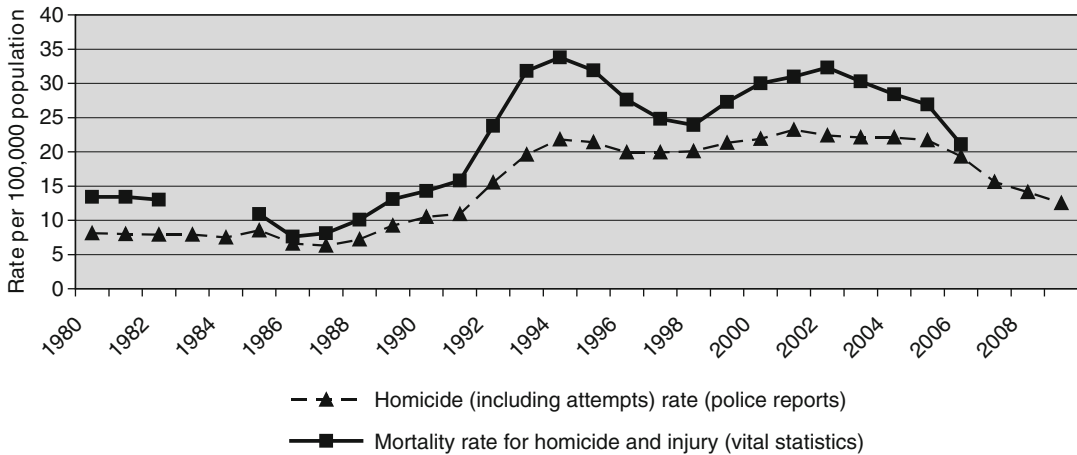


Fig. 29.2 Police-recorded homicide rate (including attempts) per 100,000 residents (police reports) and mortality rate per 100,000 residents for homicide and injury purposely inflicted by other persons (vital statistics) for

1980–2009. *Source:* Police-recorded data are from Luneev (2005) for 1980–1984, Gilinskiy (2006) for 1985–2005, MVD RF (2010) for 2006–2009. Vital statistics data are from WHO (2010b)

data (Gilinskiy, personal communication with the first author, May 6, 2010).

Given the differences between crime data and vital statistics data for homicide considered above, Fig. 29.2 provides available data on police-recorded data and mortality data for homicide and injuries for the period 1956–2009. As we can see, the trends in both police-recorded homicide and vital statistics mortality seem to follow each other (sharp increase from 1992 with its peak in 1994 and then a new rise after the economic crisis in 1998 with the peak in 2001–2002), though homicide estimates from the mortality data significantly exceed those from the crime data for the same years. In their analysis of changing homicide rates in Russia, Pridemore and Kim (2007) found that the mean change in regional (i.e., provincial) homicide rates between 1991 and 2000 was an increase of about 14 homicides per 100,000 persons, or an average increase of nearly 100% over 1991 rates. Of the 78 regions in their analysis, all but one experienced an increase in homicide rates between 1991 and 2000 (the rate in the Kursk Oblast decreased by less than 1 homicide per 100,000 persons).

As for the gender differences in the rates of homicide in Russia (victimization rate provided by vital statistics data for 1980–2006) (WHO

mortality database, 2010a), the male homicide rate was significantly higher than the female rate with a male–female rate ratio of 2.8 in 1980 increasing to 3.7 in 1994 and then slightly decreasing to 3.5 by 2006. Figure 29.3 shows that the male mortality rate for homicide and intentional injury increased about 70% (from 19.6 to 32.8/100,000 of population) in Russia from 1980 to 2006, while the female rate increased about 30% (from 7.1 to 9.4/1,000,000 of population) from 1980 to 2006. It can also be seen that the apex for male and female mortality rate for homicide and intentional injury was reached in 1994, with rates of 53 and 15 deaths per 100,000 population, respectively, confirming that males and females have undergone different mortality experiences, with males increasingly over-represented in death (Godek, 1998; Leon et al., 2007; Men, Brennan, Boffetta, & Zaridze, 2003; Notzon et al., 1998; Pridemore, 2003b; Shkolnikov, McKee, & Leon, 2001; Watson, 1995).

In recent years, Belarus and Ukraine experienced a similar pattern of changes in homicide rate to that seen in Russia and other countries in the European part of the former Soviet Union such as the Baltic States: a rapid rise in the period 1990–1995, after which their rates stabilized and then fell. However, even after this fall,

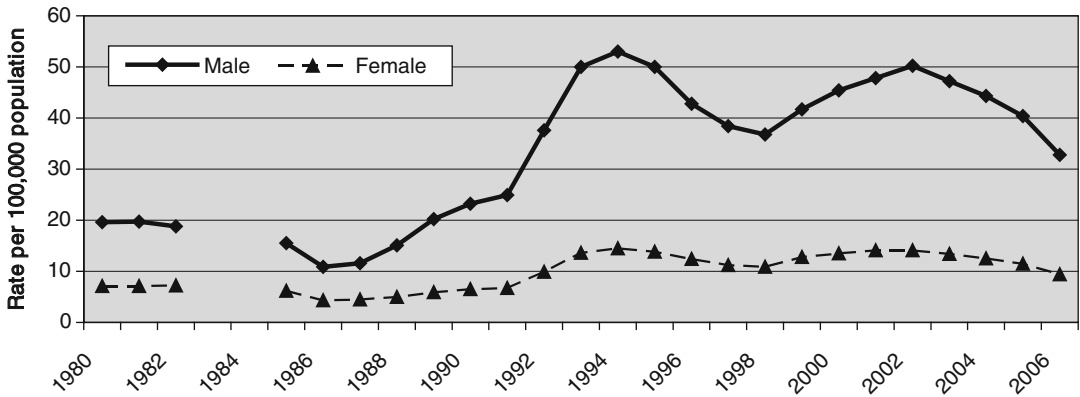


Fig. 29.3 Sex-specific mortality rate per 100,000 residents for homicide and injury purposely inflicted by other persons in Russia, 1980–2006. *Source:* WHO (2010b)

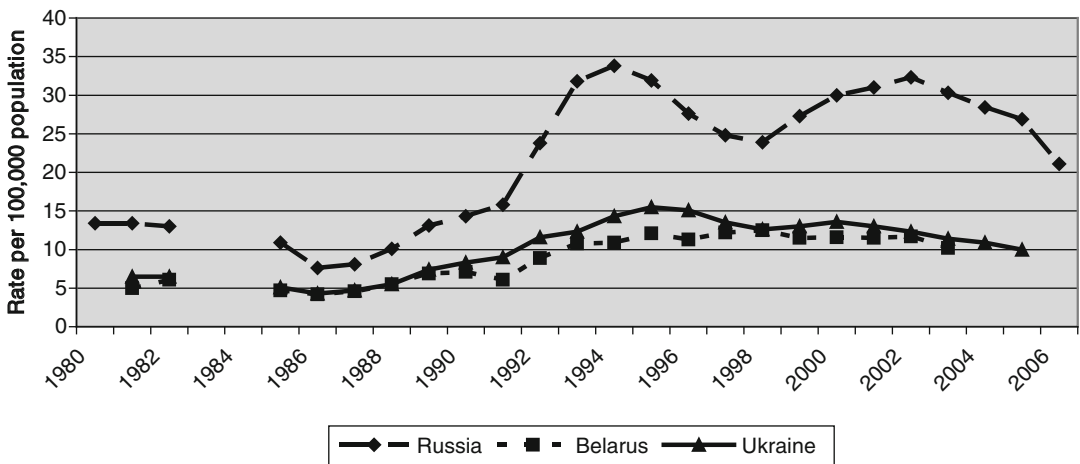


Fig. 29.4 Mortality rate per 100,000 residents for homicide and injury purposely inflicted by other persons in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, 1980–2006. *Source:* WHO (2010b)

the police-recorded homicide rate in Belarus in 2005 (8.4/100,000 residents) was still 19% above its 1990 level and over seven times higher than the rate in the European Union (Tenth United Nations Survey, 2005–2006). Even though the Ukrainian homicide rate, at 6.5/100,000 in 2005, is lower than that in Belarus, it is still much higher than the rate in the European Union (Tenth United Nations Survey). Comparing the mortality rates for homicide and intentional injury in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, Fig. 29.4 shows that Russia stands out with a homicide mortality rate

ratio of 2.4 with Ukraine and 3.1 with Belarus in 1994 (World Health Organization, 2010b).

As with Russia and other nations, the victims of homicide and intentional injuries leading to death in Belarus and Ukraine are most often males, though the gender gap in homicide victimization rates is lower in Belarus and Ukraine than in Russia. For example, in 1994, the male–female rate ratio was 3.2 in Ukraine, 2.8 in Belarus, and 3.7 in Russia.

One of the conspicuous characteristics of homicide in Russia (as well as in Ukraine and Belarus) is the higher homicide rate in rural

relative to urban areas (Chervyakov et al., 2002; Iliashenko, 2003a; Pridemore, 2003b; Stickley, Leinsalu, & Razvodovsky, 2007). This may be indicative of the differential development of urban centers in Russia (as well as Belarus and Ukraine) and other European countries, including the U.S. For example, in the United States, urban neighborhoods became increasingly segmented along racial and class lines, resulting in ghettos characterized by racial segregation, concentrated disadvantage, and high crime rates (Wilson, 1987, 1996). In Russia, on the other hand, urbanization did not occur on a large scale until well into the twentieth century, and Soviet economic and migration policies created an urban landscape that was more egalitarian and that lacked areas of concentrated disadvantage (Pridemore & Kim, 2007). The increase in homicide rates for both sexes amongst nearly all age groups in rural areas compared to urban areas during the transition may be also ascribed to the impoverishment of the countryside after 1995, depopulation, rising alcohol abuse, and deteriorating health care in rural regions (Stickley et al., 2007).

Another curious feature is the regional distribution of homicide rates in Russia and Ukraine, where there is a general increase from West to East (Andrienko, 2001; Men et al., 2003; Pridemore, 2003b; Statistics of death and trauma in Ukraine in 2007–2008, 2009). Moreover, regional homicide rates in Russia vary tremendously, ranging from a low of 7/100,000 in Kabardino-Balkaria to a high of 135 in Tyva (Antonov-Romanovskiy, 2000).

Incident Characteristics of Homicide

When discussing victim, offender, and event characteristics of homicide in Russia, we must keep in mind our earlier discussion of police data and note that incident characteristics are much determined by whether the offender was found (Alimov & Antonov-Romanovskiy, 2000; Pridemore & Eckhardt, 2008). For example, there are conspicuous differences in victim characteristics in cleared relative to unsolved homicides. Alimov and Antonov-Romanovskiy (2000)

undertook a comparative analysis of solved and unsolved homicides in Moscow. They found that cleared homicides took place mainly between relatives and acquaintances in the apartment or flat of the victim or the offender. The leading motives were arguments, revenge, and fights in 40% of homicides, jealousy in 7%, and other emotional reasons in 30–35%. Profit was the motive in about 10–15% of homicides. Females were victims in every third homicide and the weapon of choice was mostly a knife. In unsolved homicides, on the other hand, the event mostly took place in the doorways, stairwells, and courtyards of apartment buildings. Most of the victims were males (85%) with a university education (8 times greater than for cleared homicides), and 31% were private businessmen (18 times greater than solved homicides). Every fourth homicide was committed with the firearm (5 times more solved homicides) with a profit motive in 38% of cases, profit revenge in 14%, and to hide another crime (7%) (Alimov & Antonov-Romanovskiy).

Based on a set of detailed narratives containing extensive information about homicide events in the Udmurt Republic, Pridemore and Eckhardt (2008) found systematic differences between homicides in which alcohol was involved and absent and provided an alcohol-based typology of homicide. Alcohol-related homicides were significantly more likely to occur overnight, on weekends, and to result from acute arguments, and they were significantly less likely to occur between strangers, to be profit motivated or premeditated, and to be carried out to hide other crimes. However, no significant differences between the drinking and nondrinking samples were found for victim's gender, primary weapon used, or event location.

Victim–Offender Relationship and Dynamics of Violence

In a large majority of all homicides, victim and offender were intimately related to each other or were acquaintances. Among local inhabitants of Moscow, in 51% of homicides, offenders and victims were acquaintances and in 26% they were

relatives (Gorbatovskaya & Matveeva, 2000). Based on data from the Udmurt Republic in Russia, offender and victim were related in 52% of homicides (Pridemore & Eckhardt, 2008). This raises the issue of intimate partner and family violence in Russia, which is very high but unfortunately has not been recognized widely as a serious problem in the country (Ivanov & Andreeva, 1998; Lysova & Douglas, 2008), though the dynamics of violence often leading to homicide among relatives, cohabitants, and acquaintances in Russia has been previously investigated by Russian and foreign criminologists and sociologists (Iliashenko, 2003a, 2003b; Lysova & Shchitov, 2010; Pridemore & Eckhardt, 2008; Straus et al., 2007; Vannoy et al., 1999).

The typical family situation leading to homicide in Russia looks as follows. Usually, the violent argument starts when family members are home from work: between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. (Iliashenko, 2003a; Pridemore & Eckhardt, 2008), during the weekend (mostly on Fridays and Saturdays) (Pridemore, 2004) and holidays, when Russians usually consume a lot of alcohol (Iliashenko, 2003a, 2003b; Pridemore, 2004; Razvodovsky, 2007; Stickley & Pridemore, 2007). Violent arguments leading to injuries and deaths often involve some level of victim precipitation (Pridemore & Eckhardt, 2008). In their study of violence in Russian families, for example, Vannoy et al. (1999) found that when women report their victimization experiences, they also often report their own use of intimate partner violence in their relationships. For example, among the married/cohabiting women, 14% threw something at their male partners, 22% shoved or pushed him, 17% slapped or struck him, and 6% beat him, and among the divorced women, 19% threw something at their former husbands, 22% shoved or pushed him, 23% slapped or struck him, and 12% beat him (Vannoy et al.). Other research has suggested that who is the victim and who is the offender may change over the course of a violent interaction (Pridemore & Eckhardt, 2008). It may happen that the initial “offender,” instigating an initial argument or aggression, may ultimately become the homicide victim, particularly if the participants have been drinking.

Weapon Use

It was not until 1999, when detailed ICD-10 codes were included in individual death records in many regions of the Russian Federation, that researchers had an opportunity to look at the distribution of homicide victims by means of assault on a large scale. The most common weapon used in homicides in Russia is a knife, with firearms being the primary means of assault in fewer than 10% of cases (Iliashenko, 2003a; Pridemore & Eckhardt, 2008). In a small-scale study in one region, for example, Chervyakov et al. (2002) found that among the 215 homicide deaths officially registered in the first half of the year 1999 for the Udmurt Republic, 45% were committed with the use of a sharp object, 25% were committed by unspecified means, 14% by a blunt object, 7% by strangulation, and only 5% by firearms. Drinking offenders as well as family offenders are more likely to use sharp objects and less likely to choose strangulation than nondrinking offenders (Pridemore, 2006a).

The Role of Alcohol

In about 46% of homicide deaths in Russia, the perpetrator, the victim, or both are under the influence of alcohol at the time of the homicide event (Godek, 1998). Alcohol intoxication at the time of the offence is considered an additional aggravating circumstance in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. In Russia, the percentage of those convicted of homicide who were reported (according to data from police investigations) to have been intoxicated at the time of the offence declined between 1990 and 1998–1999 from about 80% to about 70% (Nemtsov, as cited in Chervyakov et al., 2002). In the Udmurt Republic of Russia, offenders were drinking in about two-thirds of all homicide events, whereas the victims were drinking in a little over 40% of homicides. In 36% of the homicides, both the offender and the victim were drinking at the time of the event, whereas in 31% of the cases, neither offenders nor victims were drinking (Pridemore & Eckhardt, 2008).

In Belarus, 41% of offenders committing grave crimes and 22% of victims were under the influence of alcohol (MVD Belarus, 2010). In homicides between family members, 20% of victims (most of whom are women) were intoxicated (MVD Belarus, 2010).

In Ukraine, both males and females experienced worsening alcohol-related homicide rates between 1965 and 1983, and then again between 1986 and 1994 (Godek, 1998). For example, from 1986 to 1994, alcohol-related homicide rates increased more than fourfold for males and 2.75 times for females. As for the homicide's contribution to overall alcohol-related mortality, it also grew from 3% in 1960s to 6% by 1994 for males and from 3 to 8% for females (Godek).

Other Incident Characteristics

In Russia, the number of convicted homicide offenders acting with the help of accomplices rose from 12% in 1990 to 21% in 1997, with 5% of murders leading to convictions shown to be committed by organized gangs (Chervyakov et al., 2002). The absolute number of offenders convicted for murders with aggravating circumstances in Russia more than doubled between 1990 and 1997, while their proportion among all convictions for murder increased from 20 to 25% during this same period (Chervyakov et al.).

Victim Characteristics

Most of the victims of violent deaths are men: 76% of male victims in all Russia in 1995 (Pridemore, 2003b). When females become victims of homicide, from 30 to 50% of these homicides take place in the family context (Ivanov & Andreeva, 1998). However, most of the homicide victims in the family are males (65%) (Iliashenko, 2003b). In fact, the male homicide victimization rate in a family context increased from 1970s to the end of the 1990s (Shestakov, 2003: 35). In Ukraine, females comprised 25% of all homicide victims in 2008 and 28% in 2009 (MVD Ukraine, 2010). In Belarus, 34% of victims

of grave and very grave crimes were female (MVD Belarus, 2010). Russia and Belarus stand out in terms of the age-specific homicide rates relative to other nations. The highest victimization rates in Russia and Belarus are found among 35- to 44- and 45- to 54-year-old age groups (MVD Belarus, 2010; Pridemore, 2003b). This different pattern is even more marked for females, where women aged 45–54 have the highest victimization rates (Pridemore). Finally, Pridemore and Shkolnikov (2004) found both marriage and education to be significant protective factors against homicide victimization in Russia.

Offender Characteristics

Over 85% of offenders of Russian violent crimes, including homicide, are men (MVD RF, 2010). The proportion of all homicides committed by males in some Russian regions is even higher, reaching 95% of all homicides (Pridemore & Eckhardt, 2008). At the same time, the number of homicides committed by females in Russia has been growing slightly, from 11% of homicides in 2002 to 13% in 2005 (VNII MVD of the RF, n.d.).

Both homicide offenders and victims in Russia are markedly older than their counterparts in most other industrialized nations (Pridemore, 2003b), and Belarus is similar to Russia in this regard (MVD Belarus, 2010). Most of those convicted of homicide in Russia are between 30 and 39 years old, though the mean age of convicted homicide offenders fell by more than 10% between 1990 and 1997, from 38.7 to 34.6 years old (Nevretdinova, 2000). In spite of the decline, the average age of Russian homicide offenders is significantly higher than in the USA (Pridemore, 2003b). In the USA in 1997, more than 55% of homicide offenders were under age 25, whereas in Russia the equivalent proportion was only half of this (27%). In addition, those convicted of homicide in Russia were older, on average, than those convicted for all crimes together (Chervyakov et al., 2002).

One plausible explanation of the higher homicide rate among older people may be their greater

involvement in family life and hence arguments and violence (Cubbins & Vannoy, 2005; Gondolf & Shestakov, 1997; Iliashenko, 2003a). Older males are also more vulnerable in terms of income, employment, health, and alcohol consumption, especially during and after the transition period (McKee & Leon, 1994; Nevretdinova, 2000; Pridemore & Kim, 2007; Shkolnikov et al., 2001).

Another characteristic of homicide offenders in Russia is their low educational status. Most of those convicted of homicide in the Russian Federation in 1998 (67%) had completed only a secondary education (10 years of regular school education), 17% a specialized secondary education, 13% had less than a secondary education, and only 2.8% finished a university degree (Nevretdinova, 2000). This educational attainment of the homicide offenders was very similar to that in the Udmurt Republic: 35% had less than a secondary education, 48% had a secondary education, 15% had a specialized secondary education, and 3% had at least some college education (Chervyakov et al., 2002).

Explanations

The Civilizing Process and Cultural Spillover Theory

The extremely high homicide rate in the modern Russia may be partly a consequence of the fact that, historically, Russian homicide rates have been comparatively high and lagged behind the decreases that occurred in most European nations (Stickley & Pridemore, 2007).

Norbert Elias and Manuel Eisner argue that there has been a century-long “civilizing process” that resulted in a major reduction in homicide since the late middle ages (Eisner, 2003; Elias, 1978). One aspect of the civilizing process is a decrease in the use of violence for socially legitimate purposes, such as trial by ordeal, torture to obtain confessions, cruel forms of execution, and the right of husbands to use corporal punishment against wives. A recent major reduction in legitimate violence is the prohibition of capital punishment in most Western nations, and during the

last decade, the right of parents to use corporal punishment was ended in 24 nations (Ending Legalized Violence Against Children, n.d.).

In the 1980s, Baron and Straus introduced the cultural spillover theory, which argues that violent crime such as rape and homicide may be influenced by the implicit or explicit approval of violence in various areas of life, such as corporal punishment in the family and schools, the portrayal of violence in mass media, and sports such as boxing and football. This theory predicts a carryover or diffusion from social contexts in which the use of violence is socially approved to social contexts where the use of violence is considered illegitimate or criminal (Baron & Straus, 1989). Many studies provide evidence for a link between legitimate violence and rape (Baron, Straus, & Jaffe, 1988; Hogben, Byrne, Hamburger, & Osland, 2001; Sanday, 1981) and homicide (Archer & Gartner, 1984; Ember & Ember, 1994; Levinson, 1989). In their cross-national study of homicide, for example, Archer and Gartner (1984: 94) suggested that wars tended to legitimate the general use of violence in domestic society via a message that killing another human being was, under certain circumstances, acceptable in the eyes of the nation’s leaders (1984: 94). Ember and Ember found evidence of this in their study and argued that “high rates of homicide and assault are inadvertent (unintended) consequences of more war: Once you learn to kill an enemy, you may find it easier to hurt or kill anyone” (1994: 643).

Rates of legitimate violence in Russia are extremely high. Violence thrives and usually is not treated as a crime or even a problem in cases of family violence against wives (Cubbins & Vannoy, 2005; Vannoy et al., 1999), children in the form of corporal punishment and abuse (Lysova, 2009), and elders (Puchkov, 2005). Violence against the male population of Russia by the police, in the army, and in Russia prisons are other forms of common violence that, while not legitimate, are accepted or committed by those with governmental authority.

Russia has also been involved in a number of wars and violent conflicts with neighboring countries during the last 100 years. During the

twentieth century, Russia participated in the Russian-Japanese War (1904–1905) and World War I (1914–1917), which was followed by the October Revolution and a civil war (1917–1920). Beginning in the 1930s, Stalin's repressions directly touched more than 10% of the Russian population: countless people were executed and sent to prisons, labor camps, and deported to different parts of the country (Oleinik, 2001). The losses suffered by Russia during World War II, of course, were monumental, and the war's impact on the population cannot be overstated. Recent conflicts include the war and ongoing unrest with Chechnya, as well as skirmishes with Georgia.

Thus, according to the concept of civilizing process and cultural spillover theory, all these forms of unbridled legitimate violence in Russia theoretically can directly condone criminal violence in the form of interpersonal homicide.

Social Structure and Social Stress

Pridemore and Kim (2007) explicitly tested the effect of the major force of the Russian transition – socioeconomic and political change – as an explanation of the increase in the rates of interpersonal violence during the 1990s. They found that higher levels of negative socioeconomic change were positively and significantly associated with greater increases in regional homicide victimization rates. They gave to this a Durkheimian interpretation according to which the rapid political, social, and economic change weakened the former means of solidarity, which lost its power to control individuals. At the same time that a strong collective conscience and communitarian ideals were being replaced by the individual goals of freedom, autonomy, and economic opportunities, Russians started to consider material success an important social value. Furthermore, the growing disjuncture between consumerist goals and the limited means of most Russians to reach those goals may help explain the increase in and wide variation of crime throughout the country (Merton, 1968). In the case of Russia, then, it may not only be the

deregulation of desires that is important in explaining heightened levels of violence but also the redistribution or removal of opportunities and the frustration and anger that ensues (Pridemore & Kim, 2007).

An alternative explanation for the increasing homicide rate in Russia relates to the economic performance during the period of transition, especially high levels of poverty and unemployment (Andrienko, 2001; Pridemore & Kim, 2007). For example, Pridemore (2005) showed that poverty was positively associated with the cross-sectional variation in homicide victimization rates in Russia at the aggregate level, and Andrienko (2001) found poverty and low education to be associated with regional homicide rates in Russia.

One particular mechanism through which the rapid changes in social structure lead to an increase in the homicide rate may be explained by the concept of social stress. Social stress is an umbrella concept under which all psychosocial problems are placed (Godek, 1998). Studies show that economic and political practices under Soviet rule, as well as after the collapse of the Soviet Union during the transition period in the 1990s, led to high levels of social stress (Godek, 1998; Shkolnikov et al., 2001; Watson, 1995). Some argue that while females in Russia have a better arsenal of coping mechanisms that enable them to handle the existing stressors, males have become less protected and more prone to despair and stress (Watson, 1995). This jeopardized males' traditional role in public life and as a breadwinner, which might have led to increased violence in the family (as a compensation mechanism) and to alcohol abuse for relieving the stress, and hence further chances of violence.

Since one-third of all Russian homicides are committed within the family, it is worth mentioning that police non-intervention into family disputes, high levels of alcohol consumption in the home, and Russia's chronic housing shortage (e.g., when people cannot move and divorced couples continue to live in the same apartment) may also be serious risk factors for homicide (Ingram, 1999).

Alcohol Consumption and Alcohol-Related Homicide

Multiple studies support the hypothesis that homicide and alcohol are closely connected in cultures where an intoxication-oriented drinking pattern prevails, and several scholars suggest that a binge drinking pattern is important in explaining the high rate of homicide in Russia (Andrienko, 2001; Bye, 2008; Pridemore, 2005; Razvodovsky, 2007). Pridemore (2002) found that Russian provinces with higher levels of heavy drinking had higher levels of homicide. This provincial-level association is not new, however, as Stickley and Pridemore (2007) used historical data from 1910 for western Russian provinces and found the same association. Pridemore and Chamlin (2006) used annual time series data between 1956 and 2002 for all of Russia and found a significant positive association between heavy drinking and homicide. Pridemore and Eckhardt (2008) employed data on homicide victim, offender, and event characteristics in Russia and found that alcohol-related homicides differed from non-alcohol-related homicides on a number of characteristics, including victim-offender relationship and motive. Further, though examining non-lethal violent victimization, a recent study of Moscow residents found that men who binge drink were more than twice as likely than those who did not to have been a victim of violence (Stickley & Pridemore, 2010).

Punishing Homicide

The imprisonment rate in Russia is one of the highest in the world, with a rate of 629 prisoners per 100,000 residents in 2008 (Walmsley, 2009). Nearly 20% of all people spending time in prison in Russia have been convicted of homicide and grievous bodily harm (Andrienko, 2001). The current punishment system for homicide in Russia stipulates the following types of criminal punishment: the death penalty (article 59 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, 1996), life imprisonment (art. 57), and deprivation of freedom (art. 56). The 1996 criminal code is more

severe than any previous criminal codes of Russia, even during Stalin's rule. Moreover, some kinds of probation and parole (deprivation of freedom with suspended sentence) have been excluded from the new criminal code (Gilinskiy, 2006). There has been a moratorium on the death penalty since 1998 (and there have been no death sentences since then), although this has not been ratified by the Russian parliament. In November 2009, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation finally and completely prohibited the death penalty in Russia. Thus, life imprisonment became the most severe type of punishment for those convicted of homicide beginning January 1, 2010.

From 1997 to 2003, the number of those convicted of homicide and sentenced to life imprisonment rose 6.5 times, from 177 people in 1997 to 1,115 people by 2003 (Alexandrov, n.d.). Almost all of them were convicted of aggravated homicide, including 33% who were convicted of homicide with a profit motive, 18% with cruelty, 12% with rape, and 12% who committed homicide in group. The majority of offenders sentenced to life in prison committed two or more homicides (Alexandrov, n.d.).

Punishment Related to Homicide and Violence in Belarus and Ukraine

The most severe violent crimes, including homicide and intentional grievous bodily harm with aggravated circumstances, may still be punished by the death penalty in Belarus. However, since 1997, life imprisonment may be applied as an alternative punishment to the death penalty. Moreover, capital punishment may not be used against offenders who were under 18 years old at the time of the event, females, and males after 65 years old. After the introduction of the new Criminal Code in Belarus in 1999, with life imprisonment as an alternative to death penalty, the number of death sentences dropped from 47 in 1998 to 2 in 2009 (Samoseiko, 2010). Moreover, the number of crimes subjected to the articles of Criminal Code for which it is possible to use capital punishment also went down.

For example, the total number of all sentences (including possibility of death penalty) for intentional homicide (Article 139 of the Criminal Code of Belarus) was 474 in 2001, 390 in 2007, 270 in 2008, and 241 in 2009 (Samoseiko). The number of those sentenced to life in prison has also decreased in recent years, from 20 people in 2002 to 5 in 2009. Currently, 142 convicted offenders in Belarus are spending their life in prison, though it is possible, they may get out in 25 years (Samoseiko).

Life in prison is the most severe form of punishment in Ukraine since 2001. Today 1,553 Ukrainian offenders are spending their life in prison. While there is also the chance that their sentences will be commuted to less than life in prison, the minimum they must spend in prison is 38 years (Silaeva, 2009).

Conclusion

Post-Soviet countries such as Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus deserve special attention when considering homicide in Europe. The social, economic, and political turmoil experienced by many former Soviet countries in the post-Soviet period was accompanied by a sharp rise in all-cause mortality, in particular deaths from homicide. Even though Ukrainian and Belorussian homicide rates are lower than in Russia, they are still very high relative to other countries in the European region. Further, while these rates have been extremely high in recent years due to various factors associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian homicide rates have been higher historically than in other European nations.

Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus share homicide characteristics that are distinct relative to other European nations. These include the low proportion of homicides committed by firearms, higher homicide rates in rural relative to urban areas, vast regional differences in homicide rates, and the significant role of alcohol in homicide offending and victimization. Moreover, due to the sweeping scale of socioeconomic and political changes in the 1990s in Russia and Ukraine, and

to a lesser extent Belarus, these nations may serve as natural experiments for testing various sociological theories, especially those related to anomie, as potential explanations for the increase in homicide rates.

This chapter also addressed the ongoing problem of the lack of reliable and transparent homicide reporting systems in these countries, which raises serious concerns about the validity of official homicide statistics. We provided available data on police-recorded homicides and data on homicide estimates from vital statistics for the last half of the twentieth century in Russia and confirmed previous findings showing higher homicide estimates from the latter.

The most intriguing question for criminologists and sociologists is what reasons are behind the extremely high homicide rates in these post-Soviet countries, especially Russia, compared to other industrialized European countries and even the United States. We outlined several possible factors, including the civilizing process, the cultural spillover effect, social structure and stress during the transition, and alcohol consumption.

Elements of social disorganization, including structural factors like poverty and family instability, and individual-level factors such as education and marriage have been found to be associated with homicide in Russia. The failure of homicide rates to decrease as drastically as they increased, even though political and economic stability is now much greater than in the mid-1990s, might be attributed to the lagged effects of the transition, including serious disruption to key social institutions like the family, education, and the economy, and because those adolescents who were most negatively affected by the transition are now adults.

While punishment related to homicide and violence in Belarus and Ukraine is becoming less harsh and more humane (e.g., less lengthy prison terms, reluctance to use the death penalty in Belarus and its substitution with life imprisonment), Russia's punishment path has remained the same, and perhaps even become more punitive, and Russia's imprisonment rate remains among the world's highest (along with the United States).

In sum, our chapter hints at the high toll of interpersonal violence in Russia and, to a lesser extent, Ukraine and Belarus. Systematic research on homicide is still new in these nations, and it is vital that scholars and public health officials recognize the problem and take steps to better understand the causes of high rates in order to reduce the heavy burden of violence in these countries.

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Appendix

Chapter 13: Terrorism in Europe from 1945-present

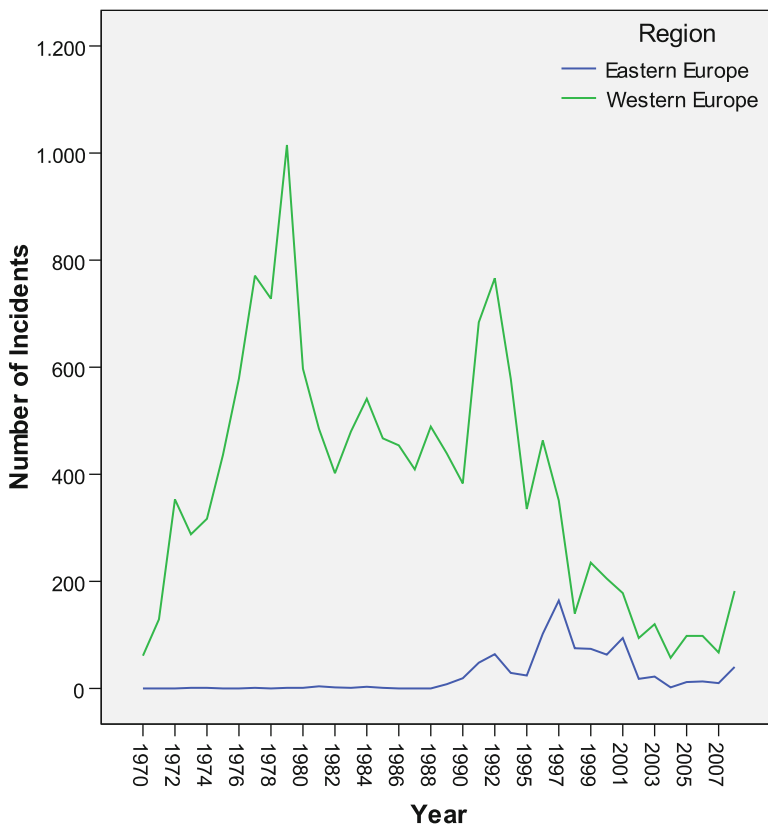


Fig. 13.4 Difference between development of terrorist activity in Western and Eastern Europe 1970–2008. Based on the Global Terrorism Database

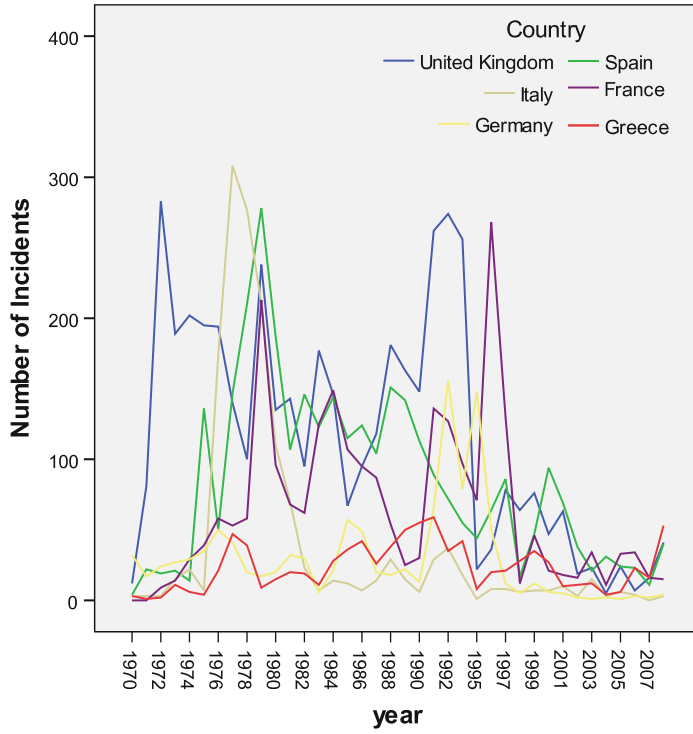


Fig. 13.5 Development of terrorist activity for the six most hit countries. Based on the Global Terrorism Database

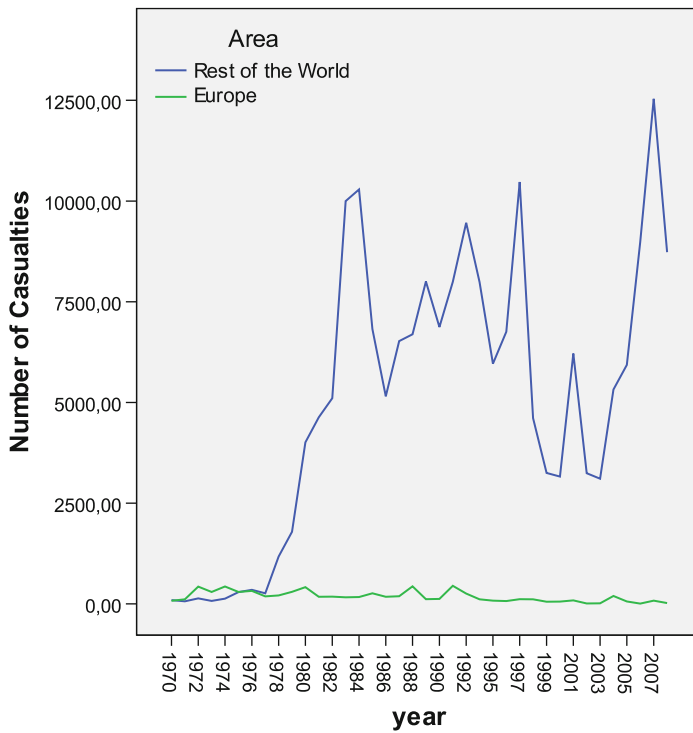


Fig. 13.7 Number of fatalities as a result of terrorism per year for Europe and the rest of the world. Based on the Global Terrorism Database

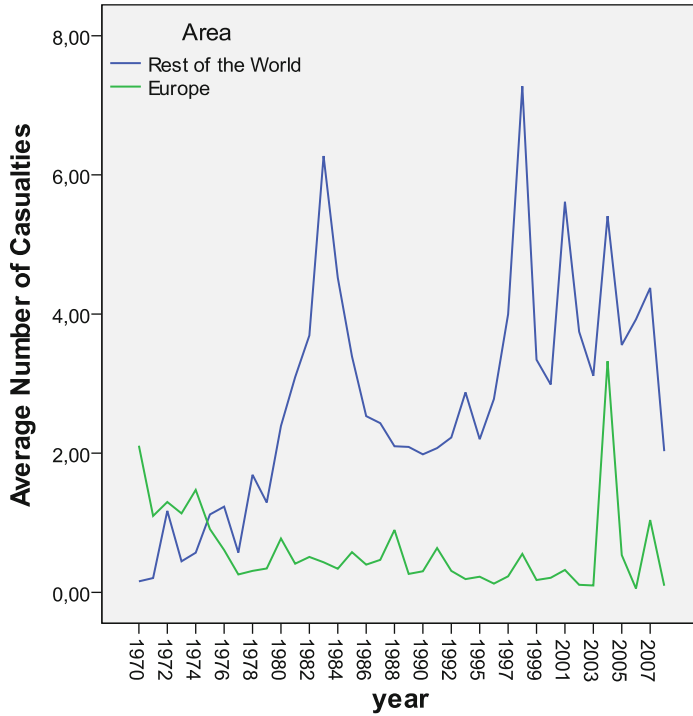


Fig. 13.8 Average number of fatalities per incident for the period 1970–2008 for Europe and the rest of the world. *Source:* Global Terrorism Database

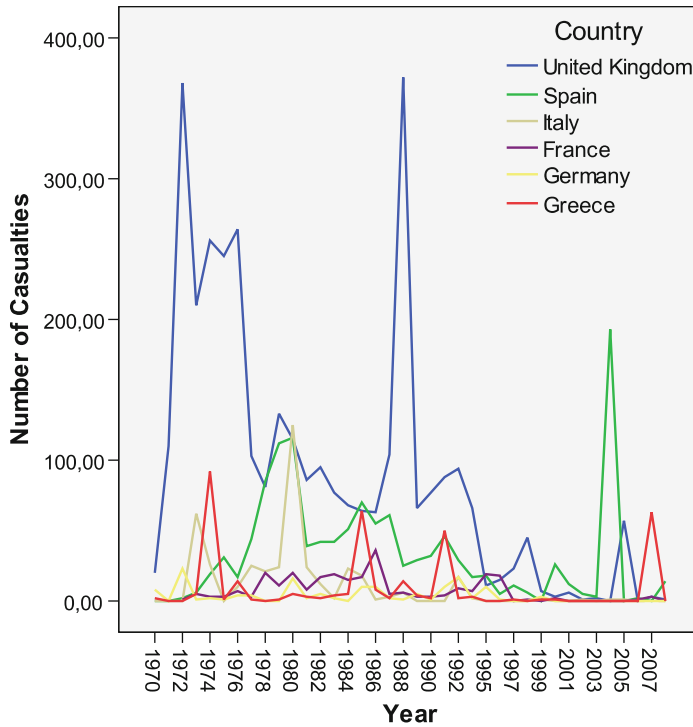


Fig. 13.9 Average number of fatalities specified for the six most hit countries in Europe. *Source:* Global Terrorism Database

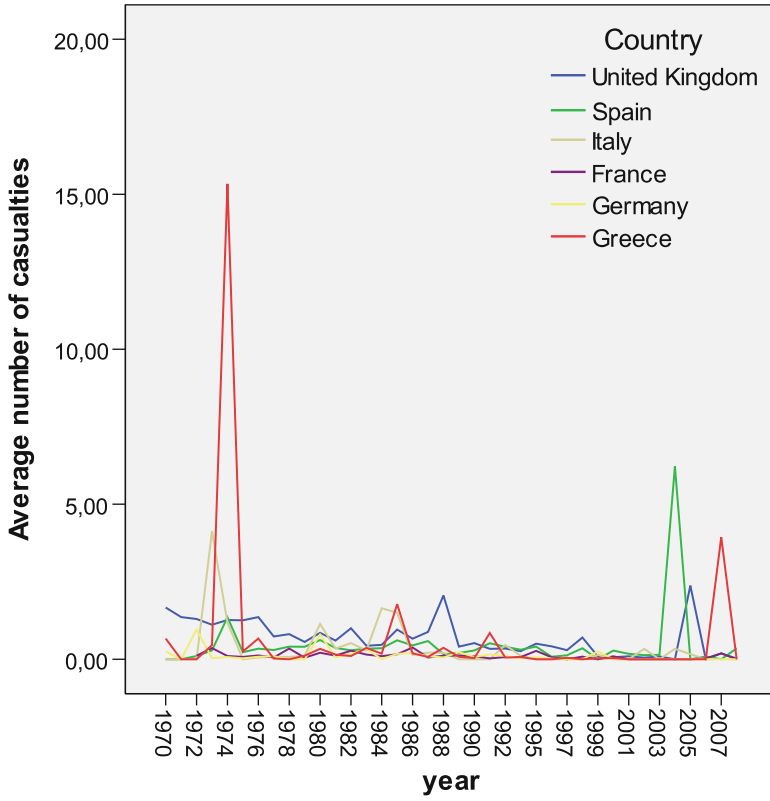


Fig. 13.10 Average number of fatalities specified for the six most hit countries in Europe. *Source:* Global Terrorism Database

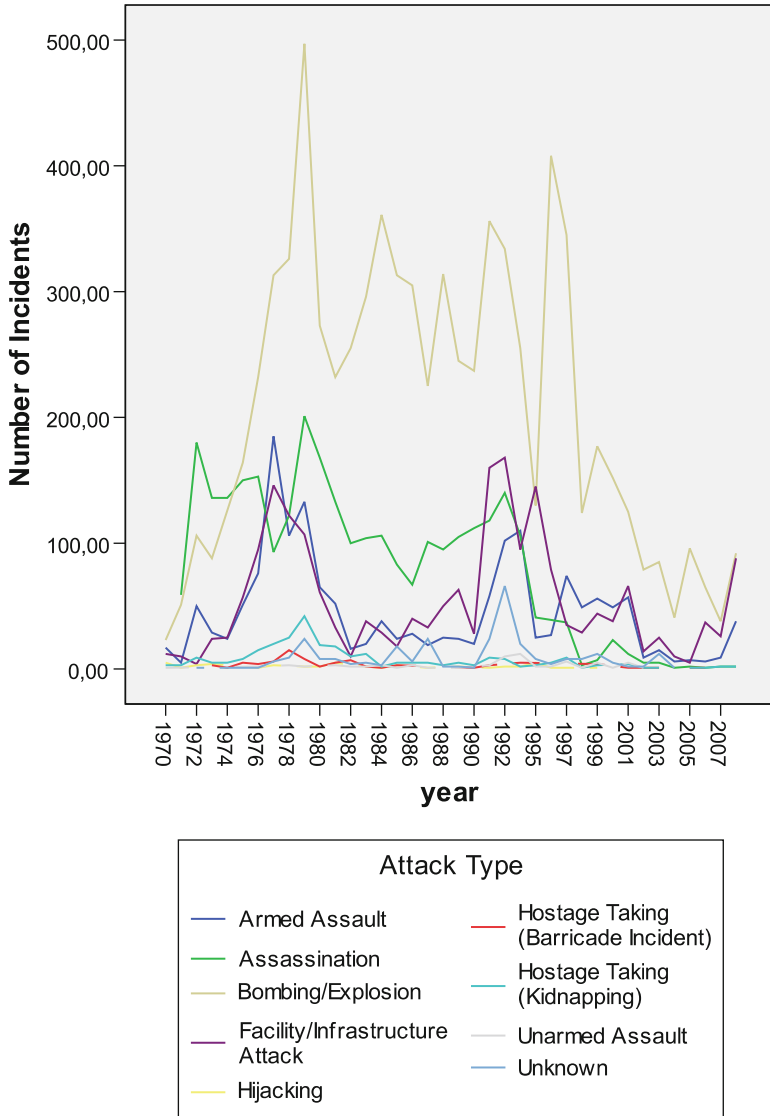


Fig. 13.11 Attack types used in terrorism in Europe, specified per year. *Source:* Global Terrorism Database

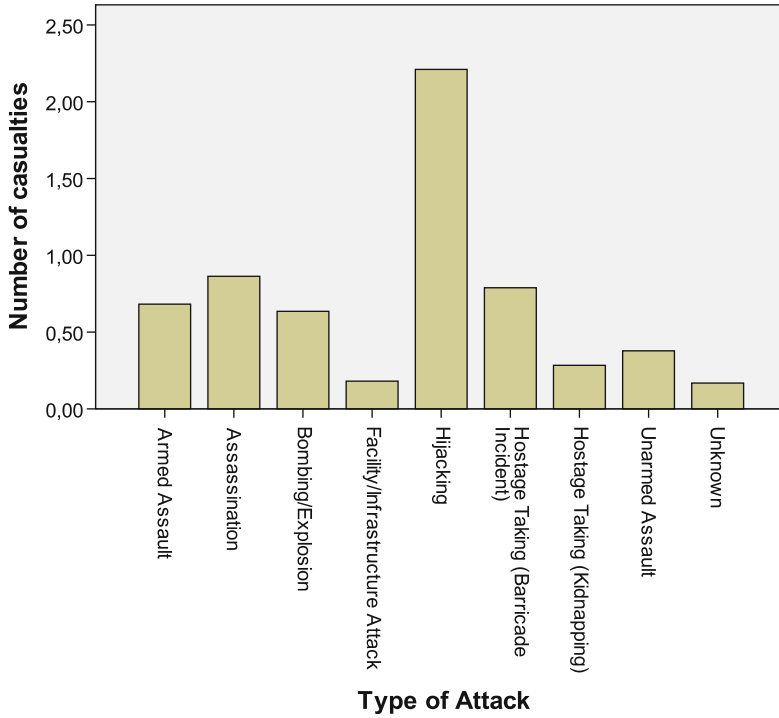


Fig. 13.12 Average number of fatalities per attack type

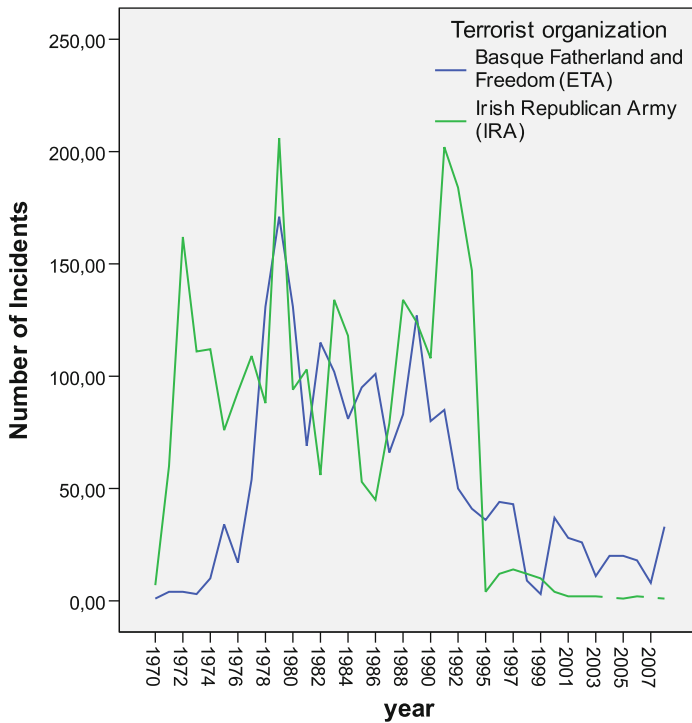


Fig. 13.13 Number of incidents per year for the Provisional IRA and ETA. Source: Global Terrorism Database

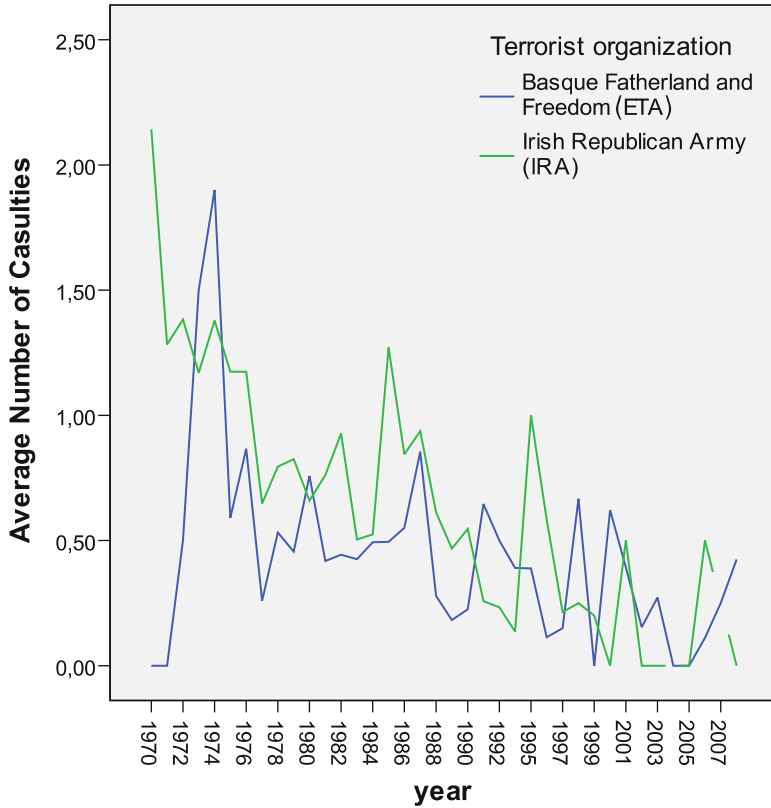


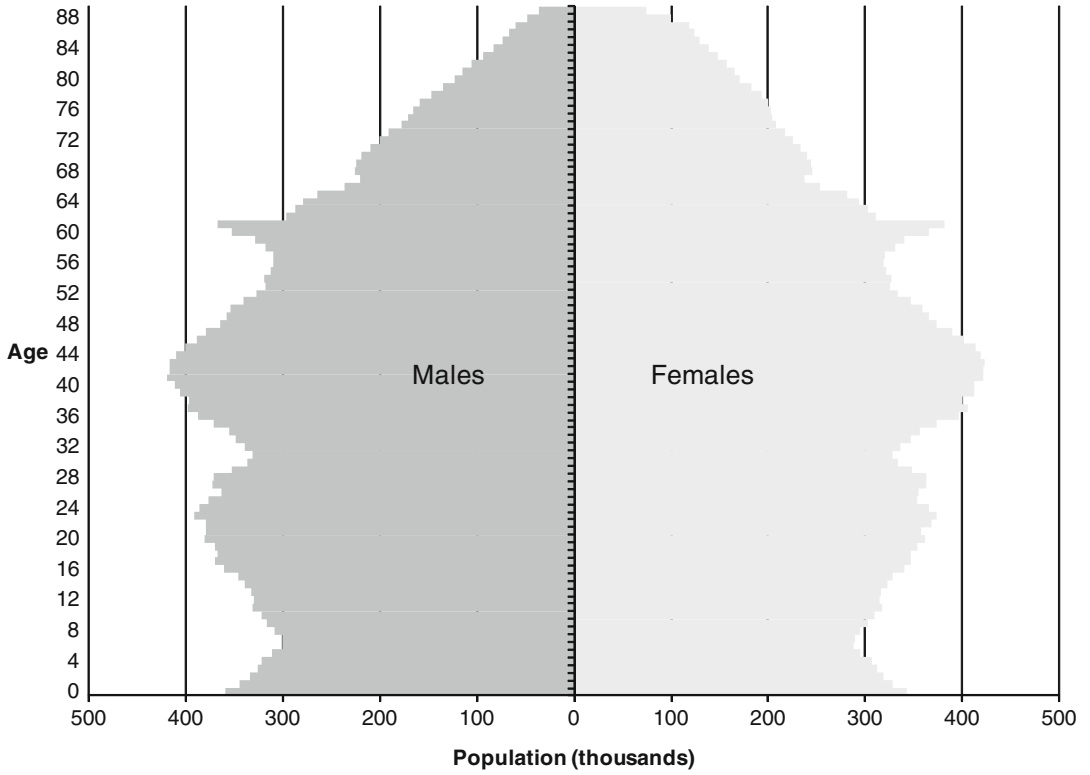
Fig. 13.14 Number of fatalities per year for the Provisional IRA and ETA. *Source:* Global Terrorism Database

Table 13.1 Top ten European countries with the highest number of terrorist incidents in the period from 1970 until 2008

Rank	Country	Number of Incidents
1	Northern Ireland	3,806
2	Spain	3,182
3	Italy	1,494
4	Corsica	1,314
5	France	1,142
6	Greece	893
7	Great Britain	609
8	Germany	554
9	West Germany (FDR)	541
10	Yugoslavia	191
	Total	15,371

Based on the Global Terrorism Database

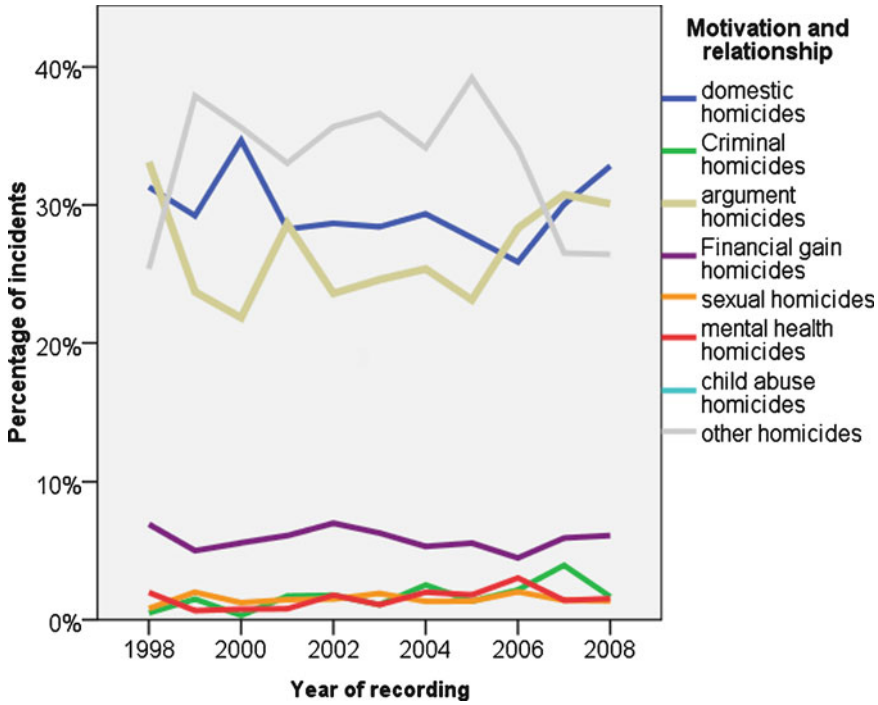
Chapter 18: Homicide in England and Wales



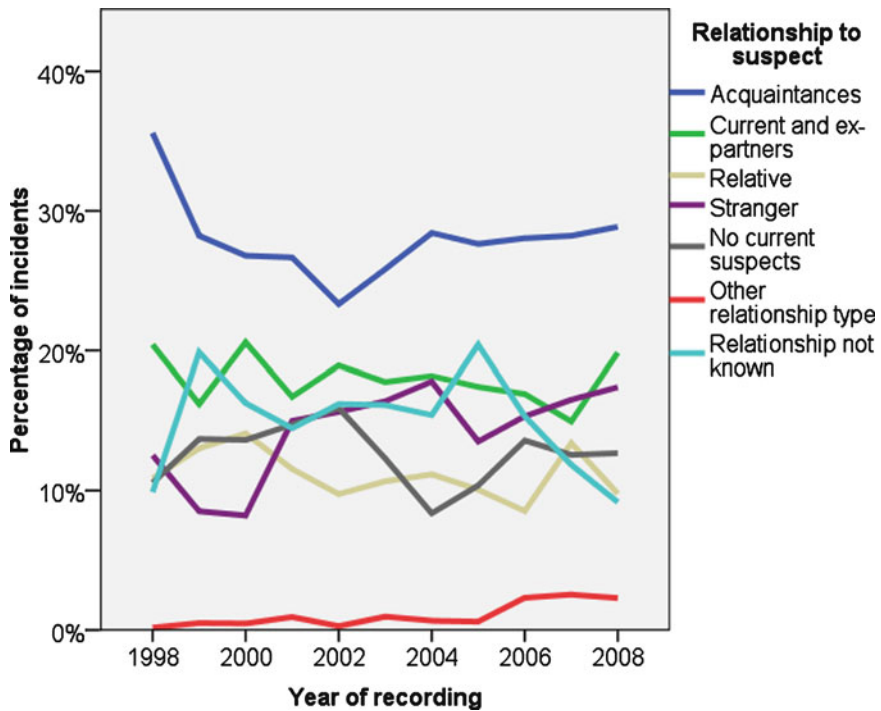
APPENDIX A Population Structure for England and Wales 2008

Year of recording	Gender of victim				Total
	Female		Male		
	Number %	Incidence rate	Number %	Incidence rate	
1998	208 33.1	0.78	421 66.9	1.67	629
1999	188 29.8	0.71	442 70.2	1.75	630
2000	227 33.6	0.85	449 66.4	1.77	676
2001	228 29.2	0.85	554 70.8	2.17	782
2002	257 33.8	0.96	504 66.2	1.96	761
2003	256 33.4	0.95	511 66.6	1.98	767
2004	216 27.7	0.80	564 72.3	2.17	780
2005	224 32.6	0.82	464 67.4	1.77	688
2006	205 28.3	0.75	520 71.7	1.97	725
2007	210 28.7	0.76	522 71.3	1.96	732
2008	192 28.5	0.69	482 71.5	1.80	674
1998 - 2008	2411 30.7	0.81	5433 69.3	1.91	7844

APPENDIX B Homicide incidence rate for victims by gender 1998–2008



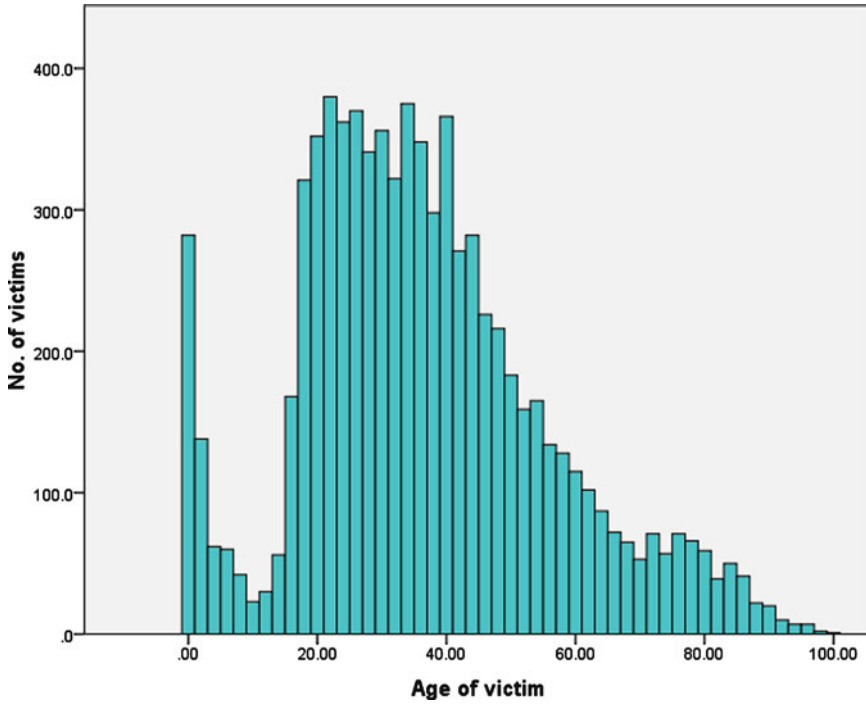
APPENDIX C Motivation and relationship by recorded year – incidents of homicide 1998–2008



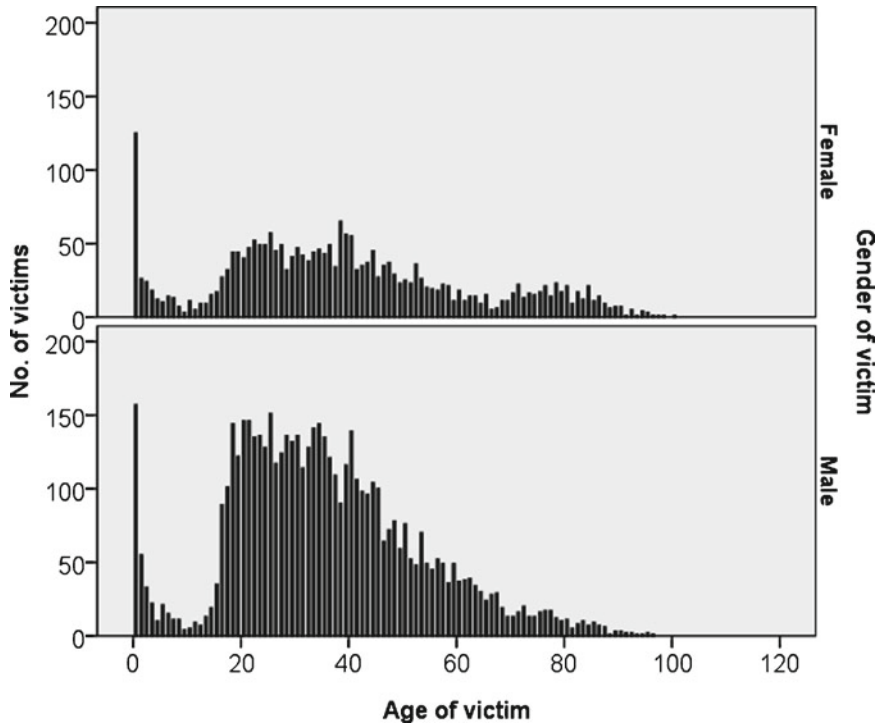
APPENDIX D Relationship by recorded year – incidents of homicide 1998–2008

Method	Gender of primary victim		Total
	Male	Female	
	Number %	Number %	
Arson, burning, scalding	86 3.8%	117 2.2%	203 2.7%
Blunt instrument	219 9.6%	445 8.4%	664 8.8%
Causing to fall/struck by Motor Vehicle	109 4.8%	377 7.2%	486 6.4%
Drowning, suffocation, asphyxiation	155 6.8%	139 2.6%	294 3.9%
Exposure, negligence	55 2.4%	79 1.5%	134 1.8%
Kicking, hitting	160 7.0%	891 16.9%	1051 13.9%
Poisoning including carbon monoxide	82 3.6%	189 3.6%	271 3.6%
Sharp instrument	694 30.6%	1911 36.3%	2605 34.5%
Strangulation	353 15.5%	110 2.1%	463 6.1%
Shooting, explosion	80 3.5%	577 10.9%	657 8.7%
Other including baby battering	106 4.7%	187 3.5%	293 3.9%
Not known	172 7.6%	249 4.7%	421 5.6%
Total	2271 100.0%	5271 100.0%	7542 100.0%

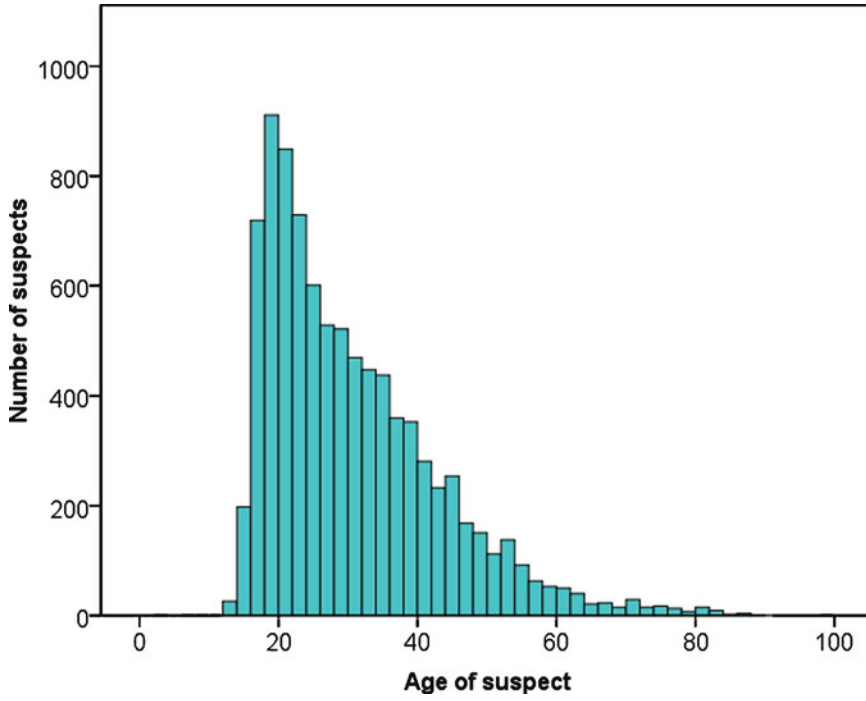
APPENDIX E Method by gender of primary victim – incidents of homicide 1998–2008



APPENDIX F Currently recorded homicides 1998–2008. Number of victims by age



APPENDIX G Currently recorded homicides 1998–2008. Age of victim by gender



APPENDIX H Currently recorded homicides 1998–2008. Age of suspect by gender

Chapter 22: Homicide in Switzerland

Table 1.1 Country information

	Total	Men	Women
Total population (OFS, 2009b)	7,785,806	3,830,566	3,955,240
Population density (OFS, 2009c)	194.7/km ²		
Percentage of persons aged 15–64 (CIA, 2009)	68.1		
Life expectancy (years) (CIA, 2009)	80.9	78.0	83.8
Literacy (%) (CIA, 2009)	99	99	99
Foreign population (%) (OFS, 2009d)	22		
Households owning a firearm (%) (Killias, Haymoz, & Lamon, 2007)	27.8		
Alcohol consumption (WHO, 2009)	10.8		
Opiate consumption (%) ²	0.61		
Cocaine consumption (%) ³	0.8		
Cannabis consumption (%) ⁴	9.7		

² Annual prevalence of opiate use as a percentage of the population aged 15–64 in Switzerland, found in UNODOC (2010).

³ Annual prevalence of cocaine use as a percentage of the population aged 15–64 in Switzerland, found in UNODOC (2010).

⁴ Annual prevalence of cannabis use as a percentage of the population aged 15–64 in Switzerland, found in UNODOC (2010).

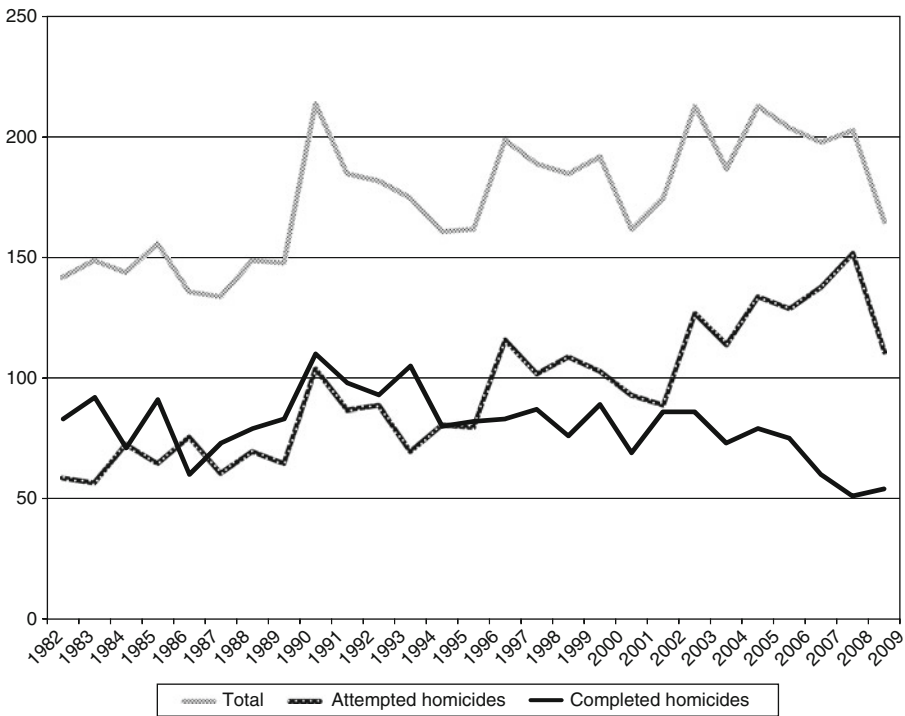


Fig. 22.1 Absolute number of police-recorded attempted and completed homicides

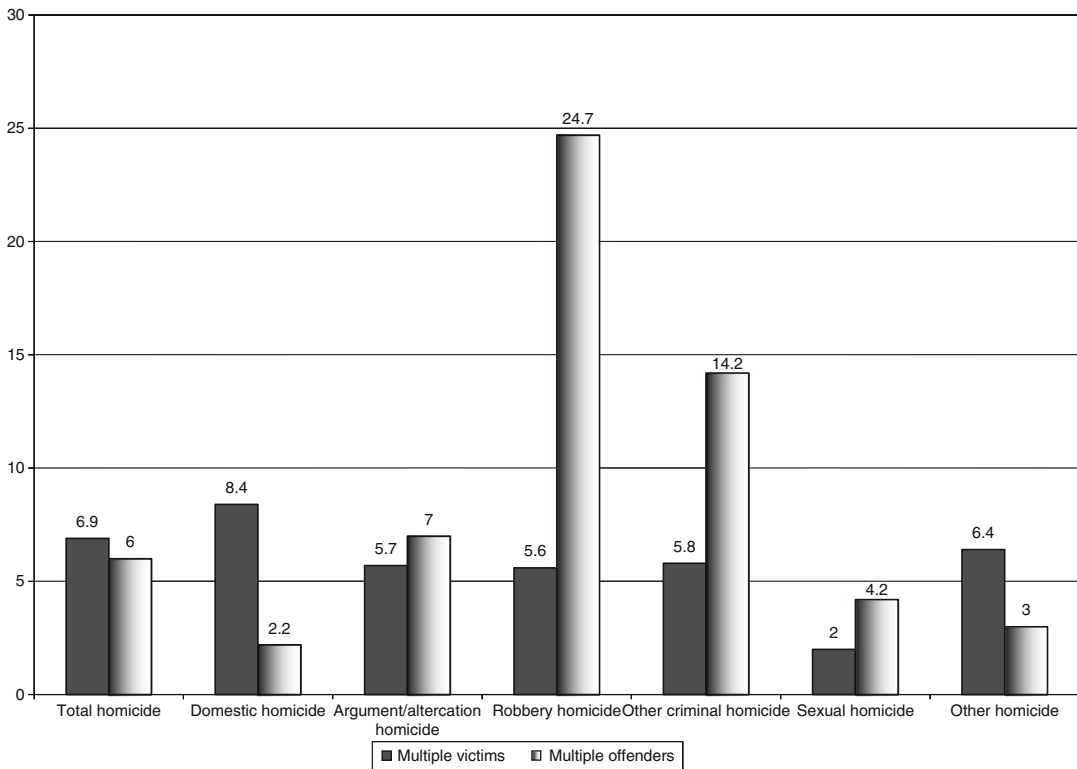


Fig. 22.4 Number of multiple victims and offenders by homicide constellation, in %

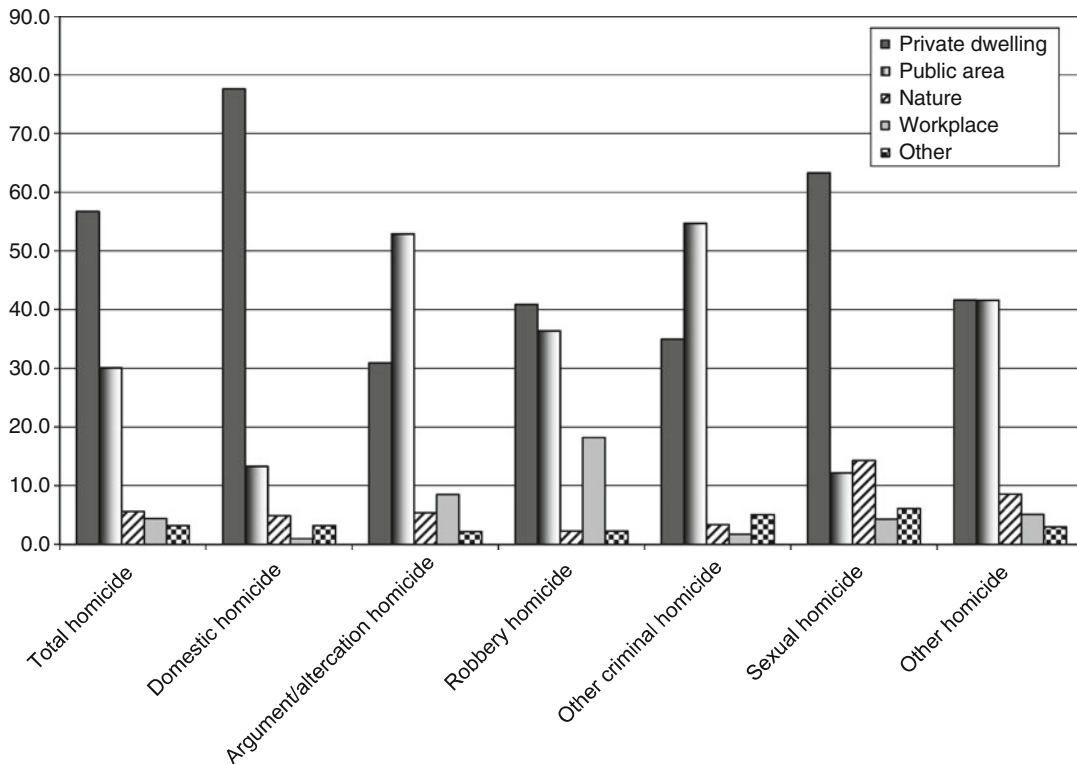


Fig. 22.5 Location of the homicide by homicide constellation, in %

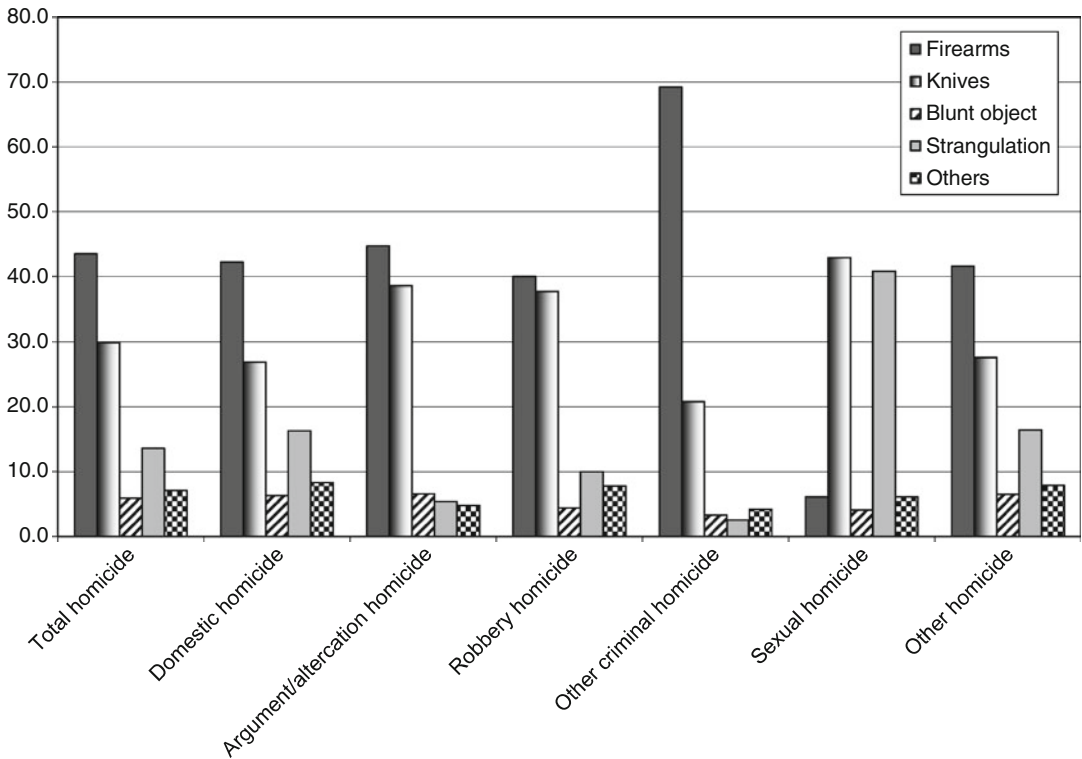


Fig. 22.6 Modus operandus by homicide constellation, in %

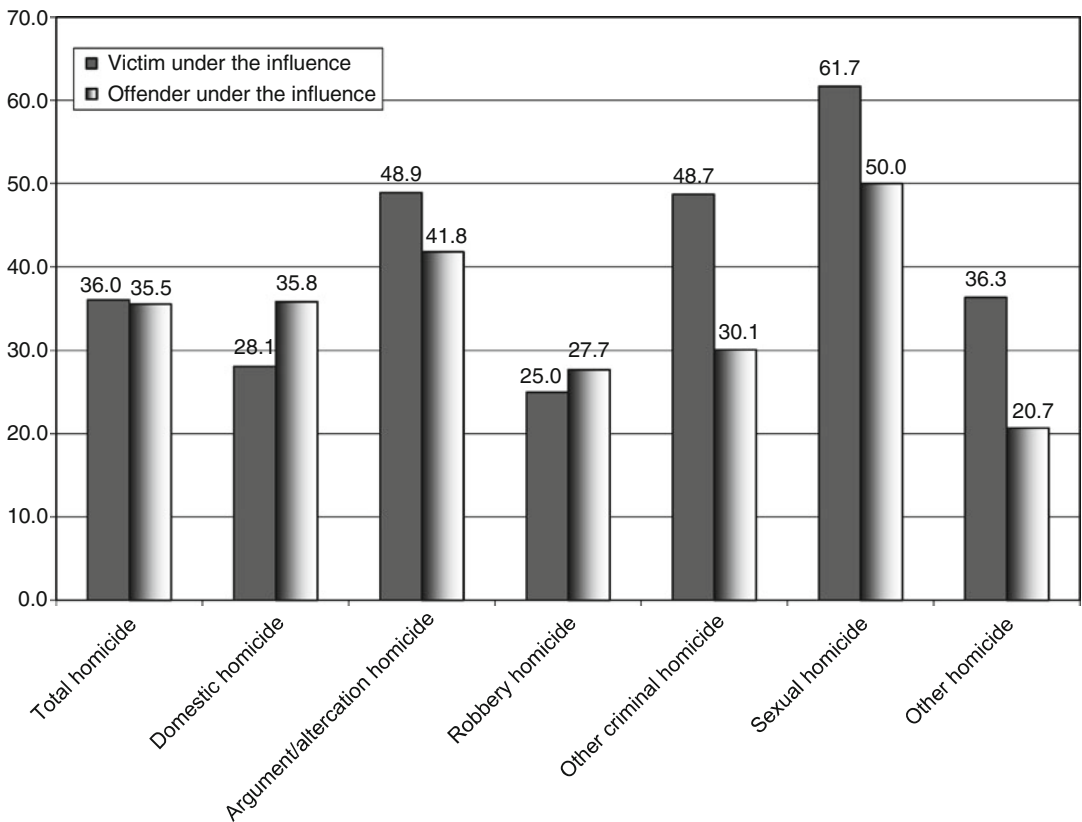


Fig. 22.7 Victim and offender intoxication by homicide constellation, in %

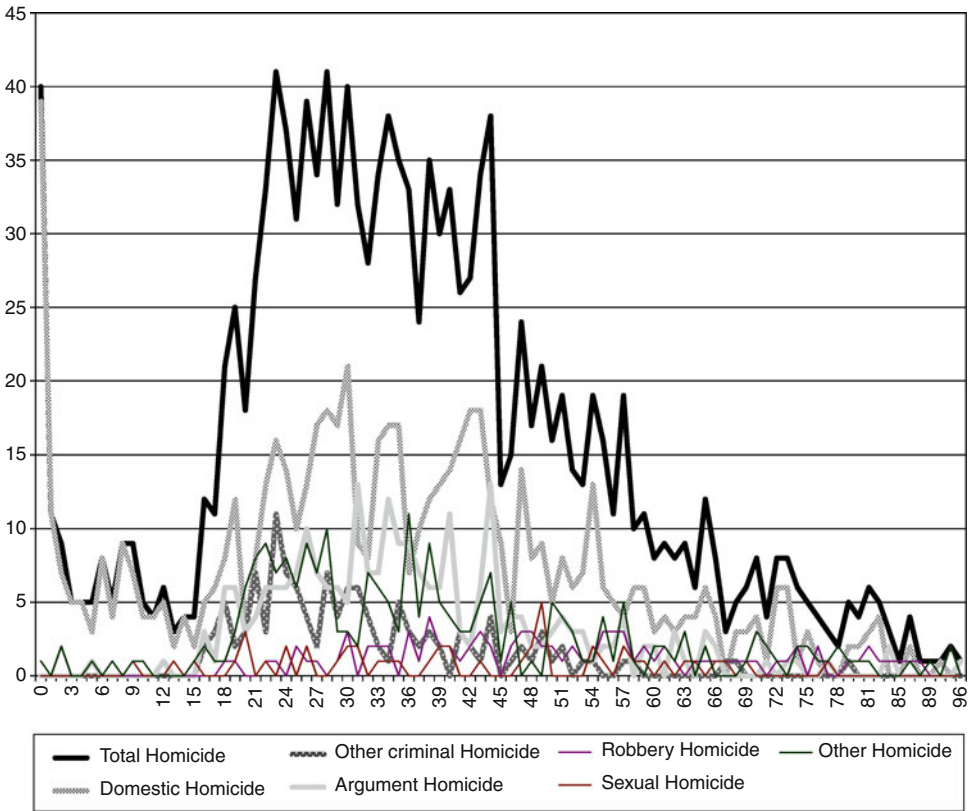


Fig. 22.8 Age of victims by homicide constellation

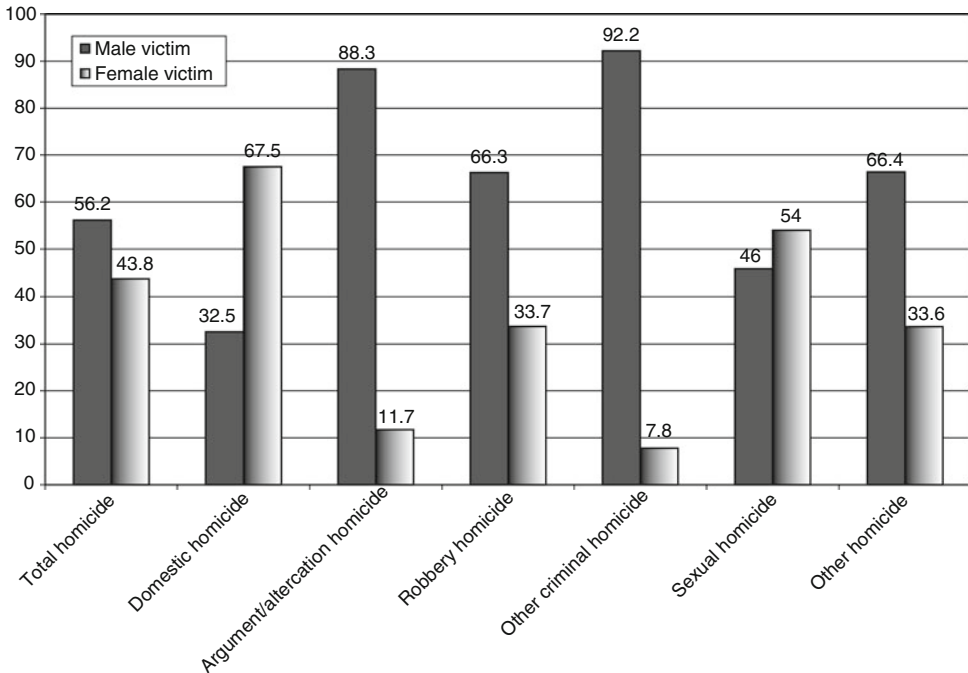


Fig. 22.9 Gender of victims by homicide constellation, in %

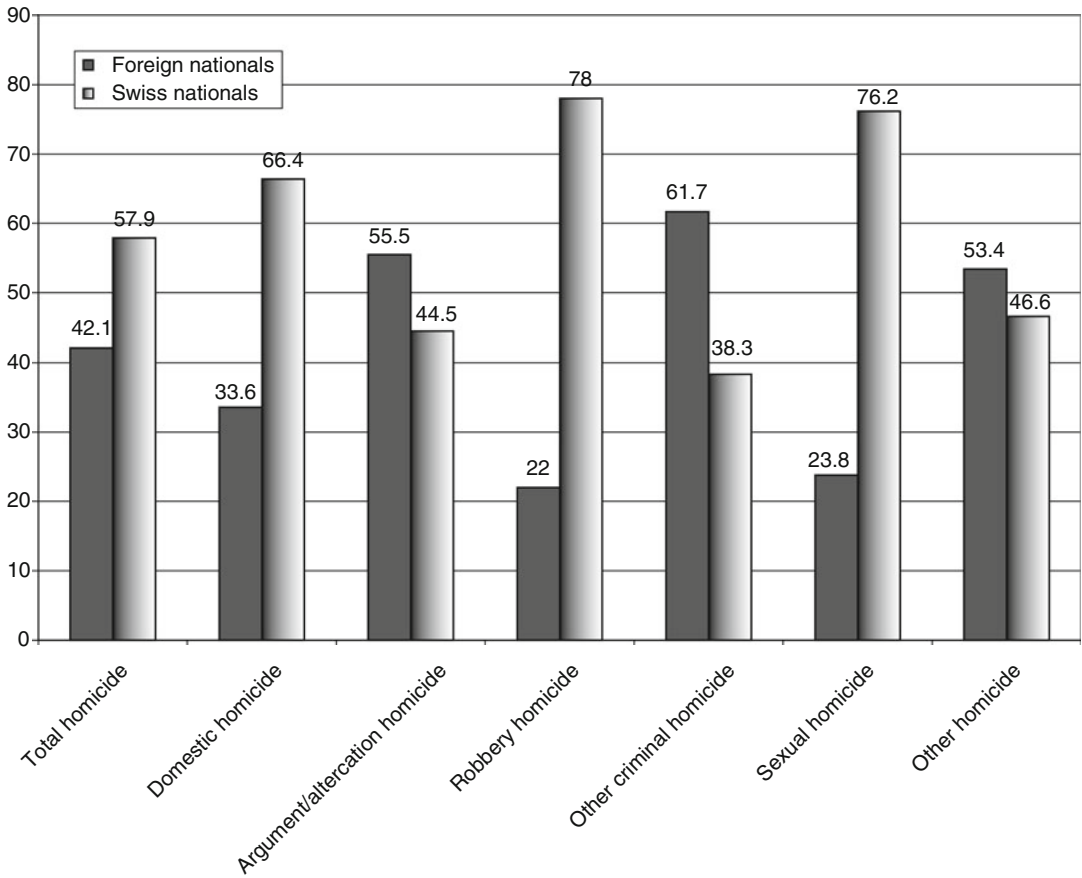


Fig. 22.10 Nationality of victims by homicide constellation, in %

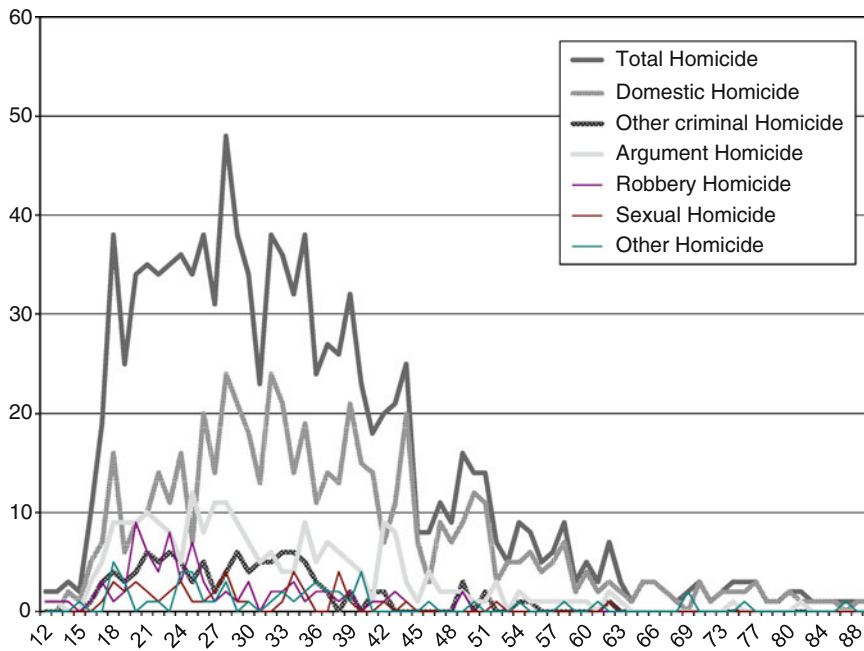


Fig. 22.11 Age of offenders by homicide constellation

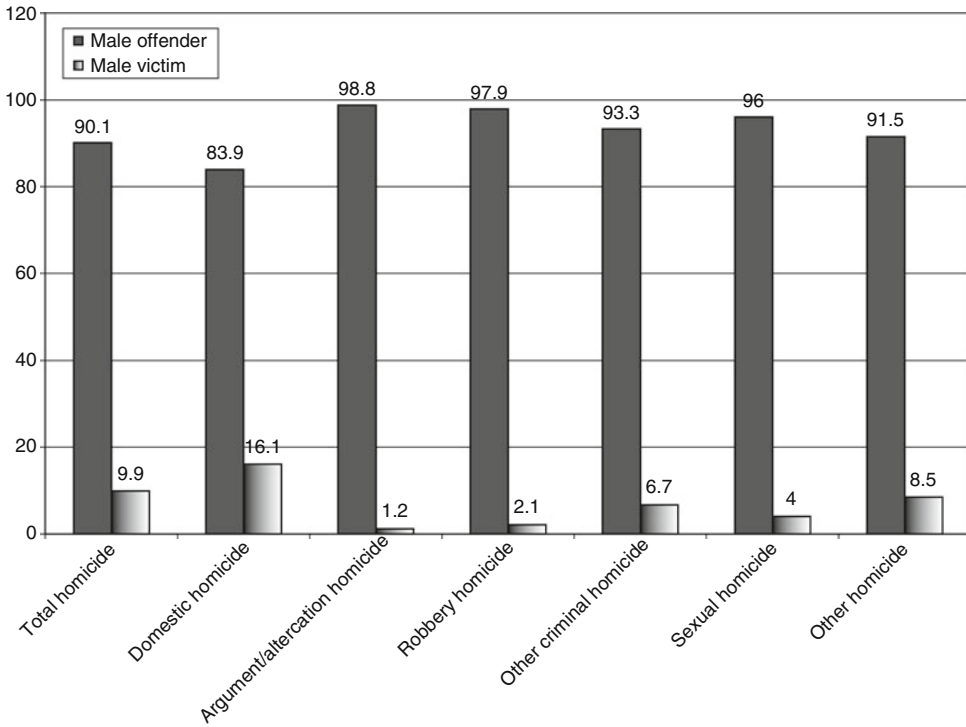


Fig. 22.12 Gender of offenders by homicide constellation, in %

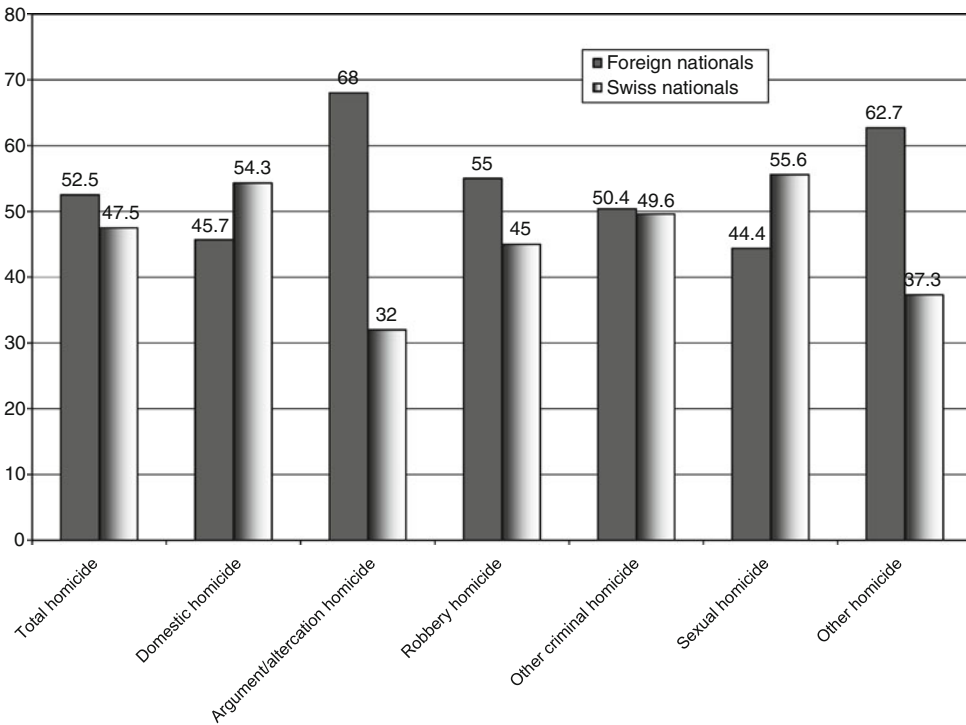


Fig. 22.13 Nationality of offenders by homicide constellation, in %

Chapter 26: Homicide in Sweden

Table 26.1 Average annual homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants, and population density in number of inhabitants per square kilometer, in Sweden's eight NUTS2 regions for the years 2002–2008

	Annual homicide rate per 100,000	Population density (no. of inh./km ²)	Largest city (in no. of inh.)
SE 11: Stockholm	1.22 (1.77)	290 (260)	Stockholm
SE 12: Eastern central region	1.18 (1.02)	39 (39)	Uppsala
SE 23: Western region	0.96 (1.01)	62 (59)	Gothenburg
SE 31: Northern central region	0.95 (1.17)	13 (13)	Gavle
SE 22: Lower southern region	0.90 (1.10)	95 (91)	Malmoe
SE 21: Eastern southern region	0.89 (0.90)	24 (24)	Jonkoping
SE 33: Upper northern region	0.84 (1.17)	3 (3)	Umea
SE 32: Central northern region	0.81 (0.72)	5 (6)	Sundsvall

Data for 1990–1996 displayed in *parentheses*

Table 26.2 Distribution (%) of homicide incidents in Sweden by motive category, 2002–2008 (*N* = 644) and 1990–1996 (*N* = 719)

	2002–2008	1990–1996
Expressive motives		
Spontaneous arguments	26	29
Revenge	9	4
Jealousy	6	8
Separation from partner	9	10
Racism or homophobia	2	5
Psychosis	10	12
Instrumental motives		
Robbery	5	5
Other crimes (narcotics affairs, burglary)	3	4
Economy	5	4
Avoidance of threats/self-defence	4	1
Rape/sexual crimes	1	2
Other/unknown motives	20	16
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 26.4 Distribution (%) of homicides in Sweden by type of homicide, 2002–2008 ($N = 644$) and 1990–1996 ($N = 719$)

	2002–2008	1990–1996
Domestic homicide ^a	36	35
Criminal homicide ^b	11	6
Homicides resulting from arguments/altercations ^c	29	36
Robbery/burglary homicides	6	6
Sexual homicides	1	2
Other homicides	17	15
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

^aHomicides within the context of family, involving (estranged) intimate partners, rivals (in love), parents and children as well as siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts and other family members. Also cases involving honor-revenge and blood feuds can be included here if the victim and offender were related by family ties

^bHomicides in which the perpetrator and/or victim was involved in criminal practices, including the drug trade or organized crime. The category includes inter alia drug addicts who kill one another, drug addicts who kill their dealers, and drug dealers who kill one another at a rip deal, to organized crime. Assassinations within the criminal world are also included here

^cHomicides resulting from arguments including short or long term conflicts between friends, acquaintances or strangers resulting in a violent death. This category only includes those homicides where offenders and victims do not know each other from criminal circles

Table 26.5 Location (%) of homicides in Sweden, 2002–2008 ($N = 644$) and 1990–1996 ($N = 719$)

	2002–2008	1990–1996
Private home	65	70
Street, road, public transport	19	13
Hotel, shop, restaurant/café or other place of entertainment and amusement	4	5
Park, forest or recreational area	5	6
Other	7	6
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 26.7 Age distribution (%) of homicide victims in Sweden, 2002–2008 ($N = 644$) and 1990–1996 ($N = 719$)

	2002–2008	1990–1996
0–14 years	5	9
15–29 years	24	24
30–44 years	26	26
45–59 years	23	22
60+ years	15	14
Unknown (over 14 years)	7	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 26.8 Age distribution (%) of offenders charged (or in a similar way known to the prosecutor's office) with homicide in Sweden, 2002–2008 ($N = 658$) and 1990–1996 ($N = 739$)

	2002–2008	1990–1996
0–14 years	0.01	0.01
15–29 years	46	43
30–44 years	34	37
45–59 years	15	15
60+ years	5	5
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 26.9 Proportion (%) of offenders and victims respectively who were drunk at the time of the homicide, 2002–2008 ($N = 555$) and 1990–1996 ($N = 694$)

	2002–2008	1990–1996
Offender drunk	45	57
Victim drunk	41	52
Neither offender nor victim drunk	40	30

Table 26.10 Median age of the Swedish population and annual homicide rate (victims/100,000), 1976–2006

	Median age	Homicide rate
1970	35.3	0.8
1976	35.6	1.2
1980	36.3	1.2
1986	38.1	1.4
1990	38.4	1.3
1996	38.7	1.2
2000	39.2	1.0
2006	39.9	0.9

Source: Statistics Sweden (SCB); Cause-of-death statistics (Health Department)

Table 26.11 Proportion (%) of offenders and victims of homicide in Sweden with documented alcohol abuse problems, 2002–2008 ($N = 658$ for offenders; $N = 644$ for victims) and 1990–1996 ($N = 739$ for offenders; $N = 719$ for victims)

Documented alcohol abuse?	2002–2008		1990–1996	
	Offenders	Victims	Offenders	Victims
Yes	35	25	46	39
No	55	60	48	55
Unknown	8	15	6	6
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 26.12 Proportion (%) of victims of homicide who died before professional medical care in ambulance or hospital, respectively during or after such care, 2002–2008 ($N = 644$) and 1990–1996 ($N = 719$)

	2002–2008	1990–1996
Died before being taken care of by Ambulance or Hospital personnel	73	80
Died during or after being taken care of by Ambulance or Hospital personnel	18	9
Unclear	9	11
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Male victims

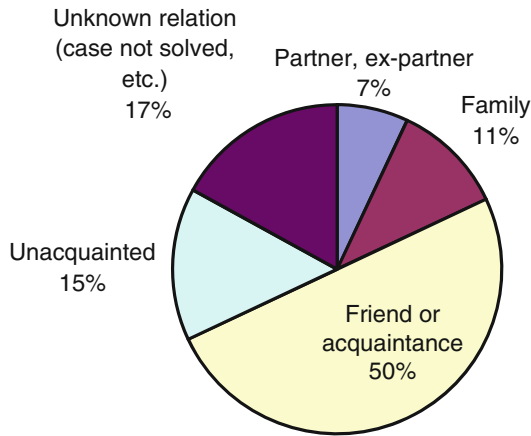


Fig. 26.2 Relationship between male victims and perpetrator in Swedish homicides 2002–2008 (*N* = 426)

Female victims

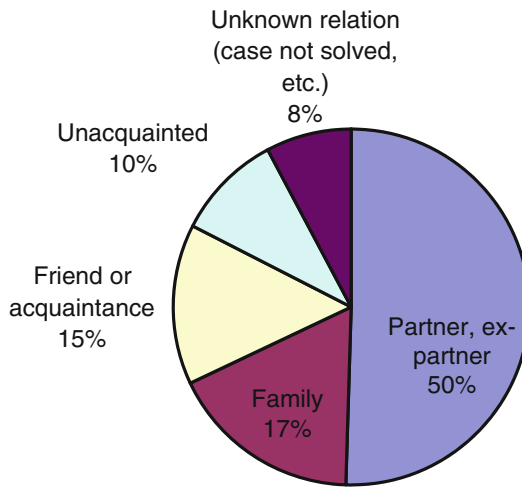


Fig. 26.3 Relationship between female victims and perpetrator in Swedish homicides 2002–2008 (*N* = 217)

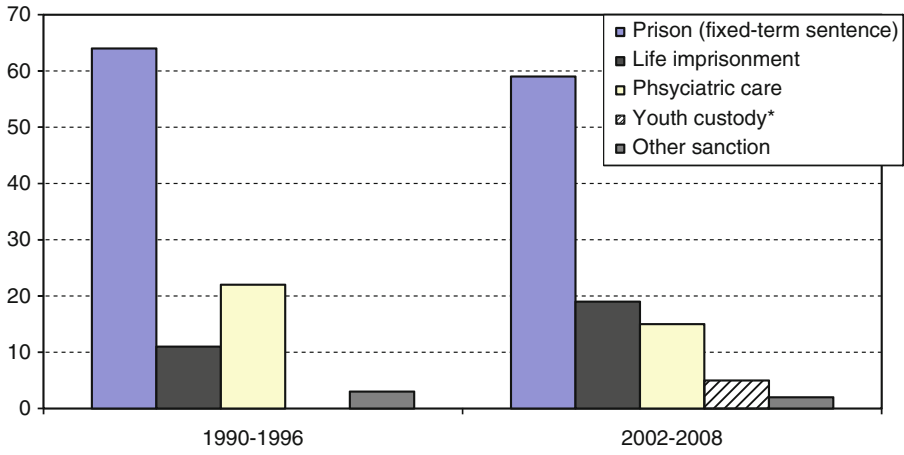


Fig. 26.4 Percentage distribution of sanctions for offenders convicted of homicide in Sweden, 2002–2008 (*N* = 541) and 1990–1996 (*N* = 602). * Sanction for offenders aged 15–17 years, which first appeared in 1999

Chapter 27: Homicide in Estonia



Fig. 27.2 Homicides rates in Estonia, Tallinn and Ida-Viru county, 1993–2009

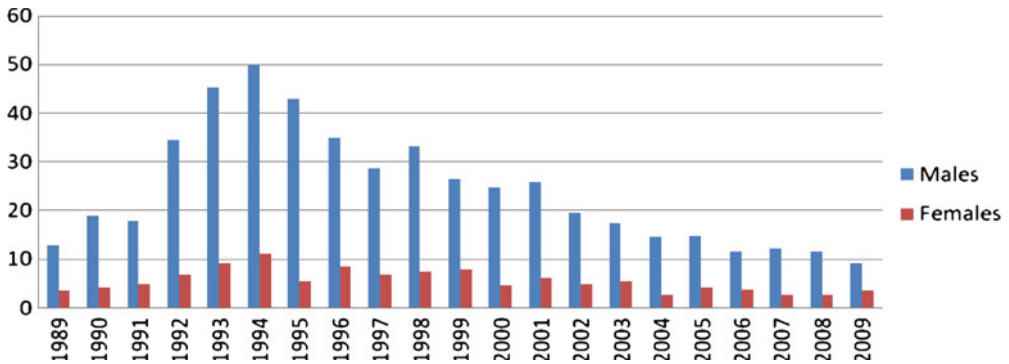


Fig. 27.4 Homicide victims by gender according to mortality statistics in 1989–2009, per 100,000 inhabitants

Chapter 28: Homicide in Lithuania

¹⁰The regional (municipal) distribution of homicide rates (2001–2002) map is available from Springerlink: *please put URL here.*

¹¹The local Moran's *I* maps for municipal homicide rates are available from Springerlink: *please put URL here.*

Biography

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Vania Ceccato is a human geographer interested in security issues, particularly in the spatial dimension of crime and its underlying dynamics, both at local (urban) and regional levels. She has conducted empirical work in Sweden, United Kingdom, Brazil, and in the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

She is Associate Professor at the Department of Urban Planning and Environment at Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden where she is in charge of research projects dealing with outdoor rape, safety in underground stations, and safety in rural communities.

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Brian Francis is Professor of Social Statistics at Lancaster University, and Director of an ESRC Research Methods node. He has over 30 years of experience in statistical consultancy and applied statistical research. His publications span statistics, health, sociology, and criminology, developing analytic approaches. His research interests include criminal careers, quantitative methods in criminology, and analysis of ranked data.

Soenita M. Ganpat (1982) has finished her studies in Criminology in January 2006 at the Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Since November 2009 she is working as a Ph.D. student at the Department of Criminology at Leiden University, and she is writing her doctoral thesis on risk factors that contribute to the escalation of lethal violence in conflict situations. This research takes place within the context of the research programme Criminal Justice: Legitimacy, Accountability, and Affectivity. At the moment she is also cooperating in a large-scale international comparative research project on murder and manslaughter in Europe.

Sven Granath has been working as a researcher for the National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) in Stockholm, Sweden since 1999. From then on he has also been involved in research for the Institution of Criminology at Stockholm University, and received his Ph.D. in criminology in 2007. His doctoral thesis was on, among other things, trends in serious youth violence in Sweden on the basis of an analysis of court judgments relating to attempted homicide and consummated homicide. The last years he has gained substantial experience working with questions and data sources concerning the structure and trends of serious violence in Sweden (and Sweden compared to other countries). He recurrently gives lectures on the characteristics and trends in Youth Crime, Serious Violence, and Robbery.

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Colin Pritchard was a Principle Psychiatric Social Worker and after 15 years practice became a Lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Leeds, 1970, with the late and great Professor Max Hamilton who taught that “if you teach a practice, you practice”. Consequently, Colin maintained a small mental health practice link throughout most of his academic career. After a Senior Lecturership at the University of Bath, in 1980 he became Professor of Social Work at the University of Southampton and then Research Professor in the Department of Psychiatry in 1998, where he continues as a Visiting Professorship.

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