



Universität St.Gallen



Firearm homicide: the “Swiss case”

PhD Simone Walser, University of St. Gallen Switzerland

Prof. Nora Markwalder, University of St.Gallen Switzerland

Prof. em. Martin Killias, University of St.Gallen Switzerland

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*“From insight
to impact”* 

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Firearm homicide trends in Switzerland
3. Nature of firearm homicides in Switzerland
4. Conclusions

1. Introduction: Firearms in Switzerland

- Historically high firearm ownership rate in Switzerland due to mandatory military service and hunting/shooting tradition
- However, low number of (firearm) homicides
→ “Swiss paradox”
- Strong decline of firearm ownership in the last 25 years: from 38 % (1998) to 17 % (2022) of Swiss households
- Reasons for this decline: strong reduction of army size and different gun law restrictions

→ Influence on firearm homicides?



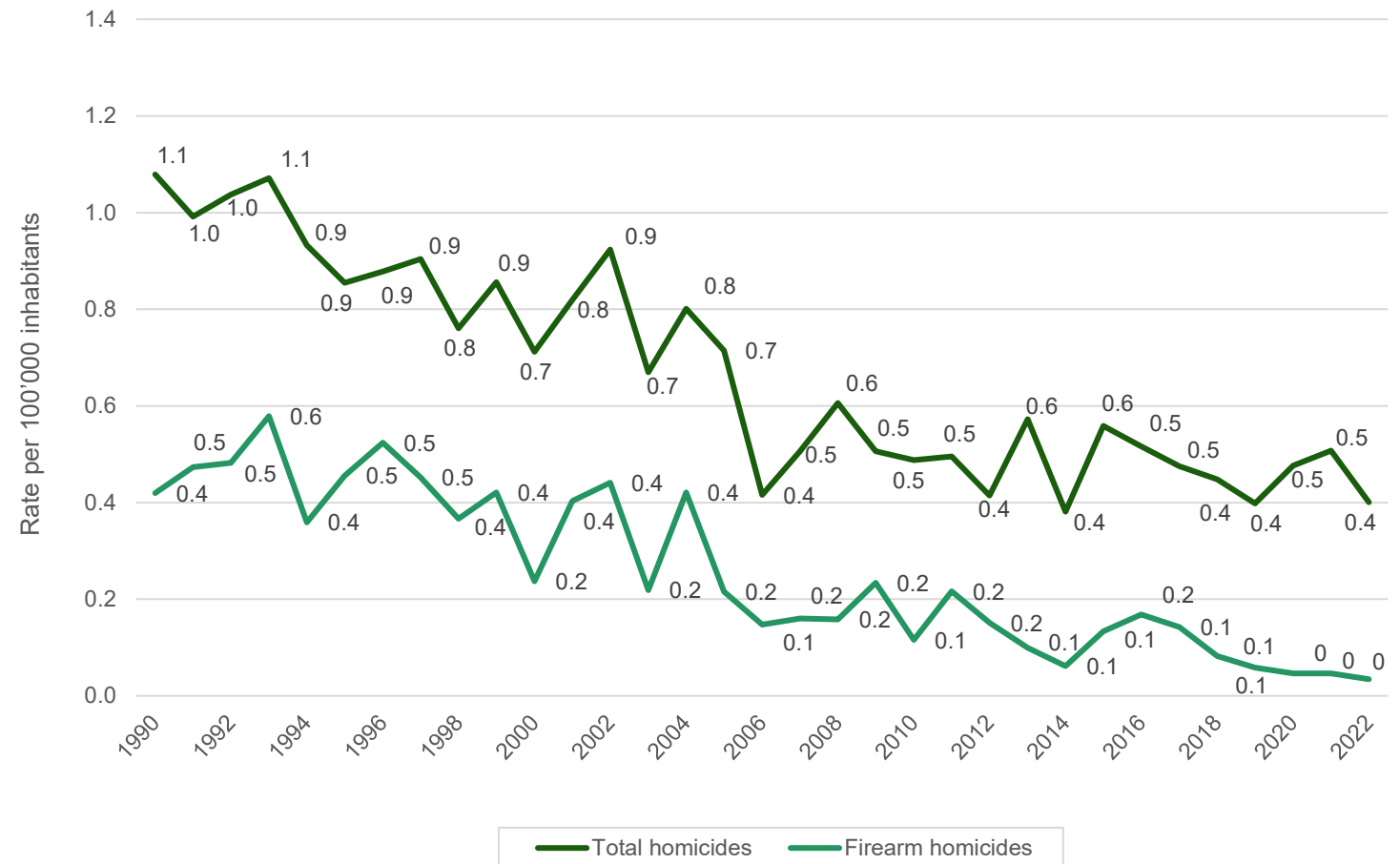
<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21379912>

1. Introduction: Swiss Homicide Monitor

- Swiss Homicide Monitor contains all completed, intentional homicides committed in Switzerland from 1990-2022
- Data content: offender-related, victim-related, incident-related data
- Data origin: files of courts, offices of public prosecutors, police institutions and institutes of forensic medicine, media reports
- Current state: 32 years with 1648 cases (1844 victims and 1750 perpetrators)

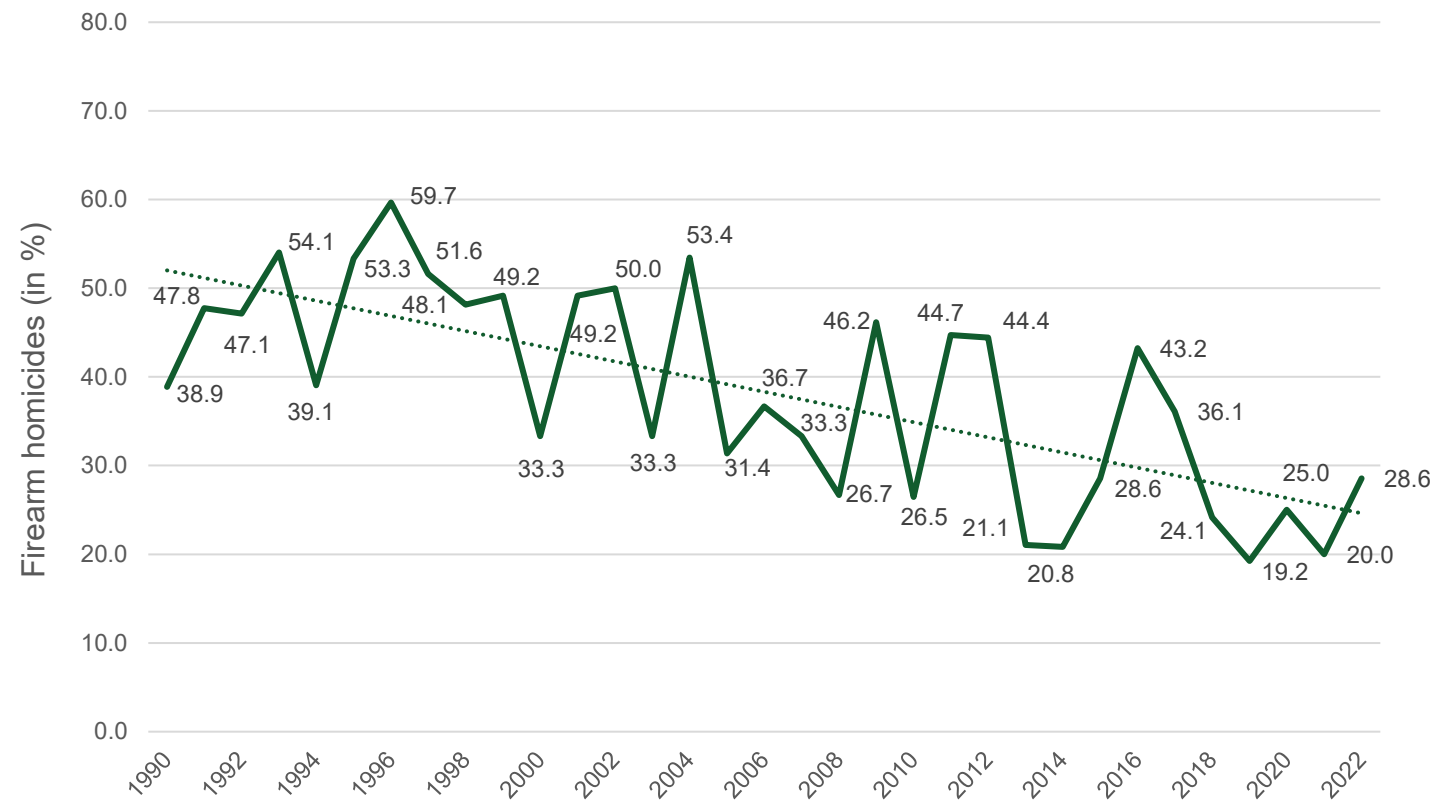
2. Firearm homicide trends (1990-2022)

- Total homicides:
 - Decline from 1990-2006
 - Stagnation from 2006-2022
- Firearm homicides:
 - Decline from 1990-2022



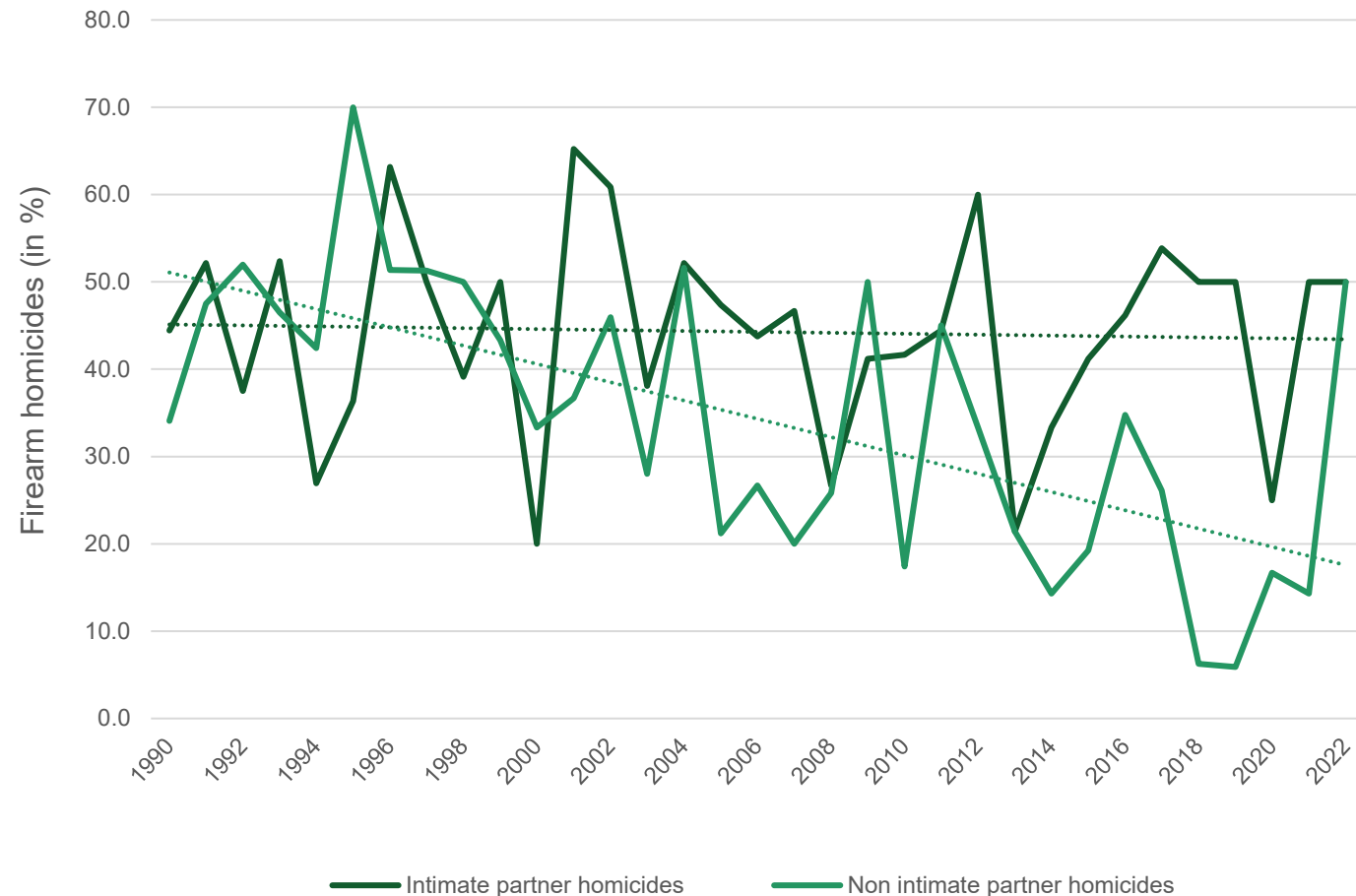
2. Firearm homicide trends (1990-2022)

- Decrease of share of firearm homicides from 50 % to 25 % since 1990



2. Firearm homicide trends: intimate partner homicides vs. non intimate partner homicides (1990-2022)

- Strong decline of firearm homicides for non intimate partner homicides
- Stable firearm homicides for intimate partner homicides

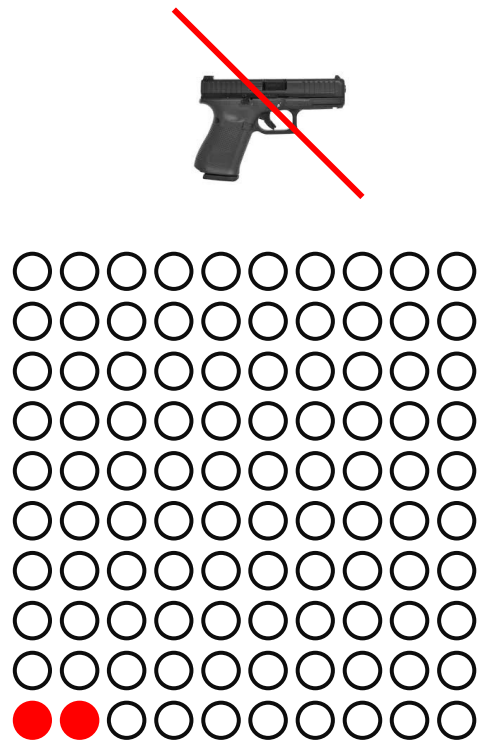


3. Nature of firearm homicides in Switzerland (2015-2022)

- Older offenders and victims involved in firearm homicides
- More Swiss offenders and victims involved in firearm homicides
- More male offenders involved in firearm homicides
- More firearms involved in homicide-suicides
- More firearms involved in intimate partner homicides

	No firearm	Firearm
Offenders (N = 331)		
Male (%)	85.3	97.1
		** 5.8
Age (mean)	38.5	53.3
		*** (t-test)
Swiss (%)	42.4	77.3
		*** 4.6
Victims (N = 355)		
Male (%)	45.5	44.0
		n.s.
Age (mean)	42.3	50.1
		** (t-test)
Swiss (%)	45.9	69.9
		*** 2.7
Offender and victim 65+ (%)	4.0	25.0
		*** 8.1
Cases (N = 321)		
Suicide of offender (%)	13.7	45.3
		*** 5.2
Intimate partner (%)	30.6	59.4
		*** 3.3

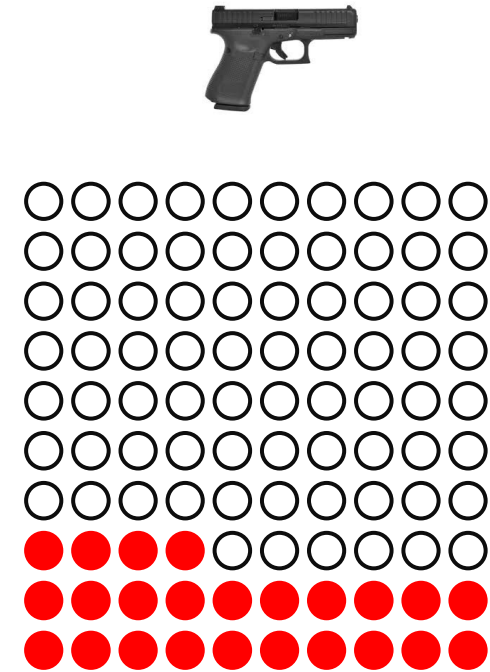
3. Nature of firearm homicides in Switzerland (2015-2022)



1.5 %

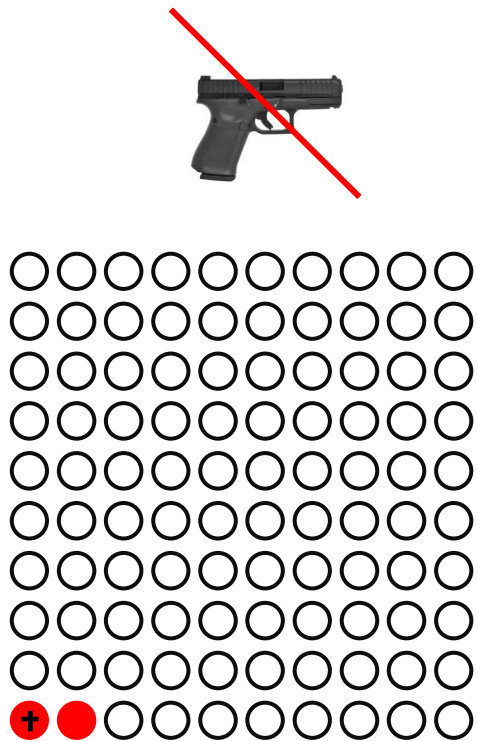


Intimate partners
Offender and Victim
- 65+ years old
- Swiss



23.8 %

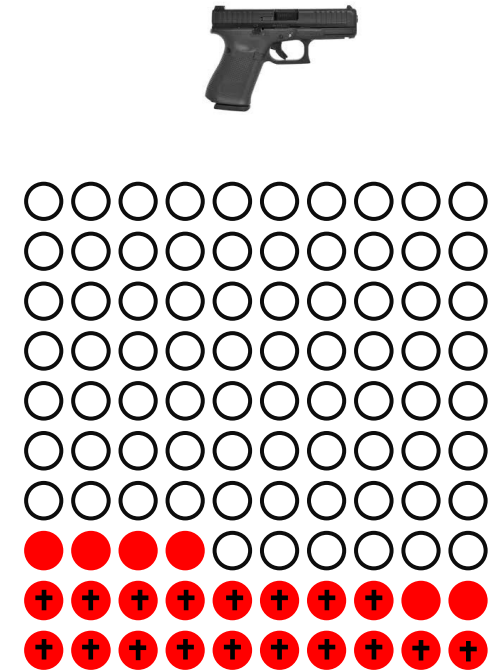
3. Nature of firearm homicides in Switzerland (2015-2022)



1.5 %



Intimate partners
Offender and Victim
- 65+ years old
- Swiss



23.8 %

4. Conclusions

- Decrease of share of firearm homicides from 50 % to 25 % since 1990
 - But only for non intimate partner homicides
 - Stable share for intimate partner homicides
- Firearm homicides in Switzerland often committed by elderly Swiss men towards their wives
- Homicide-suicides much more often when firearms are involved
- No effect of gun ownership decline on firearm homicides between intimate partners
 - Elderly men still have their army gun at home
 - Effect visible in the future with active military age cohorts getting older

Thank you for your attention!

Any questions or comments?

simone.walser@unisg.ch

nora.markwalder@unisg.ch

martin.killias@unisg.ch

Kompetenzzentrum
für Strafrecht und Kriminologie