

Gun-related homicides in Switzerland

JOSHUA B. WEISS

This paper examines and describes the situation of gun-related homicides in Switzerland and their recent development in the last 30 to 40 years. After a brief explanation of the term ‘gun-related crime’ and its understanding in Switzerland, potential trends in firearm use in general, as well as in homicides, are being shown to the reader using different graphs. For this purpose, national and cantonal data are examined and compared to find out whether similar developments can be deducted. As a result of this comparison, the major data gaps will then be highlighted and some suggestions to overcome these issues are made. Before drawing a conclusion, the development of gun-related homicides in recent years is chronicled, as the attempted and completed offences are analysed in greater detail.

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I. Introduction

The Swiss Legal System and its different laws regulate various gun-related offences. In practice, these events remain a rare phenomenon. Therefore, there is generally little available data on gun-related crime. In the years

2005 and 2006, a series of so-called ‘family tragedies’ led to reforms in the Swiss Weapon Law and a widespread consciousness about gun-related crime in this specific sphere.¹ Such cases are mostly understood as homicides of family members, followed by the subsequent suicides of the offenders.² The investigation of 75 cases of homicide-suicide in western and central Switzerland over the period of 23 years (1981–2004) showed that in 76% of the cases, the most commonly used instrument to commit this crime is a gun.³ In 25% of those cases, the lethal gun was an army weapon, in 28%, however, it was not possible to determine the type and origin of the gun due to incomplete reports.⁴ Unfortunately, it is not possible to make a clear and profound analysis of the origins of the weapons (military weapon or not), as in almost one third of all cases, this indication is missing in the records.⁵

1. Aim of the Paper

This paper collects different information about gun-related homicides in Switzerland to present an overview of the current situation. The aim is to evaluate the available statistics on a federal, as well as on a cantonal level to analyse gun-related killings and their development in Switzerland. This paper abstains from analysing the various cases in detail, as each case is completely different and could not suit as a representative example. To receive such a result, every single case would have to be analysed separately, or, as a consequence, any choice of a case would be arbitrary and not reflective of the general situation. For this reason, the individual cases and their analysis are not in the scope of this paper.

This research paper will be limited to attempted and completed homicides that involve a firearm when committed. To fulfil the aim of this paper, it is important to define the term ‘gun’ or rather ‘firearm’, which are used as

1 Silke Grabherr et al, ‘Homicide-Suicide Cases in Switzerland and Their Impact on the Swiss Weapon Law’ (2010) 31(4) *The American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology*, 335–335.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.* 336

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.* 337.

synonyms in this paper, and therefore to understand the terminology ‘gun-related crime’.

2. Definition ‘gun-related crime’

In Swiss law, the term ‘gun’ or rather ‘firearm’ is rarely utilised in legal provisions. More often, the general term ‘weapon’, with or without a specifying adjective, is applied.⁶ This is a much broader term including numerous objects that can be employed to commit a crime or as a threatening instrument. In addition, the legislatures could not find a consistent way of adopting the terms ‘weapon’ or ‘gun’, creating a diffuse and complex situation when it comes to ‘gun-use’ in the Swiss Criminal Code.⁷ For example, there might be a provision that applies the inclusive and wide term ‘weapon’ for a qualification of a general crime, whereas other provisions utilise the more restrictive term ‘firearm’ and in combination with the term ‘weapon’.⁸ This complicates the understanding, research, and analysis of this topic. Nevertheless, to conduct this research, a common definition of the term ‘gun’ or rather ‘firearm’ is required:

Fortunately, the Swiss Weapons Act⁹ defines in Article 4 Paragraph 1 what is to be understood under the term ‘weapon’.¹⁰ Yet, this definition is only applicable for violations of the Weapons Act and hence not binding when applying the Swiss Criminal Code.¹¹ To prevent confusion and provide a consistent way of using and understanding the term ‘weapon’, the definition of the Weapons Act in Article 4 Paragraph 1 Litera A will be applied: ‘devices that allow projectiles to be fired by means of a propellant

6 See for example art 123 para 2 SCC, art 189 para 3 SCC, art 190 para 3 SCC.

7 *Swiss Criminal Code of 21 December 1937 (SCC)*, SR 311.0.

8 See for example art 139 para 3 SCC, art 140 para 2 SCC, art 260quater SCC.

9 *Federal Act on Weapons, Weapon Accessories and Ammunition of 20 June 1997* (Weapons Act, WA), SR 514.54.

10 Fatih Aslantas, ‘Art 4 WG’ in Nicolas Facincani und Reto Sutter (Hrsg.), *Waffengesetz (WG), Bundesgesetz über Waffen, Waffenzubehör und Munition vom 20. Juni 1997 (WG)* (2017) 11, 15 [1].

11 Aslantas (n 11) 15 [2]; Marcel Alexander Niggli and Christof Riedo, ‘Art 139 StGB’ in Marcel Alexander Niggli and Hans Wiprächtiger (eds), *Basler Kommentar, Strafrecht II, Art 137–392 StGB* (4th ed, 2019) 2898, 2940–2941 [170].

charge and that can be carried and operated by a single person, or objects that can be converted into such devices (firearms).¹²

Decisive for the definition in the Weapons Act are the following conditions that must appear cumulatively: the projectile must be fired by means of a propellant charge and the device must have the characteristic to be carried and operated by a single person. Where one of these characteristics is missing, yet can be added easily by a simple modification, the device must count as a firearm as well.¹³ Thus, cannons or bigger weapons are excluded, as they cannot be carried by a single person. The legislator, willing to clarify the situation, introduced the term 'firearms' at the end of the provision in parentheses.¹⁴ As soon as a device unfit to shoot can be converted into a functional firearm without much effort, it has to be classified as a weapon or rather a firearm.¹⁵ Even if the general list of weapons is not congruent with its use in the Swiss Criminal Code and the judges are free in their verdicts whether an object should be counted as a weapon or not, this research paper orientates the findings around the definition of a firearm given in the Weapons Act.¹⁶

3. Methodology

The method chosen to reach the aim of this research paper is the descriptive evaluation and analysis of available federal and cantonal statistics. By analysing these different statistics, the information can exclusively be based upon the officially reported crime. Therefore, it is not possible to reflect the actual situation, for there is always the so-called dark figure of crime, which is crime that happens beyond public or official knowledge.¹⁷ In addition, it cannot be assumed that a specific offence is committed more than others by relying on the official numbers, as there are various reasons that may or may not lead to an official process, such as different reporting behaviour for different types of crimes, the available resources of

¹² Aslantas (n 11) 16 [4].

¹³ Art 4 para 1 lit a WA; Hans Wüst, *Schweizer Waffenrecht* (1999) 28.

¹⁴ *Ibid* 29.

¹⁵ *Ibid* 30.

¹⁶ Art 4 para 1 lit a WA; Aslantas, (n 11) 15 [3].

¹⁷ Federal Statistical Office, *Police crime statistics 2020*, FSO No 1116 – 2000 (Bern 2021) 6; Tim Newburn, *Criminology*, (2017) 45.

the law enforcement authorities, cantonal differences in the regime of criminal policing, as well as legislative changes.¹⁸

Having defined the term ‘gun’, or rather ‘firearm’ (chapter I.2.), this paper focuses on an analysis of the different crime statistics and the various data collected by the officials (chapter II.) before highlighting the major data gaps (chapter II.2.). Ensuing, the research will continue with an analysis of the trends (chapter III.) before concluding the research paper with a summary of the results (chapter IV.).

II. Current Situation in Switzerland

The majority (86 %) of the Swiss population voted on September 26th 1993, for the generalisation of a common national weapons law.¹⁹ The Weapons Act was introduced on June 20 1997 and came into force on September 21st 1998. The corresponding regulation came into force on January 1st 1999.²⁰ From that moment on, Switzerland no longer had 26 different cantonal weapon laws, but one commonly binding Weapons Act (and corresponding Regulation).²¹ The Weapons Act regulates the situation from a general point of view, and the Weapons Regulation defines the different issues in more detail.²² The purpose of the Weapons Act is the protection of the population, individuals, as well as the society itself, from violent criminality. This goal is aspired to be achieved with a wide and preventive regulation in the branch of weapons trade, weapons possession, and the carrying of weapons. The main goal of the Weapons Act is the prevention of weapons abuse and the harmonisation of the previously cantonally regulated weapons laws.²³ Its introduction had a visible effect on the use of weapons while committing crimes; in 1998, firearms were used in 18.5 % of the robbery cases, but the share decreased to 10.6 % in 2005. A similar tendency can be observed in the use of sharp objects.²⁴ The private

18 Ibid.

19 Wüst (n 14) 1.

20 Ibid 8.

21 Ibid 9.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid 15; BBl 1996 I 1054.

24 Nora Markwalder, *Robbery Homicide, A Swiss and International Perspective* (2012) 224 [348].

possession of weapons also decreased: in 2000, 35 % of the Swiss households possessed at least one firearm. Five years later, this percentage decreased to 28 %. Yet, this reduction must be explained by the downsizing of the Swiss Army, and not only by the introduction of the WA.²⁵

It can be concluded that the legislatives of a country can influence the behaviour of criminals by changing the legal framework.²⁶

Various legal provisions foresee a harsher punishment if there is a (mis)use of a weapon.²⁷ Nevertheless, it should be noted that a weapon, or more specifically a firearm, is a tool that can be used to commit more than just the crimes that specifically mention a gun-related commission. It is also important to note that despite the seriousness of an offence involving a firearm, there is no general database of every gun-use in criminal offences. Although there is statistical information collected about gun-related deaths including suicides and other reasons, there is unfortunately little information statistically collected about other crimes than homicides. A general decreasing trend in the use of firearms for committing all types of crime can be observed, with a mirroring increasing trend in the use of sharp objects.²⁸ It can be argued that weapon availability influences the commission of an offence and whether the outcome is fatal or non-fatal.²⁹

When analysing gun-related deaths, there is one undeniable fact that stands out: most of the gun-related deaths are not due to a criminal offence, but the result of suicide (graph 1). Out of 436 gun-related deaths in 1995, only 44 (10.09 %) were not suicides (graph 1). Ten years later, in 2005, there have been 299 gun-related deaths with 27 (9.03 %) cases of other reasons than suicide (graph 1). Another ten years further on, in 2015 and also in 2018, only 20 (8.66 %) of the 231 respectively 20 (9.85 %) of the 203 deaths had nothing to do with suicide. Consequently, there is an overall decreasing trend both in gun-related suicides, as well as in other gun-related deaths (graph 1).³⁰ It can be observed that the proportion of 9 to 1 has not

25 Martin Killias, Sandrine Haymoz and Philippe Lamon, *Swiss Crime Survey, Die Kriminalität in der Schweiz im Lichte der Opferbefragungen von 1984 bis 2005* (2007) 94.

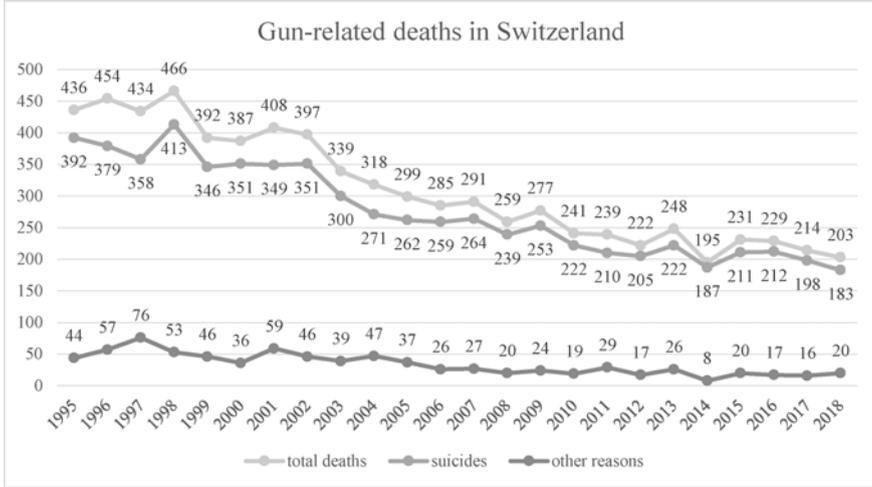
26 Ibid 229 [357].

27 See for example art 139 para 3 SCC, art 140 para 2 SCC, art 260quater SCC.

28 Federal Statistical Office, *Schusswaffentote nach Geschlecht*, FSO je-d-14.03.04.01.13. (Bern 2020).

29 Markwalder (n 25) 225 [350].

30 Ibid.



Graph 1: Gun-related deaths in Switzerland

significantly changed over the last 25 years, but remained more or less stable.³¹

Whether these decreasing trends are due to the Weapon's Act or due to other reasons cannot be statistically evaluated. If one follows the results of the Swiss Crime Survey that bases its data on numerous nationally and internationally held crime victimisation surveys, the observed tendency is a decreasing trend in weapon-related crime.³²

1. Available statistics

One of the most important statistics in Switzerland are the Police Crime Statistics ('PCS'), which are annual papers analysing and mainly summarising the current crime trends in Switzerland. On the national level, they are published by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, on the cantonal levels, it is mostly the police departments that publish the detailed statistics. Since 2009, all the cantonal cases are collected and compiled in these statistics in a detailed and consistent way.³³

³¹ Ibid.

³² Killias, Haymoz and Lamon (n 26) 1.

³³ Federal Statistical Office, *Police crime statistics 2019*, FSO No 1116-1900 (Bern 2020) 7.

As earlier mentioned (chapter I.3.), the PCS can only list the crimes known to the police. There will always be the so-called dark figure of crime. Therefore, what the actual situation is can only be estimated.³⁴ Furthermore, various other factors influence the number of statistics; most importantly, these are the available resources for the prevention of some categories of crime, the cantonal differences in crime policy and guidelines, as well as changes in the law.³⁵

1.1. Analysis of the federal statistical information

In 2020, there have been 47 completed and 206 attempted homicides, which is an increase of 22.2% compared to the year before (graph 2). Even though the main instrument to commit or attempt a homicide has been a sharp instrument (53%), nearly 10% of the completed or attempted homicides were committed with a firearm (24 cases resp. 9.5%). This means that the 24 cases of gun-related (completed such as attempted) homicides in 2020 are below the average of absolute numbers of the preceding 11 years, which would be 42 (41.9 resp. 19.29%) of an average of 217.2 cases. The most absolute gun-related cases can be counted in the years 2009 (21.6%) and 2012 (22.3%), with a total of 51 cases each year (graph 2). The fewest gun-related cases occurred in 2014, with a total of 18 homicides (10.4%) (graph 2). In the year 2020, 59.6% of all the completed homicides (meaning 28 cases) took place in the domestic sphere, which shows a decrease compared to the year before (with its 29 domestic homicides), but still above the average of the last ten years (which would be 25 domestic homicides).³⁶

The cases of gun-related homicides overall in Switzerland are decreasing, as the number has been reduced by half over the last 12 years, from 51 cases in 2009 to 24 cases in 2020 (graph 2).³⁷ Nonetheless, graph 2 shows that trend is

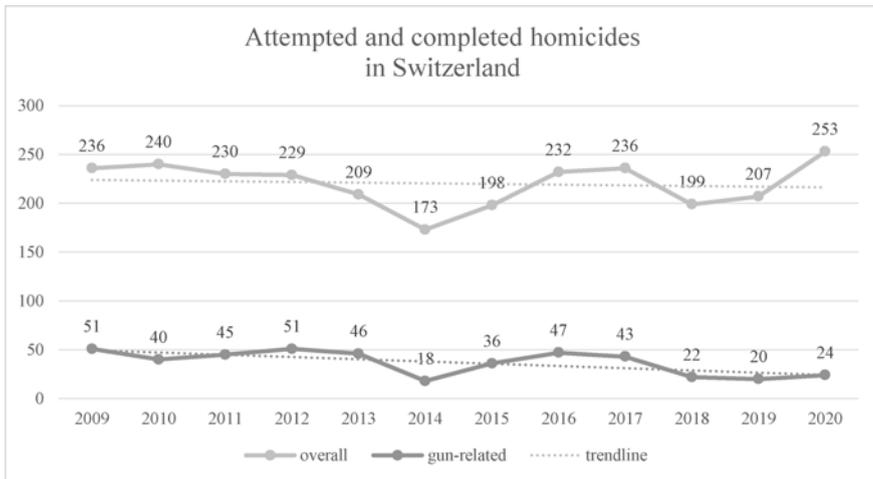
34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Federal Statistical Office (n 18) 8.

37 Federal Statistical Office, *Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik (PKS), Jahresbericht 2017 der polizeilich registrierten Straftaten*, FSO No 1116–1700 (Bern 2018) 63; The total number of homicides of the year 2013 differs in the police crime statistics from 2017, where there are 210 cases, see Federal Statistical Office, *Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik (PKS), Jahresbericht 2013*, FSO No 1116–1300 (Bern 2014) 63.

not continuously decreasing. The lowest number of gun-related homicides can be found in 2014, where also the overall number of homicides is the absolute lowest. A clear and statistically valid reason for this could not be found, as the overall number shows a correlation in some years (vast decrease from 2013 to 2014), but then in other years, there is no correlation (decrease in gun-related cases, but increase in overall numbers from 2019 to 2020). The share of gun-related homicides compared to other methods has been between 22% and 9% over the last 12 years, with a decreasing trend in the use of firearms (graph 2).³⁸ Hence, cases of homicides where firearms are being used are less frequent, yet the number of homicides in general remained stable over time.³⁹



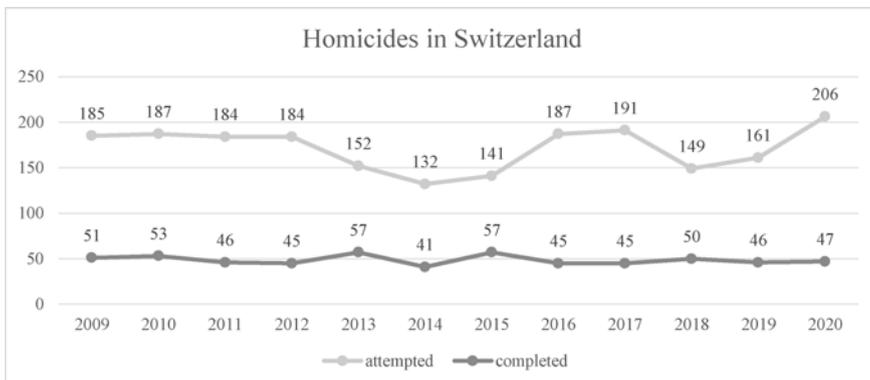
Graph 2: Attempted and completed homicides in Switzerland

The overall number of completed homicides remains stable, whereas the number of completed gun-related homicides is heavily decreasing (graph 4).⁴⁰ This trend can also be observed with the attempted gun-related homicides (graph 5):

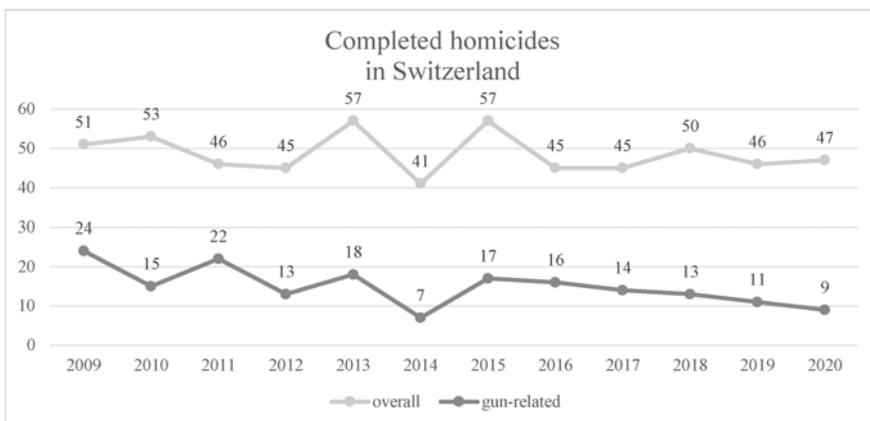
³⁸ Federal Statistical Office (n 38 [2013]) 63; Federal Statistical Office (n 38 [2017]) 63; Federal Statistical Office (n 18) 67.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.



Graph 3: Homicides in Switzerland

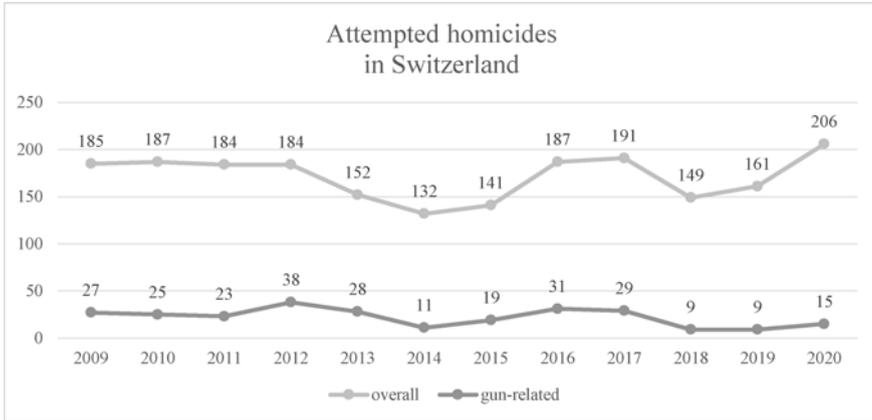


Graph 4: Completed homicides in Switzerland

1.2. Analysis of the cantonal statistics

In this chapter, the cantonal police crime statistics are analysed to determine whether the federal police crime statistics are a reflection of all the Cantons or whether there are notable differences between the regions of Switzerland. Thus, the following chapter will analyse Cantons with not only a high, but also with a low population. The detailed graphs⁴¹ can be found in the annex.

⁴¹ The sources of all the following graphs are the cantonal PCS, listed in the bibliography. If a Canton is not listed, it means that the data used for the graph has only been received



Graph 5: Attempted homicides in Switzerland

The Cantons with more than one million inhabitants, being Zurich and Bern,⁴² will be analysed first. After these two Cantons, the eleven Cantons with a population between 250'000 and 850'000 inhabitants will be analysed. These are the Canton of Vaud, Aargau, St. Gallen, Geneva, Lucerne, Ticino, Valais, Fribourg, Basel Landschaft, Thurgau and Solothurn.⁴³ In a third step, Cantons with a population higher than 100'000, but lower than 200'000 inhabitants, will be analysed as examples of average populated Cantons. This will be Graubünden, Basel Stadt, and Neuchâtel.⁴⁴ Finally, certain Cantons with a population smaller than 100'000 inhabitants will have to be looked at in greater detail, specifically Nidwalden, Glarus, Obwalden, Uri, and Appenzell Innerrhoden.⁴⁵ With this selection, the different linguistic regions of Switzerland are being taken into account in a balanced manner, and thus a comparison could be made more easily.⁴⁶ In addition to this, Cantons with larger cities, such as

via email from the specific cantonal police department. This is the case for the Cantons of Aargau, Basel Landschaft, Thurgau, Solothurn, Obwalden, Neuchâtel and Graubünden. If there is no data visible in the graph, that means that the cantonal police could not provide any numbers for this specific year.

42 Federal Statistical Office, *Die Bevölkerung der Schweiz 2019*, FSO No 348–1900 (Bern 2020)

9.

43 *Ibid.*

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*

46 *Ibid.*

Basel Stadt, Geneva or Zurich are analysed, as well as Cantons with smaller cities, namely Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Uri or Nidwalden.

The statistically published numbers of gun-related homicides include both attempted and completed cases. There is no detailed and consistent way of publishing the attempted and completed gun-related homicides on the cantonal level. This is the reason why the 26 cantonal authorities had to be contacted to receive such a separate listing. Unfortunately, not all Cantons could provide such information. Where available, it will be looked at in a differentiated way. Due to the low absolute numbers of homicides in general and gun-related cases specifically, there is not a clear trend to be deducted from the different statistics. The highest cantonal number was in 2019, where 52 overall homicides (16 completed cases and 36 attempts) took place in Zurich, thereof 9 that were gun-related (7 completed cases and 2 attempts). The lowest numbers can be found in Nidwalden with only 3 homicides from 2009 to 2020, thereof 2 being gun-related (2010 and 2018). It can be generally said that the gun-related homicide cases remain below 10, except for some extraordinary years and Cantons (for Zurich: 13 cases in 2009, for Geneva: 12 cases in 2009, 13 cases in 2012, 18 cases in 2016, for Lucerne: 11 cases in 2013). There are even Cantons where the cumulated case-number from 2009 to 2020 is below 10 (for Ticino: 8 cases, for Appenzell Innerrhoden: 0 cases, for Uri: 2 cases, for Glarus: 2 cases, for Nidwalden: 2 cases, for Neuchâtel: 7 cases, for Graubünden: 2 cases, for Thurgau: 9 cases, for Obwalden: 1 case). There have not been many cases of gun-related homicides in several Cantons, where more than half of the years taken into account show no such cases at all (for Ticino: 9 out of 12 years with 0 cases, for Appenzell: 0 cases overall, for Uri: 9 out of 11 years with 0 cases, for Glarus: 8 out of 10 years with 0 cases, for Nidwalden: 10 out of 12 years with 0 cases, for Neuchâtel: 8 out of 12 years with 0 cases, for Thurgau: 6 out of 10 years with 0 cases, for Graubünden: 11 out of 12 years with 0 cases, for Obwalden: 11 out of 12 years with 0 cases).

What can be stated is that the absolute numbers in all the different Cantons are very low and there is a decreasing, as opposed to an increasing trend in the use of firearms for committing homicides. In addition to this, it can not statistically be proven that a high population density would increase the chances of the occurrence of gun-related homicides, even though the Cantons with the highest number of inhabitants show higher absolute case numbers as well, for example, Zurich or Bern. Yet, it has to be

clarified that the number of cases does not change in a calculatable correlation with the number of people living in a Canton. One case does, due to the low absolute numbers, influence the statistics out of proportion and hence has a huge impact on the whole situation. It would be arbitrary to rely on these mere numbers without taking into account more characteristics.

It can generally be stated that the cases of completed homicides have been stable at an annual number of 50, yet the completed gun-related homicides have decreased from 24 cases in 2009 to 9 cases in 2020 overall seen in Switzerland. The same image can be seen on a cantonal level, where the numbers of completed gun-related homicides during the last five years have been between 0 and 3 cases per year and Canton, except for Zurich.

2. Major data gaps

One of the biggest issues of the different data collections is the lack of a uniform and binding use of the terms 'weapon', 'gun' and 'firearm'. Whereas the colloquial use of the term 'weapon' is often meant to describe firearms, the legal perspective of this is much broader.⁴⁷ Such an inconsistency complicates the comparison and analysis of the current situation, as it cannot always be determined whether the author is aware of this issue or chooses to ignore it. However, even their knowledge would not improve the situation sustainably, as the problem lies in the lack of a consistent definition. The legal provisions with the non-uniform way of using the different terms do not make matters easier either, leaving a dissatisfying situation of conviction statistics without any specification of the type of weapons. The result is a diffuse and unclear database.

It is difficult to differentiate between the various types of homicides already, as a lot of research does not undertake the step to distinguish between the different subtypes. As a result, it is nearly impossible to detect the particularities of the different cases. Unfortunately, this may then lead to a situation where preventative measures may be too general and unsuitable for specific types of homicides.⁴⁸ Nora Markwalder proposes the introduction or continuation of the homicide surveillance system, which

⁴⁷ Art 4 para 1 WA.

⁴⁸ Markwalder (n 25) 229 [357].

would require annual updates. This would allow researchers and the police to detect trends and may enable them to do some data-based forecasting. As this is a very time-consuming task, she also proposes that a possible solution could be a general data storage system accessible and editable by various authorities.⁴⁹ Not negligible are the data protection necessities, as well as organisational concerns, which might be a burden. Nevertheless, other countries, such as Finland, have already introduced such an electronic information system on inhabitants.⁵⁰ This information is accessible for researchers as well, and would therefore be a good solution to comply with data protection issues.⁵¹

Another problem is the lack of detailed statistical information, for gun-related attempts or completed offences of the police crime statistics are not listed separately. This renders it nearly impossible to find out how many of the completed cases of homicides have been committed with a gun. The benefit of such knowledge would be the easily visible number of completed gun-related homicides and therefore their importance compared to the overall number of completed homicides. Moreover, it could be more easily determined whether a gun has an influence on the homicide being completed or attempted, or whether the used instrument is of little importance for the outcome of this offence.

III. Development

The number of homicides committed with a gun has been decreasing from 34% of all homicide cases in the years 2000 to 2004, to 20% in the years 2009 to 2016⁵² and to 12% in the years 2017 to 2020. In general, it can be concluded that there is a moderate decreasing trend in the number of completed homicides. However, it must be noted that the average number of victims has remained stable, which consequently means that there has

49 Ibid 229–230 [358].

50 Ibid 230 [358].

51 Markwalder (n 25) 230 [358].

52 Federal Statistical Office, *Polizeilich registrierte Tötungsdelikte 2009–2016, Innerhalb und ausserhalb des häuslichen Bereichs*, FSO No 797–1600–05 (Bern 2018) 5

been a shift from the completed to the attempted homicides,⁵³ as the share of completed homicides is decreasing.⁵⁴

In cases of domestic violence, the share of gun-related homicides is slightly lower, but decreasing comparably. In the years 2000 to 2004, 27% of the domestic homicides were committed with a gun.⁵⁵ In the years 2009 to 2016, there were 67 gun-related domestic homicide cases, which is a share of 17% of all homicide cases. Only 4 of the used guns were categorised as being an ordnance weapon, 1 of active service possession and 3 were transferred into private ownership after the end of the military service.⁵⁶ Whilst guns are not the most common instrument for committing a domestic homicide, they are the deadliest instrument for this offence.⁵⁷ When it comes to domestic homicides between family members (defined as a current or former partner or other family member),⁵⁸ only 22% of the cases between 2009 and 2016 were committed with a gun. Out of these 44 cases, only 1 was committed with an ordnance weapon that was transferred into private ownership after the end of military service.⁵⁹

The number of homicides and attempted homicides remained stable for the years 2015–2019, yet there is a considerable downward trend visible when it comes to the use of firearms: whereas in 2015, 36 cases were reported to be gun-related, the number of such homicides or attempted homicides decreased to 20 in 2019.⁶⁰ The cases of (attempted) gun-related serious assaults equally decreased from 16 in 2015 to the number of 8 in 2019.⁶¹

In 2011, 38.1% of the violent crimes fell under the category ‘domestic violence’. However, the share of domestic homicides is even higher, with a percentage of 55% of all completed homicide cases being committed within the domestic area. Since 41% of the domestic homicide deaths are

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid 6.

55 Ibid 15.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid 9.

59 Ibid 20.

60 Federal Statistical Office (n 34) 65.

61 Ibid.

gun-related, it is vital to analyse this specific type of crime when talking about gun-related crime in general.⁶²

IV. Conclusion

This paper has brought to light various information concerning gun-related homicides in Switzerland and their recent development. Amongst other things, it highlighted the fact that the general use of firearms has been decreasing ever since the WA was introduced. As a result, gun-related deaths were reduced by half over the last 20 years.

As it became more difficult in Switzerland to possess firearms, the trend of transferring army weapons into private ownership has been decreasing steadily. Although the case of gun-related crime ending lethally has fallen to a low level, the number of suicides performed with a firearm is still very high. An important fact is that the share of gun-related suicides compared to other means remained stable, with 9 gun-related suicides to 1 other gun-related death. However, this is not within the scope of this paper and was not discussed in more detail. Yet as any death that can be prevented is a life that can be saved, the focus should not only be on fighting crime by restricting gun policies, but also on reducing the total number of gun-related deaths. This is a considerable area identified during the research conducted, and the research problem could be further explored by including the gun-related suicides and what possible prevention policies could be introduced to also reduce the number of gun-related suicides.

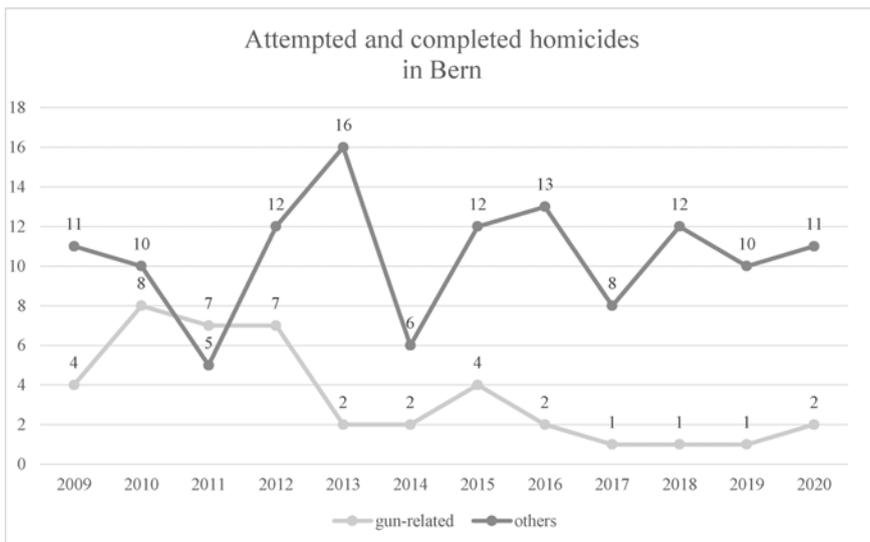
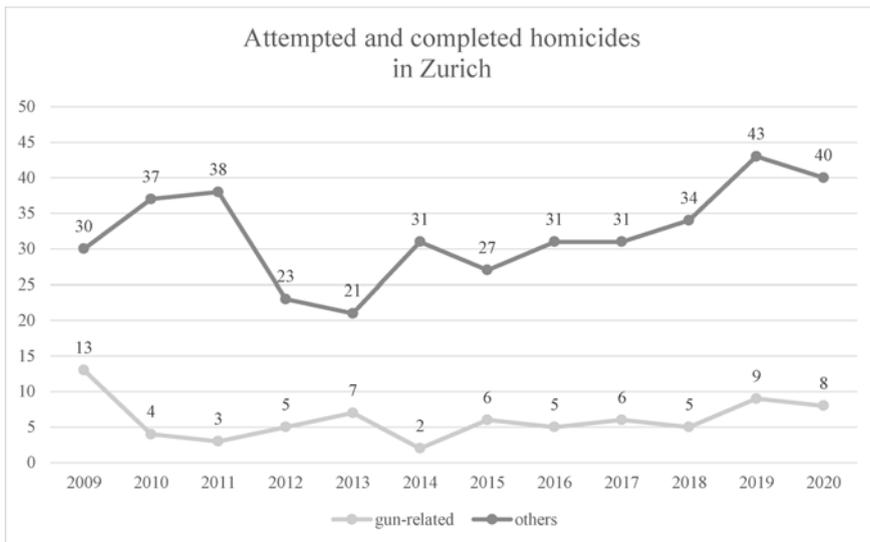
In my opinion, the main goal should be to reduce gun availability to an absolute minimum, offering the possibility to store any firearm at the armoury or even making it obligatory to do so. One could argue that the right of any person should be the right to defend him-/herself. However, if the legal restrictions that exist nowadays are respected, one would, for example, not be able to defend oneself in a gun-related robbery, as there would be no time to obtain the firearm and the ammunition from two separate rooms in a stressful situation of a robbery. In addition to this,

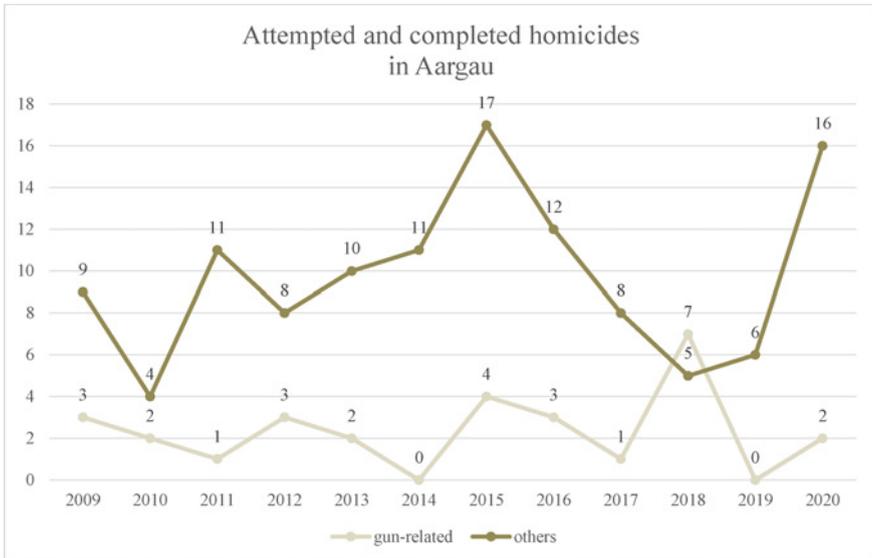
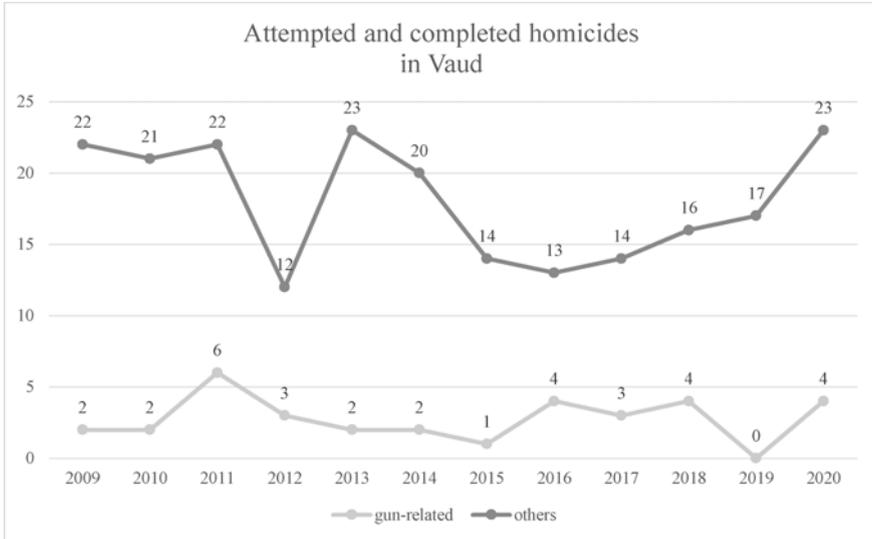
62 Federal Statistical Office, *Polizeilich registrierte häusliche Gewalt, Übersichtspublikation*, FSO No 797-1200-05 (Bern 2012) 5.

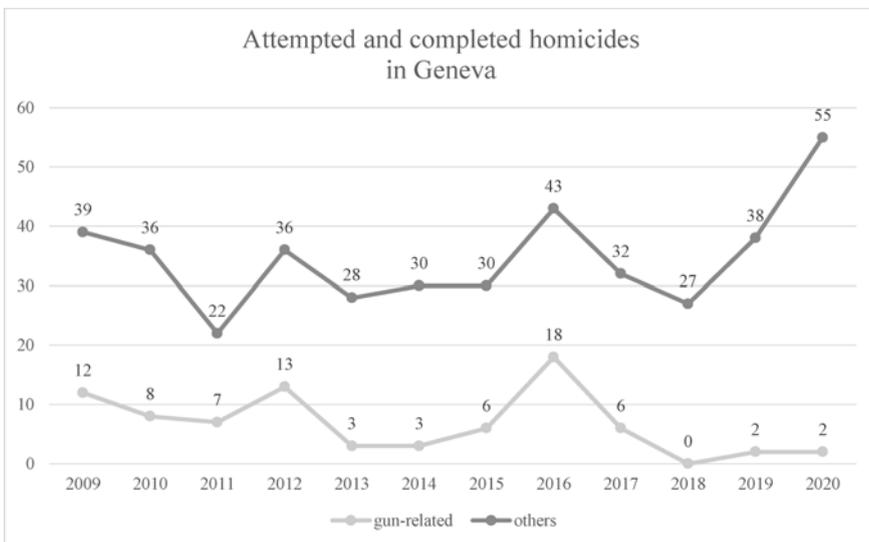
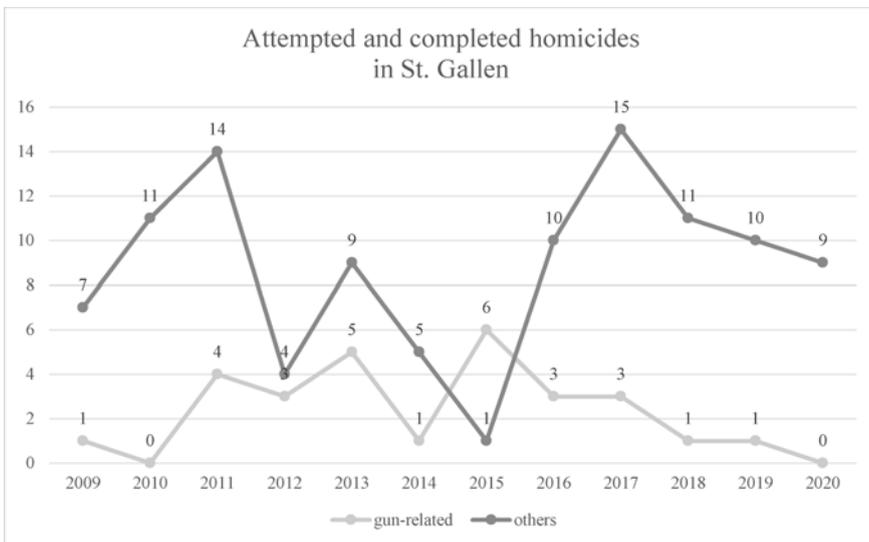
the mere presence of a firearm already endangers the situation drastically and increases its use, as well as the risk of a lethal outcome of the crime.

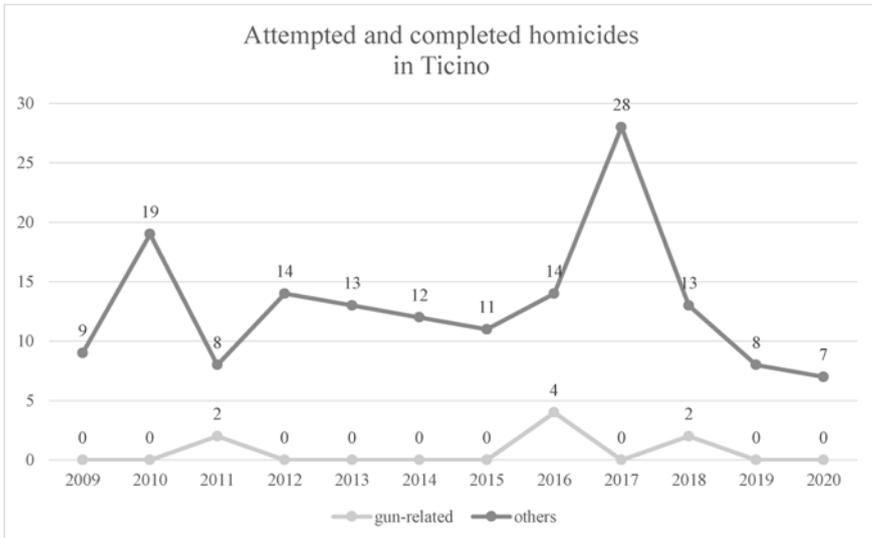
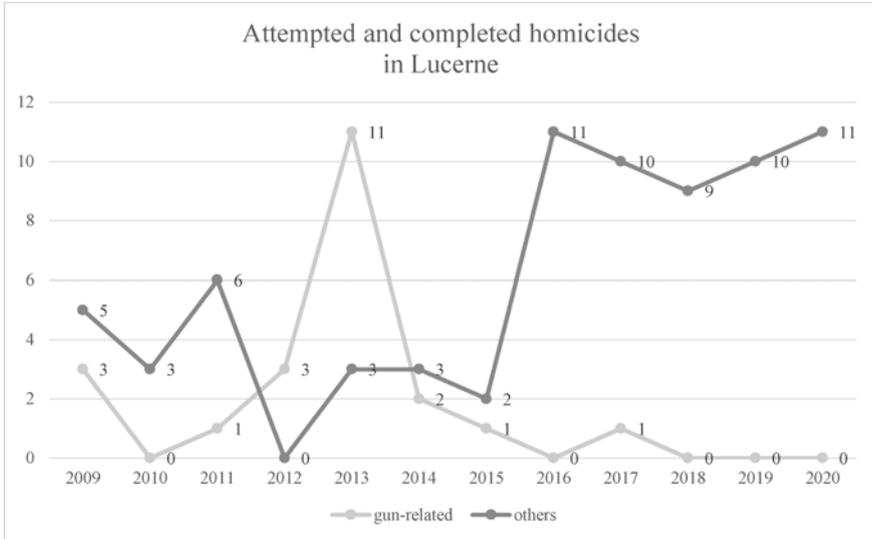
The most important and also nearly the only source of data are the (gun-related) deaths due to homicides where guns have been involved. It is for this reason that statistics should be more detailed when it comes to a specific norm of the SCC. Instead of merely putting all the different types of a crime in one category, the *modus operandi* should be listed separately as well, so that one could see how often a gun was used (as an instrument of threat, as a weapon to harm someone or to take a person's life).

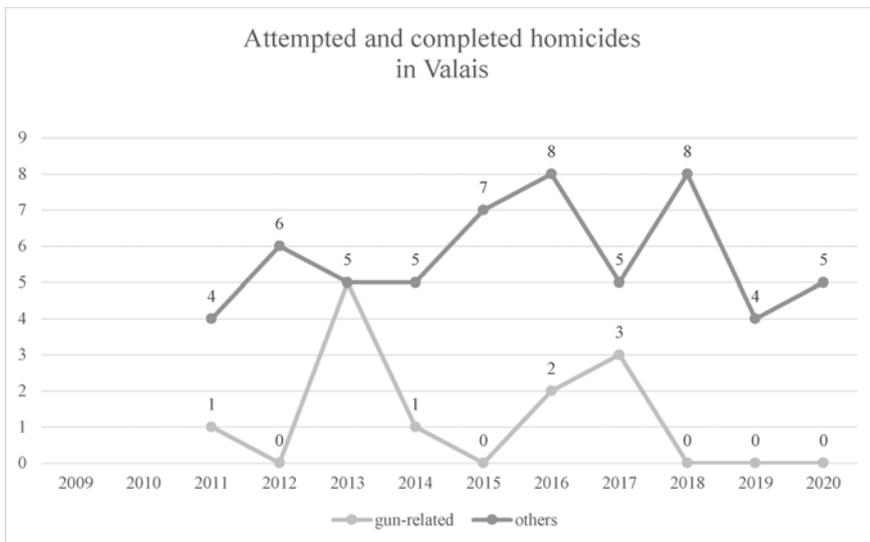
Annex



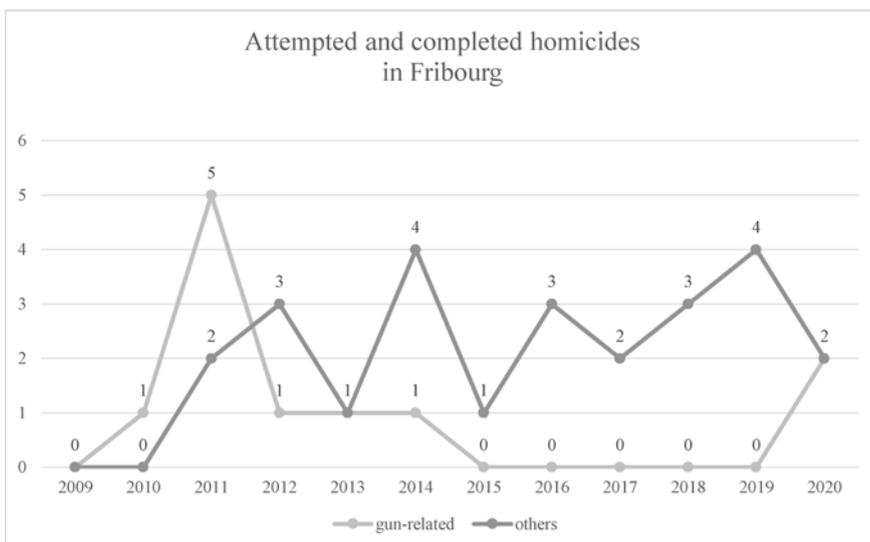






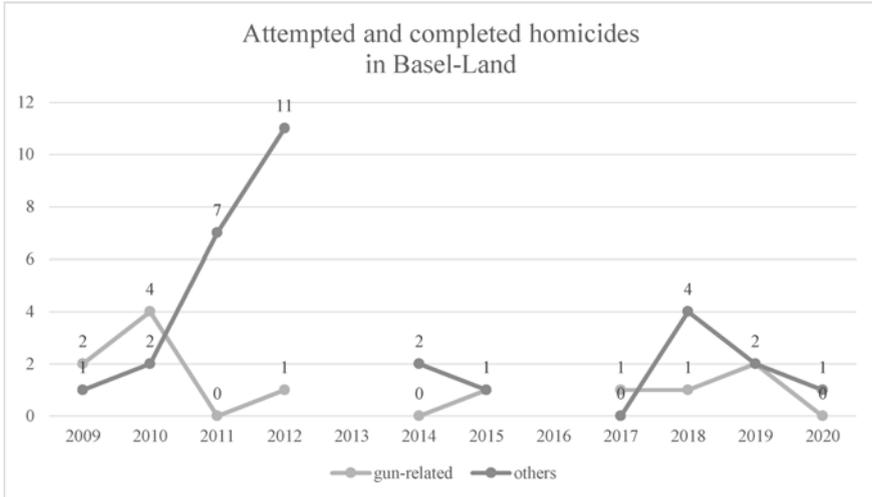


63

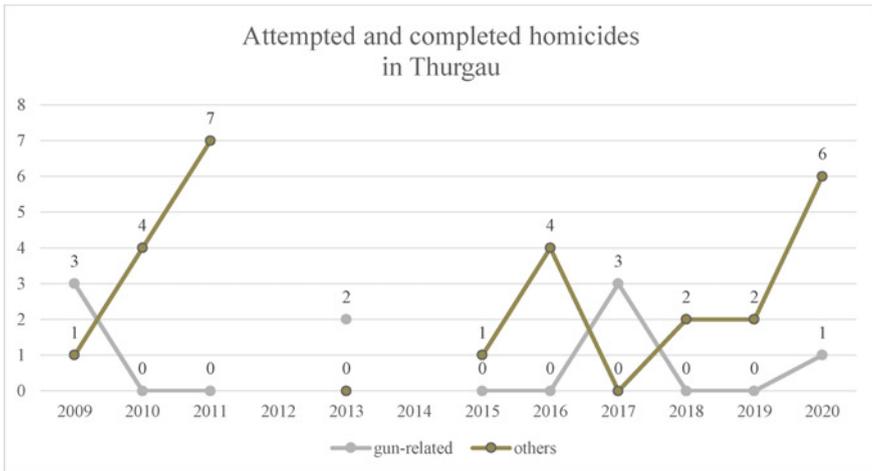


63 For the years 2009 and 2010, the Canton of Valais could not provide statistical numbers.

64

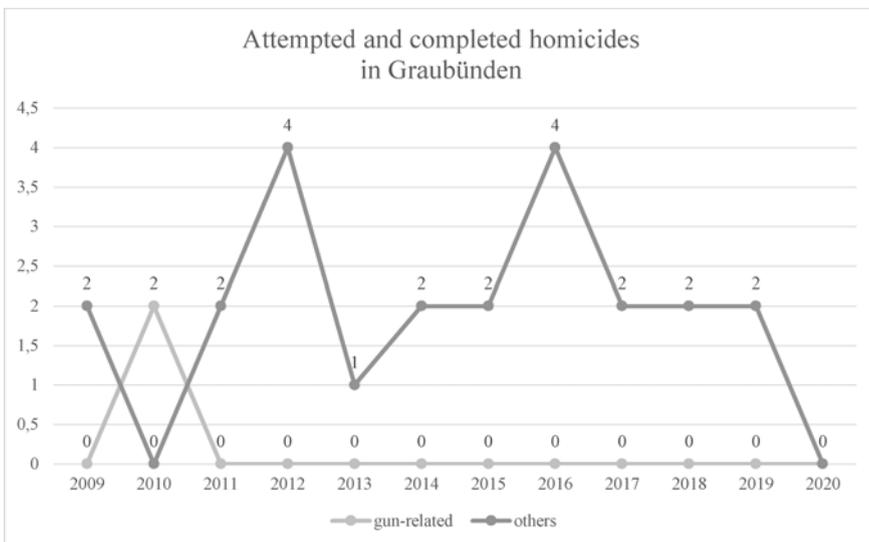
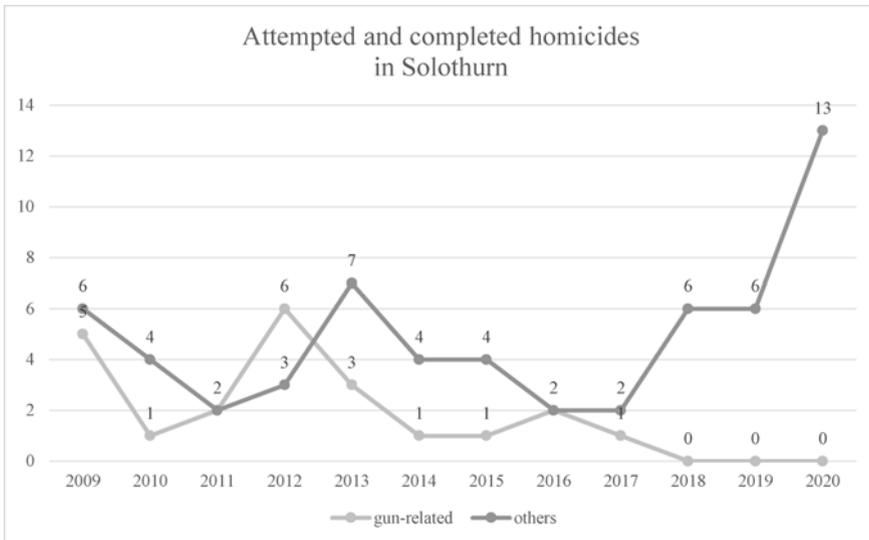


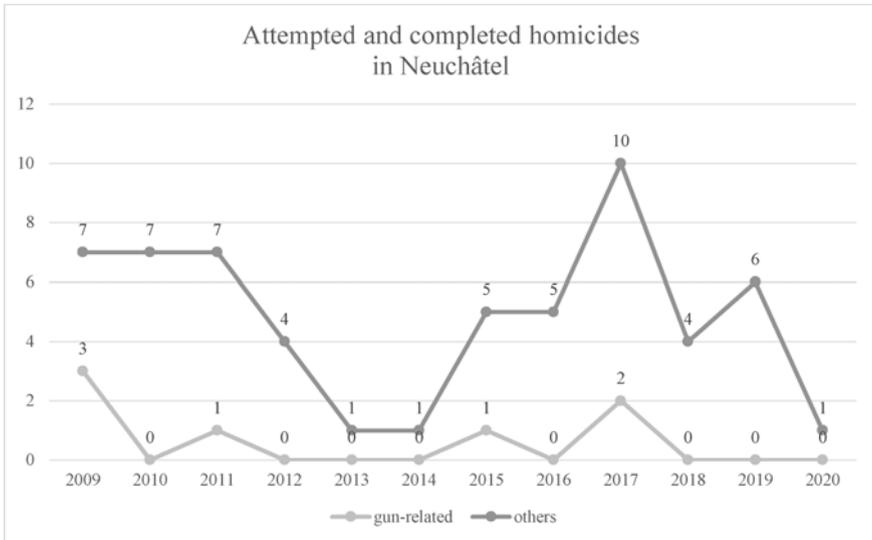
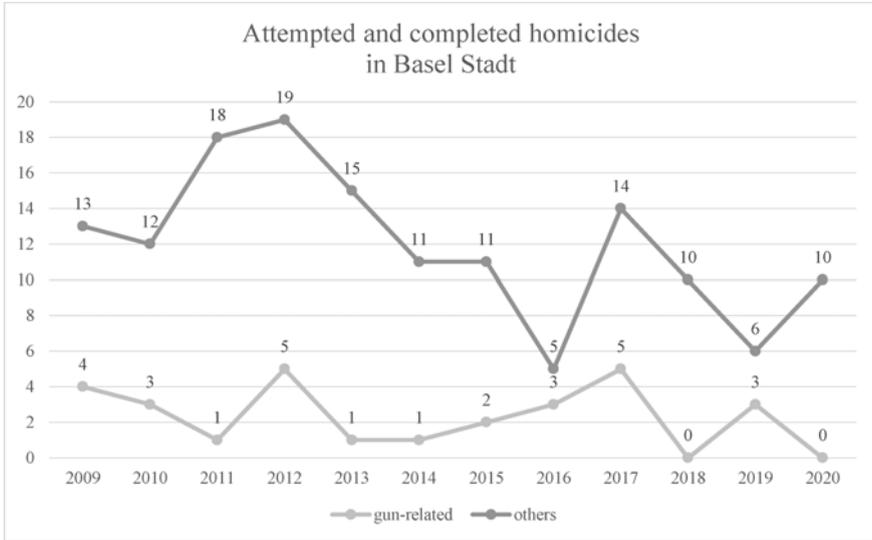
65

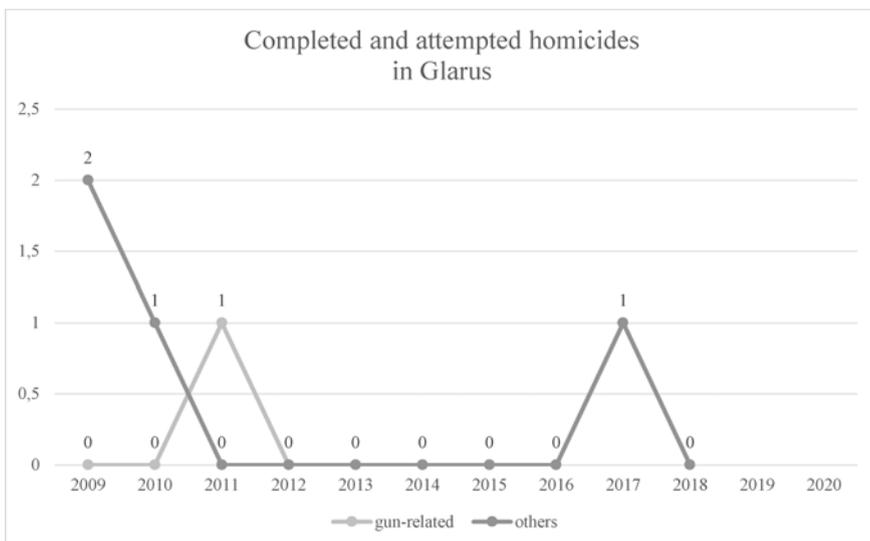
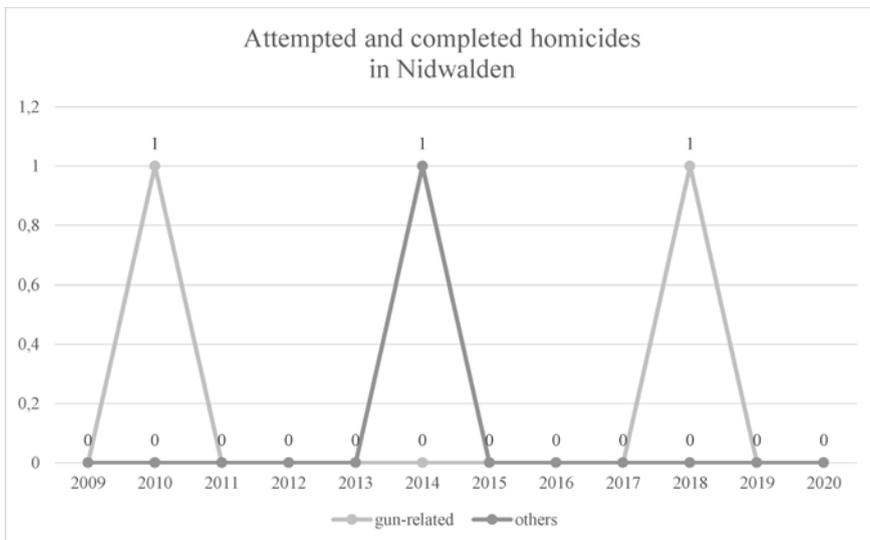


64 The gaps in 2013 and 2016 are due to the incomplete data basis received from the Canton of Basel Landschaft.

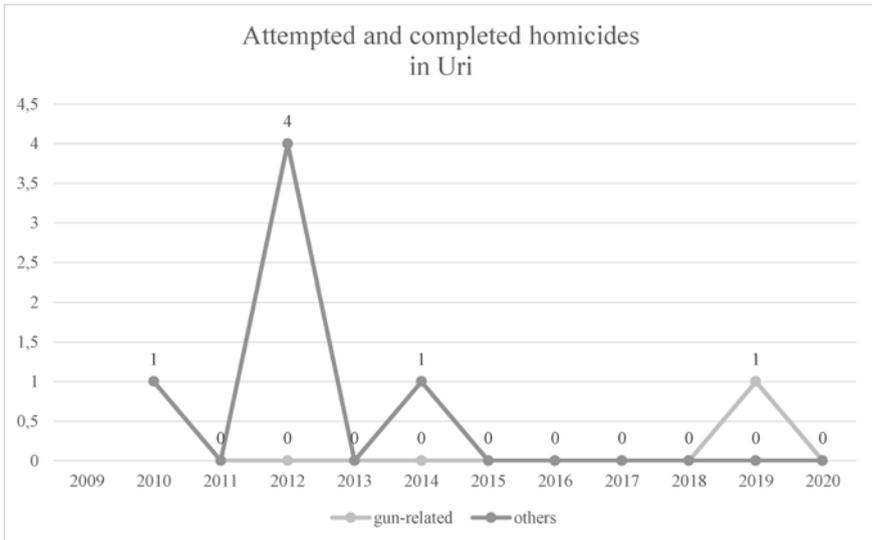
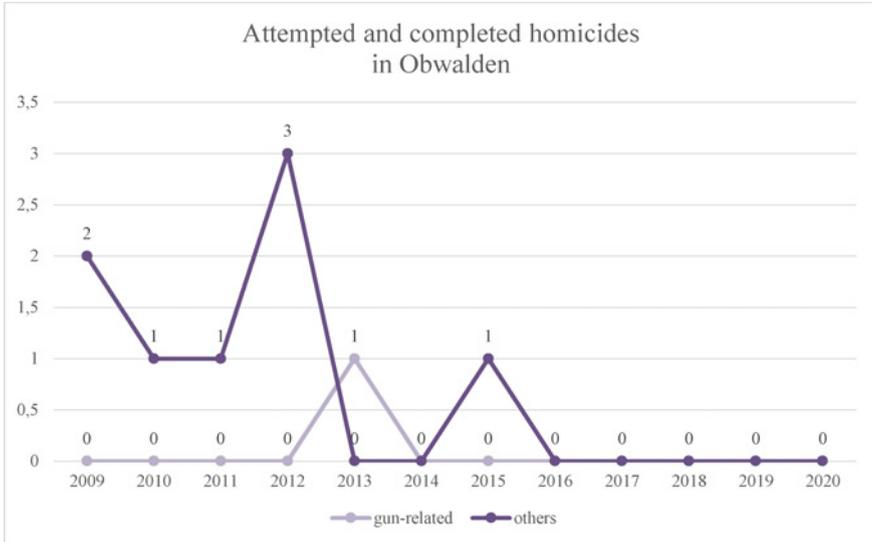
65 The gaps in 2021 and 2014 are due to the incomplete data basis received from the Canton of Thurgau.

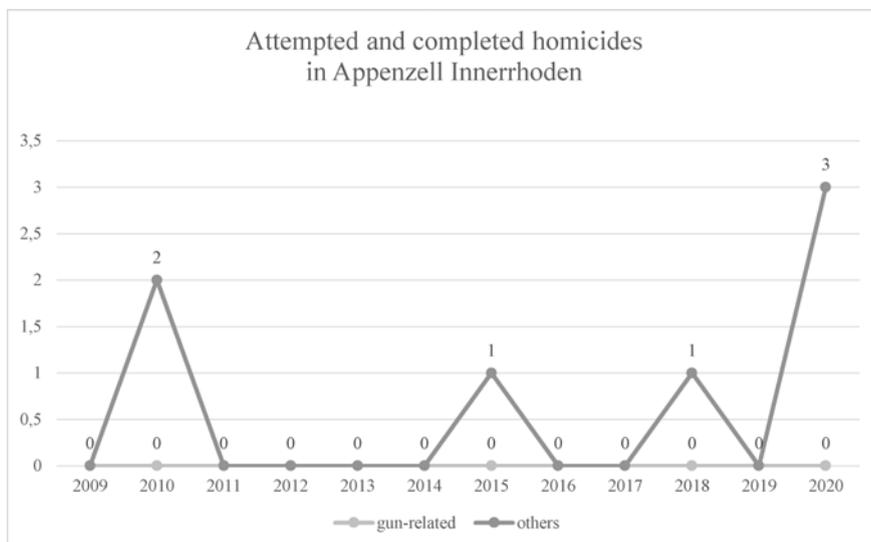






66 At the time of collection, there was no data available for 2019 and 2020.





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