

ECOLOGY OF CRIME IN SWISS CITIES

A REVIEW OF 20 YEARS OF CRIMINOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN SWITZERLAND

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1. Introduction

In the criminological literature Switzerland is often described as a safe haven – I am not talking about money laundering or Nazi gold! It is regarded as a place that despite its high degree of industrial and economic development, prosperity and urbanisation — which normally go together with high crime levels in Western societies — ranks among countries with the lowest crime rates, especially regarding violent crimes. In this respect, it has a similar reputation like Japan.

Table 1: *International comparison of violent crimes for 1992 (prevalence rate per 100 000 people)*

	Homicide	Rape	Assault	Robbery
Japan	1.0	1.2	15.1	1.8
Germany	4.1	7.8	104.8	70.4
Belgium	2.7	7.8	117.9	98.7
Sweden	8.4	19.4	42.5	71.5
Switzerland	2.3	4.0	52.3	52.3
USA	9.3	42.8	441.8	263.6

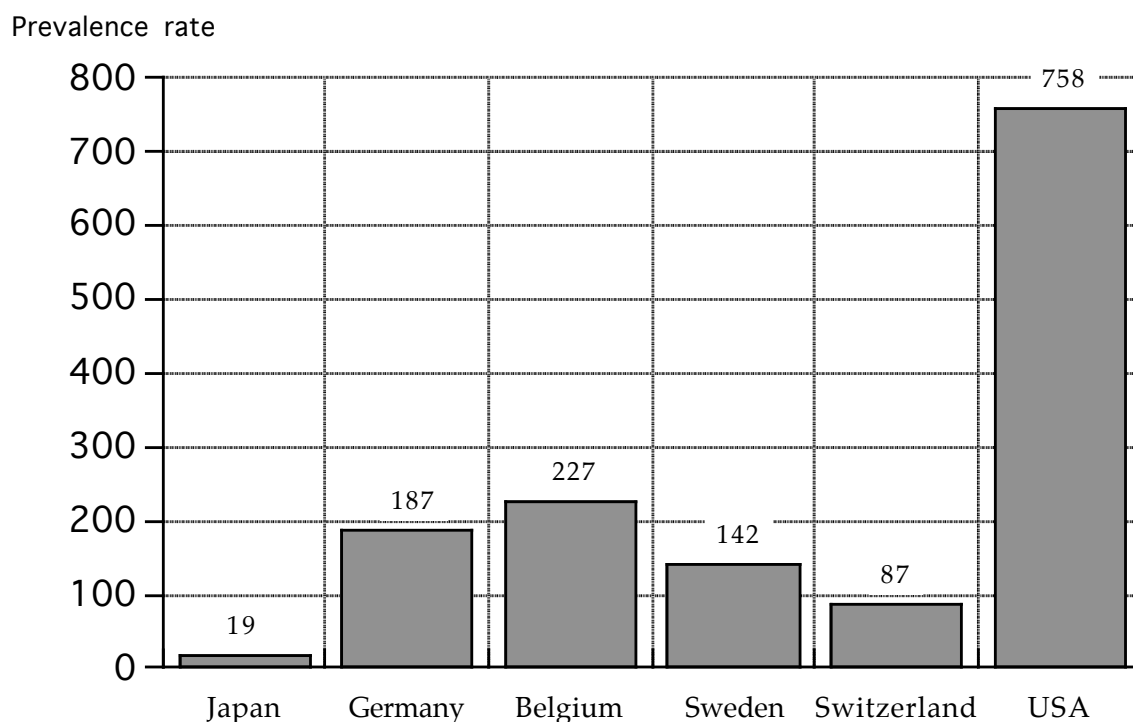
Source: INTERPOL, International Crime Statistics cited in Niggli / Pfister 1996; Fujimoto / Park 1994

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International crime statistics as well as some international victim surveys tend to confirm this assumption: Switzerland has considerably lower crime prevalence rates than Germany or the USA, as can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 1 (see Dörmann 1991; Zaidanhojin toshibohankenkyu senta 1994, 156 et seq.; Government of Japan 1995; Moriyama 1995; Schwarzenegger et al. 1995; van Dijk 1995, 101 et seq.; Niggli / Pfister 1996; Schwarzenegger et al. 1996; for a critical assessment see Fujimoto / Park 1994).

Figure 1: *International comparison of a violent crime index for 1992 (prevalence rate per 100 000 people, the index includes homicide, assault, rape and robbery)*



Source: INTERPOL, International Crime Statistics cited in Niggli / Pfister 1996; Fujimoto / Park 1994

Having these general crime rates in mind, it is only logical to assert that there must be "Cities with little crime" as Marshall B. Clinard has

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put it back 20 years ago (Clinard 1978) based on his study conducted in 1973. Another famous US criminologist named Switzerland besides Japan as "Nations not obsessed with crime" (Adler 1983). From a comparative perspective it seems to be beneficial to examine this "success story" a little closer. The focus of this study is put on the spatial and situational characteristics of crime in Switzerland. The following questions are addressed:

- What are the theoretical premises of "environmental criminology"? Is it a useful and adequate theoretical framework for the study of crime? If not, how can it be integrated into a larger framework (e.g. situational approach, etiological approach)?
- Geographically speaking, where do crimes happen most often? Especially, are there still cities with little crime in Switzerland in recent times? What empirical evidence is there for

the spatial polarisation of crime (with high crime rates in urban centres and consistently low rates in urban areas)?

- Is victim mobility a key variable in explaining spatial distributions of crime and victimisation?
- What other spatial and situational attributes of crime have been found in recent research (with particular reference to violent crimes in Basel)?
- In the public's view, which measures of situational crime prevention are regarded as necessary?

This study is mainly based on official crime statistics (police criminal statistics, collected and published by the Federal Prosecutor's Office, *Bundesanwaltschaft* or the Criminal Police of Canton Zurich, *Kriminalpolizei Zürich*) and empirical studies carried out in Zurich (Schwarzenegger

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1989, 1991, 1992), Basel (Eisner 1993, 1997) and Lucerne (Niggli / Meyer 1996). Two of these studies were based on victim surveys (Schwarzenegger, Niggli / Meyer), the other one contains a detailed analysis of police registry files for all violent crimes occurring in the Canton of Basel during the year 1991 (for smaller studies see Killias 2001).

2. *Theoretical framework*

Before going into the empirical part, some short general comments are in place:

- First of all, the **term** "environmental criminology" is highly misleading, at least in German. It denominates the study of crimes against the natural habitat, e.g. pollution of rivers, soil, air and so forth. That is the reason why German terminology deviates: "ecology of crime" (Kriminalökologie) or "geography of crime" (Kriminalgeographie) is used instead of environmental criminology.

- **Theories of crime causation** have concentrated on offender characteristics for a long time. Criminal acts, however, are very rare episodes, even in the lives of criminally motivated individuals and they cluster around specific places, times and social contexts. Etiological theories fail to explain the significance of such situational differences.

- The **situational approach** tries to fill this void: the determinants of temporal and spatial distribution of criminal events and of victims' characteristics are worthy research topics in their own right (Bottoms 1993). The existing models can be classified into 3 groups:

(1) Explanatory models for **opportunity structures** (rational choice, life-style model and routine activity approach)

(2) **Interactionist** and **social psychological** models (situational clues, stimulation, interpersonal conflicts)

(3) **Environmental** models (physical structure of the environment, ef-

fects of architecture and city planning)

- A huge amount of literature on these topics already exists, in this section only some details are picked out and commented:

(1) The popular **routine activity approach**, which claims that crime is a product of opportunity structures in modern social life depending on motivated offenders (supposed to be constant), suitable targets and the absence of capable guardians, fits fairly well as explanatory model for **instrumental crimes** like most property crimes including robbery and mugging. The disadvantage of this *homo economicus delinquents* model (cost-benefit calculation) is that is inappropriate for **emotional** and **expressive crimes** (many violent crimes, especially domestic violence, crimes of mentally ill people, vandalism, see Miethe / Meier 1994, Eisner 1997 and Table 2).

(2) The **physical environment** of houses and urban areas (parks, subways, sidewalks, parking lots etc.) is related to crime rates. However, the fact that many European cities have almost the same physical structures as 30 years ago, when the crime rate was considerably lower, should make us think about the real meaning of that relationship. Two ideas merit further elaboration:

a) The environmental setting can strengthen deviant behaviour in juveniles (etiological version). Research findings in France, Italy and Germany link the higher delinquency rate among juveniles (neo-Nazi or other radical youth groups, religious fundamentalism, drug problems) to the monotonous environment, lack of open spaces for communication and social encounters in suburban ghettos.

b) The environmental setting can serve as a **suitable milieu for criminal acts** (situational version). This aspect is important for instrumental crimes, i.e. if the offender selects the place of crime according to his chances of success and the risk of being caught. Another advantage is its easy applicability in crime prevention (target hardening, situational crime prevention) and the impact it has on the citizen's atti-

Table 2: *Expected effect of situational variables on the frequency of crimes*

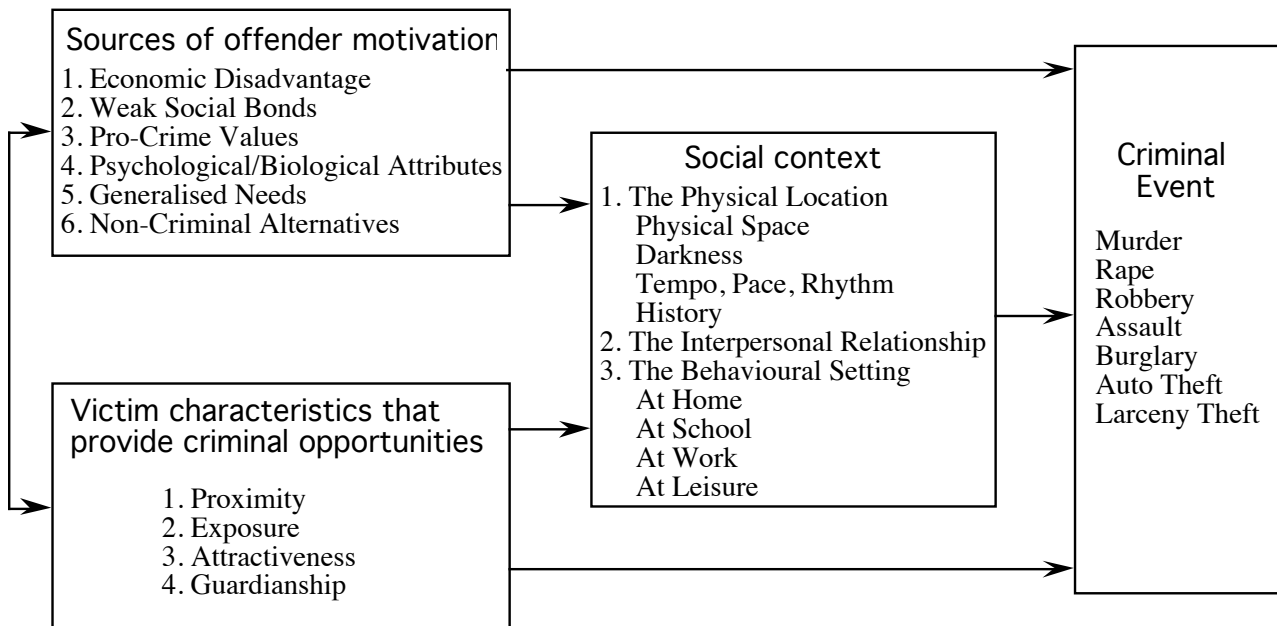
	crimes as expressive acts (spontaneous, impulsive, e.g. thrill-seeking, interpersonal conflict, venting frustration, mental illness)	crimes as instrumental acts (rational, result oriented, e.g. need for money, peer approval)
<i>Situational social control:</i> (factors that could hinder the offender or lead to his/her apprehension)	+	++
<i>Situational incentive or stimulus:</i> (situations that are perceived as attractive by motivated potential offenders)	-	+
<i>conflict proneness of in- teraction:</i> (verbal and non-verbal in- sult, provocation or signals of aggression)	++	-

Note: ++ = strong effect; + = moderate effect; - = no effect

Source: Miethe / Meier 1994, 175 et seq. and Eisner 1997, 131.

tudes towards the neighbourhood, which helps to increase informal social control, though this effect seems to be limited to wealthier city areas. In a later section, I will discuss some remarkable results from a survey (Lucerne), in which respondents were asked about the kind of situational crime prevention measures they would like the city government to establish, and how much they would be ready to pay for them (see Niggli / Meyer 1996). However, research indicates that offender motivations are not changed by technical prevention measures and may lead to displacement rather than a real crime reduction (Miethe / Meier 1994, Kaiser 1996).

Figure 2: *The integration of social context variables into a general explanatory model of criminal events*



Source: Miethe / Meier 1994, 65.

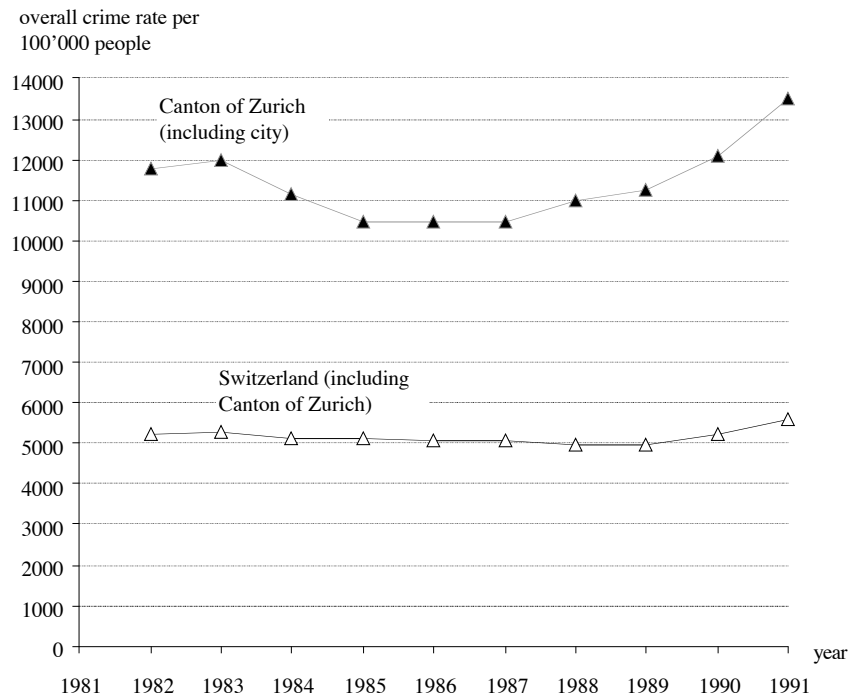
Therefore, the physical structure is **not a cause in itself**, but under certain macro-sociological conditions (especially social disorganisation) and context variables including offender motivation, darkness etc. they reinforce perceptions of situations as favourable to crime. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to explain differences in crime occurrence for very similar buildings and urban areas in the USA, Europe or Japan. Recently, criminological theory has started to integrate variables related to situational features. One synthesising model developed by Miethe and Meier (1994) is given in Figure 2.

3. *From a geographical point of view, where do crimes happen most often? Especially, are there still cities with little crime in Switzerland in recent times?*

In Figure 3 a clear-cut difference between Switzerland as a whole and the Canton of Zurich, which is the most urbanised area in Switzerland, comprising of an approximate population of 1 million, is observable.

The overall crime rate is more than twice as high in the Canton of Zurich than in the whole country. The division along the **urban-rural**

Figure 3: *Crime rates in Switzerland and in the Canton of Zurich (all available crime categories)*



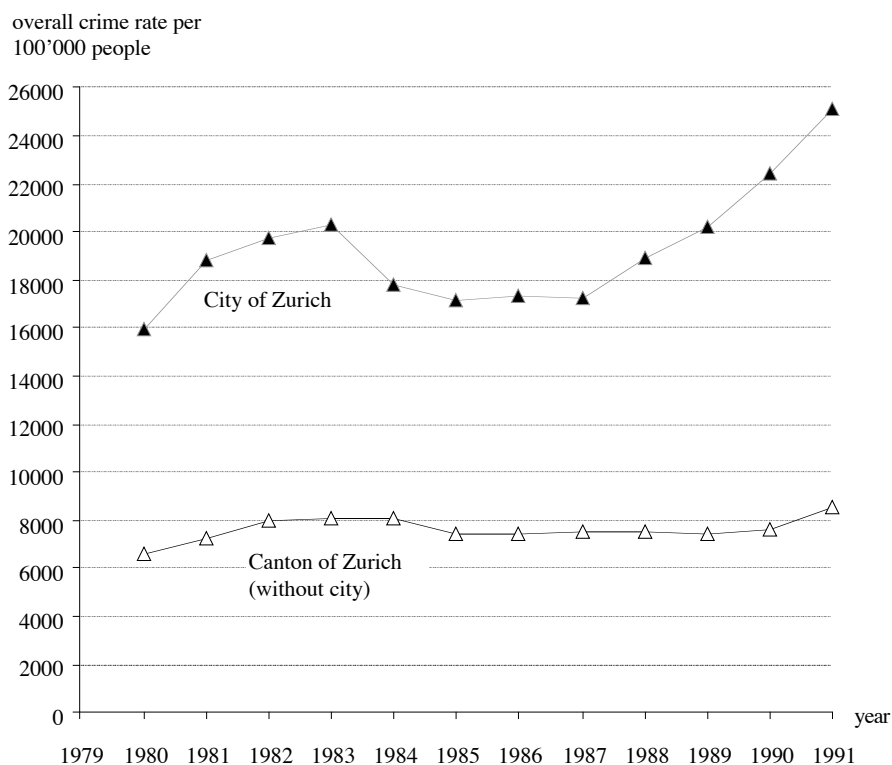
Source: Schwarzenegger 1992, 216 (calculated from national police statistics; NOTE: not all categories of violent crimes are included in this data set)

dimension can be traced even further down to the city or even city zone level.

If a distinction is made between the city of Zurich and its surroundings (see Figure 4), it becomes immediately apparent that the contrast noticed in Figure 3 is mainly due to the crime rate in the **city of Zurich**. In the most recent year included in this calculation (1991) its overall crime rate was about 25'000 crimes per 100'000 people compared to a little more than 8000 crimes per 100'000 people in the rest of the Canton. The latter figure is much closer to the average crime rate in the rest of Switzerland.

91.5% of all crimes included in the prior two line charts are **thefts**,

Figure 4: *Crime rates in the city of Zurich and in the Canton of Zurich (excluding city data)*

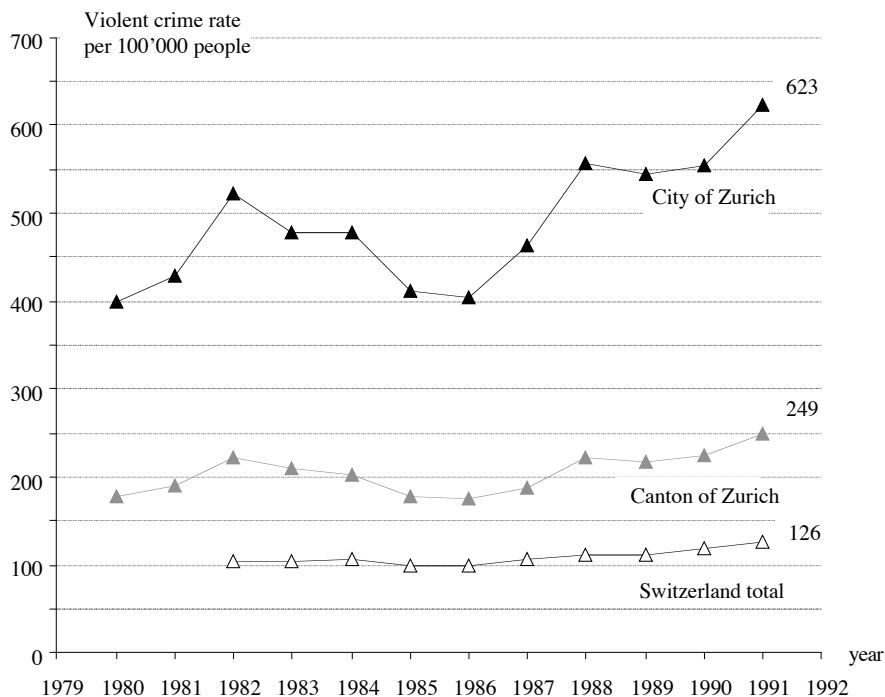


Source: Schwarzenegger 1992, 194 (calculated from police crime statistics)

therefore, the measures shown in Figure 3 and 4 are basically representations of the development for theft crimes.

To measure the development of **violent crimes**, which has been responsible for an increased public concern in Switzerland in the early 90ies, as they are now for Japan (according to a survey issued by the Prime Minister's Office in 1998, 85% of minors and 82% of adults in Japan believe that murders and wounding with knives were the biggest social problem, see Japan Times, 8.6.98, 2) all other data are excluded from Figure 5. It shows the violent crime rate over time for 3 geographical units (Switzerland, Canton of Zurich and City of Zurich). The result can be summarised as follows:

Figure 5: Violent crimes in Switzerland, Canton of Zurich and city of Zurich (including attempts)



Source: Schwarzenegger 1992, 170 (calculated from police statistics); violent crimes include intentional homicide, assault, street mugging/robbery, deprivation of liberty/abduction/hostage taking and rape

- Once again, the **city area** is much more exposed to violent crimes than the Canton or Switzerland as a whole.
- The **increase** in violent crimes is much more dramatic in the city area than in the other two geographical units. In the city of Zurich the rate for violent crimes has grown 56% since 1980.

The upward tendency in the rate of violent crimes is indisputable, if one takes the period of 1961/70 as reference point for a comparison. Keep in mind that Marshall B. Clinard's original study was carried out at the end of this period (1973). Unfortunately, not for all regions of Switzerland police statistics prior to 1982 are available. Thus, the justice statistics on court sentences will be used instead. It is widely

known that these statistics are not adequate for measuring the **real amount** of crime, nonetheless, they can be used for a comparison of the **relative trends** in violent crimes over time because sentencing patterns seem - biased as they generally are - to be relatively constant over time.

Table 3 represents the result of a calculation of relative changes in sentencing rates of violent crime according to several crime categories. The three most urbanised areas of Basel, Geneva and Zurich have been put together and are contrasted to the changes in the combined sentencing rate for violent crimes in all other parts of Switzerland. In order to control for fluctuations over time, the mean value for 10 years has been used.

Table 3 is strong evidence for the increase in the rate of violent crimes over the last 30 years; especially impressive are the differences in the categories of **robbery** and **coercion/intimidation** which have risen spectacularly in the three urban areas of Basel, Geneva and Zurich. Also homicide and serious assault have almost doubled during this time span. There have been 76% more minor assaults in the urban areas, whereas this sort of violence remained comparatively stable in the rest of the country.

The only exception to the general trend can be noticed in the category of **sexual violence** where all in all a negative trend has emerged over the last 30 years. Probably, a large dark figure of sexual crimes that is unaccounted for in official statistics exists; consequently, the court statistics must be read with caution (see Schwarzenegger 1997).

Differentiating in more detail among urban centres and less densely populated areas and using more accurate police statistics (6-year-averages), one can realise how straightforward the **relationship between urbanisation and violence** is (see Table 4): The larger the city,

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Table 3: Court statistics on violent crime in 3 urban areas as compared to the rest of Switzerland

category of violent crimes	Percentage change between 1961/70 and 1985/94	
	3 urban areas	rest of country
1. serious assault (bodily injury) and homicide	+ 91%	+ 82%
2. minor assault	+ 76%	+ 11%
3. robbery	+ 278%	+ 178%
4. coercion and intimidation	+ 217%	+ 153%
5. rape and sexual coercion	+ 6%	- 31%
all violent crimes	+ 114%	+ 40%

Source: Eisner 1997, 65 (calculated from court statistics); in terms of criminal offences the categories consist of: (1.) Art. 111-113, 122; (2.) Art. 123, 126, 133; (3.) Art. 140 (former Art. 139); (4.) Art. 180-181; (5.) Art. 189-190 (former Art. 187-188) all Swiss Penal Code

the higher normally the prevalence rate for a specific type of violence.

From a historical point of view, it is noteworthy that for a long time violence was a particular problem of rural areas! Contrary to popular belief, waves of strong urban growth are linked to a very low rate of violent crimes. The available longitudinal data indicate that over the last 500 years, violent crimes have decreased dramatically until they reached a record low shortly after World War II (Hagan 1985; Schwarzenegger 1992; for an explanation based on Elias' theory of civilisation, see Eisner 1997 with further references). Only since the 1960ties an opposite trend has emerged. The concentration of violence in urban areas is, thus, a recent phenomenon.

Also from a historical perspective, doubts arise over the basic assumptions of the "defensible space" model or other simplistic environmental equations which contend that the built environment had an intrinsic effect on the occurrence of crime, since buildings

and urban structure in the city centres of Europe have almost not changed since 30 or more years.

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Table 4: *Selected crimes of violence in 11 cities as compared to the rest of Switzerland, 1986-1991 (rate per 100 000 people)*

	Homicide (incl. attempts)	assault	robbery and street mugging	population size
Zurich	7.33	170.8	320.4	350'000
Basel	4.89	133.4	134.5	193'000
Geneva	5.18	90.6	186.2	162'000
Bern	4.44	104.6	189.3	134'000
Lausanne	2.56	98.7	100.6	125'000
Winterthur	4.31	35.7	23.1	86'000
St. Gallen	3.39	36.7	132.4	80'000
La-Chaux-de-Font	1.40	na	57.6	36'000
Fribourg	3.47	83.8	89.2	34'000
Neuchâtel	2.56	na	90.0	32'000
Chur	2.89	49.1	38.2	30'000
<i>rest of Switzerland</i>	1.88	35.7	21.8	

Source: Eisner 1997, 71 (calculated from partially unpublished police statistics)

The current concentration of crimes in urban areas is **not limited** to crimes of violence as Table 5 reveals. The detailed police statistics of the Zurich police force allow to compare not only city level data, but also crime rates on city district levels. The heart of Zurich extends through districts 1, 4 and 5 (including the central station, the infamous needle park, the old city, the amusement and night life areas, the central business zone and the lavish shopping and banking area between station and lake), hence, it is the most urbanised neighbourhood in Zurich.

The indexed prevalence rates (Switzerland is 100 in every crime category) are an indicator for crime concentration in the inner city of Zurich:

It comes as no surprise that **drug offences** are extremely “packed together” on a very small terrain in the midst of vital business and entertainment areas! Additionally, it is also the location of the main

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Table 5: *Prevalence rate of principle categories of crime in Switzerland, Canton of Zurich, city of Zurich, and Zurich city centre (districts 1,4 and 5), mean values 1982-1994 (rate per 100 000 people)*

	Switzerland (Index = 100)	Canton of Zurich	City of Zurich	City centre of Zurich (1, 4-5)
all crimes included in the police statistics	4553 (100)	6239 (137)	10'478 (230)	38'850 (852)
property crimes (incl. theft)	4393 (100)	6043 (138)	10'072 (229)	37'253 (848)
property crimes (excl. theft)	191 (100)	989 (518)	864 (452)	4032 (2111)
violent crimes	116 (100)	141 (122)	305 (263)	1277 (1101)
sex crimes	44 (100)	65 (148)	101 (230)	320 (727)
drug offences	293 (100)	621 (212)	1724 (588)	10'136 (3459)

Source: My own calculation based on police statistics published in Niggli / Pfister 1996

tourist attraction of Zurich.

People who travelled to Zurich before February 1995 still remember the open drug scene behind the central station "Platzspitz" (later at a defunct station "Letten" across the river Limmat), begging drug addicts and vagrant juveniles in apparently bad health. As a consequence of the liberal policy of the city's authorities, which contrasted with the repressive stance in other Swiss communities, as well as in Southern Germany and elsewhere across the border, attracted international organised crime to Zurich. The rates of robbery, street mugging, shoplifting and burglary in the surroundings multiplied during this period due to drug addicts in pursuit of money for buying their daily doses.

Interestingly enough, also **property crimes** excluding theft (and burglary which is theft combined with damage and intrusion) are concentrated in the urban centre. This is understandable if one considers that Zurich is the financial centre of Switzerland with a flourishing

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banking industry, stock exchange, many business transactions and opportunities. The crimes counted in this category include fraud, embezzlement, and extortion, which typically accompany business activities. So, ecologically speaking, white-collar crimes too concentrate intensely where there are ample opportunities for making illegal profits!

A considerable concentration of crimes can be traced for **acts of violence**, as has been seen in Table 4. Also for **theft** and **sexual crimes** the inner city has the highest prevalence rate of all.

It must be pointed out that we were **counting crimes** only. These data do not present any information on the offenders' and victims' place in space. As the population rate in inner cities tends to be very small, the prevalence rate of crime per 100'000 people may be over-

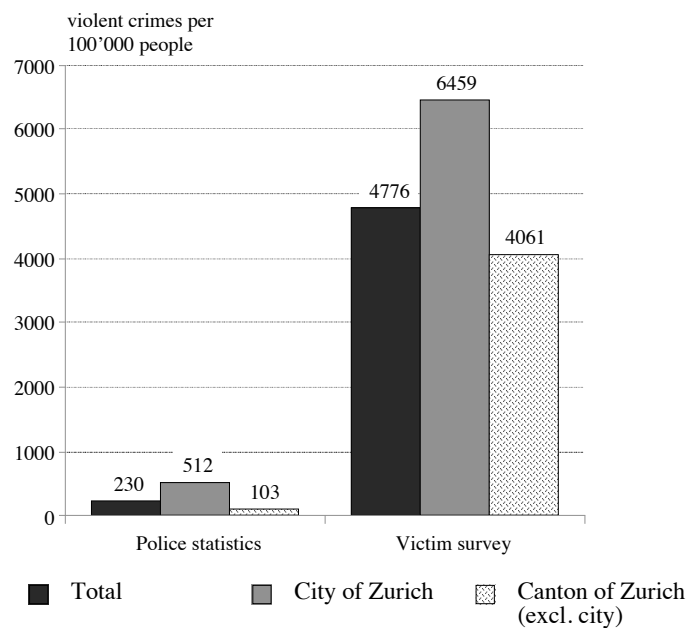
intensified. This issue will be discussed in the next section (analysis of mobility both of victims and offenders).

The data used so far are official records of crimes known to the police (or crimes adjudicated at a criminal court). As only a small margin of crimes (normally 5-10%) is detected by the police itself, the reporting behaviour of crime victims and bystanders influences the recorded crime rate. To take the remaining dark figure of crime into account, **other methods** of measurement must be used. Unlike the U.S. and U.K., Switzerland has no regular national crime victimisation survey, which could serve to verify the trends found in the police statistics. However, some national as well as local studies are available (see Schwarzenegger et al. 1995, 1996; Kaiser 1996; Niggli / Pfister 1997; Killias 2001 with further references).

With regard to violent crimes, Figure 6 reveals how **large the dark figure** of crime actually can be, though the quality of crimes unknown to the police differs from those covered by police statistics, the former including more offences of a less significant nature (often at-

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Figure 6: *Violent crimes in the Canton of Zurich and city of Zurich according to police statistics and the Zurich victim survey, 1986 (including attempts)*

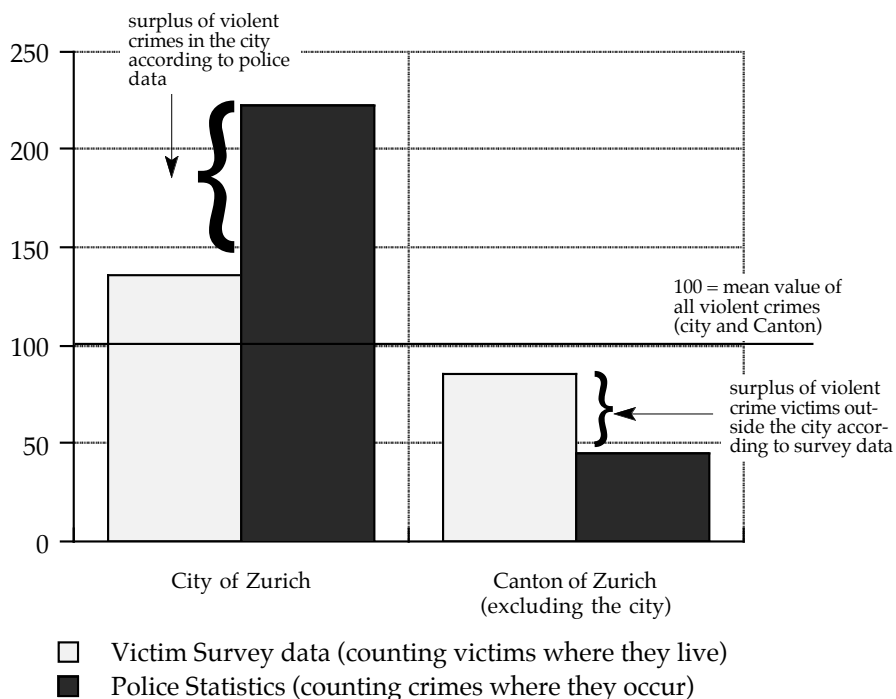


Source: Schwarzenegger 1992, 177.

tempts with no damaging consequences). Nevertheless, also serious crimes can go undetected if the victim and the offender know each other (see in more detail Schwarzenegger 1991, 1996).

More violent acts take place in the city than in the rest of the Canton, this is confirmed by the victimisation data, but a modified representation of the same data discloses an important finding (see Figure 7): the two measures of crime are not congruent regarding the **spatial distribution**. The police data are more polarised along the urbanisation dimension with a huge surplus of violent crimes in the city. The victim survey, which produced data on the spatial distribution of victims (based on their residence rather than on the place of crime oc-

Figure 7: *Discrepancy between police statistics and victim survey regarding the spatial distribution of violent crimes in the Canton of Zurich, 1986 (including attempts)*



Source: My own calculation based on data published in Schwarzenegger 1992, 177.

currence), shows a smaller variance around the mean value of all violent crimes in the Canton of Zurich. This points to the fact that victims don't necessarily get victimised where they live, but often are attacked, robbed or abused in the city centre where they go for work, shopping or leisure activities. In other words, the discrepancy can be interpreted as a sign for the importance of **social mobility** in crime victimisation. This is an logical consequence of changed lifestyle patters, as the population of the city has diminished by 20% since 1970 whereas the number of people commuting between workplace in the city and residence in the outskirts has steadily increased.

In sum, the two questions asked in the introduction can be an-

swered as follows:

- Crime in recent times is mainly a problem of urbanised areas. In Switzerland the crime rate for cities, especially city centres, is much higher than for non-urban or rural areas. This holds true for all crime categories included in the analysis.
- In the last 30 years, the crime rate has not changed dramatically in rural or non-urban contexts. In the cities however the rise is very distinct. As far as data are available, the sharpest increase can be seen in the period of 1970 to 1980. Based on recent comparative studies, the expression "**cities with little crime**" does not fit any longer for Switzerland.

The crime development since 1965 coincides more or less with those in other European states.

4. *What do we know about the spatial distribution of crimes? Is victim mobility a key variable in explaining spatial distributions of crime and victimisation?*

We have observed in section 2 that the discrepancy in the spatial distribution of violent crimes as measured by police statistics and the victim survey may be due to the mobility of victims. In other words, if victims living in non-urban areas spend much of their time in the urban centre, the risk of being victimised there (and counted as urban crime incident in the police statistics) is much greater.

It is well established in urban sociology that the **functions of urban centres** have essentially changed since the mid 60ties (Eisner 1997, 94 et seq.). Most important developments include (1960 - 1990):

- Process of suburbanisation — The general and working population dropped by 12 - 17% and moved to the suburbs whereas the number of people commuting to their workplace in the city increased by 226%.

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Table 6: *Location of crime according to the Zurich victim survey, 1986*

	violent crimes (all categories)	property crimes (excl. burglary)	property crimes (incl. burglary)
at home, in the neighbourhood	28.8%	34.7%	42.0%
in the residential community	8.5%	27.3%	24.2%
outside community (inside country)	52.5%	28.0%	24.8%
abroad (outside country)	10.2%	10.0%	8.9%
	n = 59	n = 429	n = 483

Source: My own calculation based on data published in Schwarzenegger 1991a.

- Functional separation — Cities have to constantly lost their function as a place for family residence. Their remaining functions as working environment, as business and entertainment centre have reinforced the spatial separation of uniform city areas with few residential structures.

- Deindustrialisation — After restructuring and adjustment to the needs of a post-industrial economy, half of the jobs in the industrial sector disappeared, on the other hand jobs in the service industry increased by 65 - 98%.

These macro-sociological processes have led most cities into a **social crisis situation**, which is characterised by a **relative decline in income levels** for the city population, **social disorganisation** as portrayed by a higher rate of single households, single parent

families and foreign nationals (1990: 27.4% in 5 largest cities), and an increase in **people living at the borderline** of society like homeless and drug addicts.

Consequently, only the smaller part of those 1 million people working, shopping and participating in leisure activities in the city of Zurich also live there (350'000 residents). A first rough sketch of where people get victimised can be drawn from Table 6.

A look at **violent crimes** reveals the following:

- More than half of these crimes happened outside the community

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where the respondents lived, therefore, social mobility is a key factor in understanding the spatial distribution of violence. We will consider some spatial and situational characteristics of these violent encounters later.

- Secondly, a considerable number of these crimes occur at home or in the immediate vicinity. This percentage reflects the share of conflicts among family members and neighbours.

- A very interesting finding is that every tenth violent crime victimisation took place **abroad**, i.e. on a holiday or business trips. The victimisation of tourists in foreign countries is still **largely neglected** by the current criminological or victimological literature because international tourism might not be very important for people in the USA (where the largest part of criminological research comes from). But for Switzerland, Germany and Japan to name only a few nations with a high rate of international tourism, this aspect should be covered by more research. The result is at odds with the **routine** activity perspective: Tourists are attractive targets for instrumental violence because they normally carry plenty of valuable things, but it is the unfamiliar, **non-routine** context, which makes them very suitable targets. Their **inexperience** with the localities and dangerous spots combined with language barriers appears to make them more vulnerable.

"In fact, it may be that novelty has more to do with victimisation risks than one's routine activities, if people are victimised by crimes when they are in a strange place at a strange time." (Miethe / Meier 1994, 173, emphasis in the original)

As for **property crimes**, both percentage values including and excluding burglary (only breaking into the respondent's home was measured) are given. We can observe that:

- Property crimes are evenly distributed over residential and more

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distant areas. In most cases there is no contact between offender and victim, opportunities to carry out illegal acts against property depend on a variety of factors like good access, absence of guardians, suitable targets, and individual predisposition.

- A considerable share of property crimes too turns out to be related to journeys to foreign countries.

Having established the general importance of social mobility for crime victimisations, it still remains unclear whether the discrepancy observed above (Figure 7) is due to people moving from suburbs to crime-prone city centres. For this purpose, Table 7 breaks the

victimisation rates of city residents and people living in non-urban areas into three categories according to the location where the crime occurred. Victimization abroad is omitted from this table.

The results for crimes of violence and theft are remarkable:

- More than two thirds of all **violent crime** victimisations occurred outside the residential community for those people who live in the suburbs. Though this is no direct evidence for their being victimised in the city, it remains very clear that these “suburbanites” encounter crime most often on their way and at a distance from home. On the contrary, almost two thirds of urban residents are violently attacked in their own community, most often at home or in the neighbourhood.

- Also, for the **crime of theft**, the difference between urban and non-urban residents is evident. Only 18% of the former have reported a theft that occurred to them outside the city. On the contrary, almost half of the thefts suffered by non-urban residents happened outside their community.

- **Theft of cars and motorbikes and damage to property** are most

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Table 7: *Location of crime victimisation for urban and non-urban residents, Zurich victim survey, 1986*

		urban residents	non-urban residents
VIOLENT CRIMES $\chi^2 = 5.844; df = 2;$ $p < .06$	at home, in the neighbourhood	47.1%	25.0%
	in the residential community	17.6%	5.6%
	outside community	35.3% n = 17	69.4% n = 36
THEFT $\chi^2 = 8.232; df = 2;$ $p < .02$	at home, in the neighbourhood	30.8%	22.4%
	in the residential community	51.3%	29.6%
	outside community	18.0% n = 39	48.0% n = 125
THEFT OF CAR OR MOTORBIKE (statistically not significant)	in the neighbourhood	33.3%	50.0%
	in the residential community	55.6%	25.0%
	outside community	11.1% n = 9	25.0% n = 28
DAMAGE TO PROPERTY (statistically not significant)	at home, in the neighbourhood	58.7%	46.9%
	in the residential community	19.6%	29.7%
	outside community	21.7% n = 46	23.4% n = 128

Source: My own calculation based on data published in Schwarzenegger 1991a.

often experienced in the immediate vicinity of the home, be it in the city or in the outskirts. Private property is most often kept at home or nearby, so the probability of being damaged is highest there.

Let us turn our attention to the physical location of violent crimes as measured by the Zurich Victim Survey. Unlike car theft and damage to property only a fraction of violent crimes (13%) happened at home or nearby. We will see later that there is a **notable difference** between **men** and **women** in the group of domestic violence.

- More strikingly, nearly half of all violent victimisations reported took place **on the street** (Table 8). Recalling the result found in Table 5 —

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Table 8: *Environmental characteristics of violent crimes according to the Zurich victim survey, 1986*

	Violent crimes (all categories)
on the street	41.5%
at home	13.2%
bar / restaurant / night club / disco	11.3%
in a public park / forest	7.5%
in bus / tramway	5.7%
in a department store / shop	5.7%
at work	5.7%
at the station	3.8%
others (sports stadium, parking lot, house entrance)	5.7%
	n = 53

Source: My own calculation based on data published in Schwarzenegger 1991a.

strong concentrated violent crimes in the city centre which serves as entertainment area at night — and adding the finding that violent acts peak at night shortly before midnight (exception: robbery and mugging which occur mostly between 4 and 8 PM, see Eisner 1997, 133 et seq.) with the highest rate on Friday night, we can conclude that these victimisations are on the one hand linked to **night time leisure activities** (47% of all reported cases of assault involve alcoholised offenders, see Eisner 1997, 153) and **assault**. On the other hand, the places of instrumental crimes like **robbery** and **mugging** are determined by the opportunity structure. Anonymity, suitable targets, ease of escape make the streets (and department stores, the station) of the city centre a “good choice”. These crimes are often linked to drug addiction in Switzerland.

- Violent crimes also occur inside places of nightlife activities like **bars, restaurants** and the like.
- Finally, **public parks** and **forests** have not only a bad reputation in

public opinion; they really seem to offer offenders with a good situational opportunity to carry out violent attacks.

The answers to the questions of this section are:

- **Social mobility of victims** is a key predictor of violent crimes and theft for those people who **live in non-urban areas**. They commute to the city centre for work, shopping and leisure activities. The risk of encountering a motivated offender is highest at night on the streets.

- People living in the city have a **higher risk exposure** to crimes of violence, especially if their home is in the centre or disorganised neighbourhoods. This explains why they have a higher overall victimisation rate than non-urban residents. Social mobility is less important, but frequent nighttime activities may multiply their victimisation risk (see Schwarzenegger 1991, 1996).

Results in the categories of car theft and damage to property indicate that this model of social mobility cannot explain all types of crime.

5. *Other spatial and situational attributes of crime (with particular reference to violent crimes in Basel)*

This section focuses on the spatial and situational characteristics of violent crimes, since there is some excellent data available from an in-depth analysis of police files carried out by Eisner in Basel (see Eisner 1993, 1997; the methodological framework of the study is derived from Wikström 1985, 1991).

At first, we will examine the **residence of offenders**. The city of Basel is divided into 68 districts with an average of 3'600 inhabitants. Most of them are distinct neighbourhoods with their own history and political framework; therefore, these sectorial units represent a kind

Table 9: *Percentage of offenders according to population quarters and Gini-Coefficient for Basel (1991) and Stockholm (1982)*

	Basel (1991)	Stockholm (1982)
lowest quarter (0 - 25%)	6%	8%
second quarter (26 - 50%)	16%	18%
third quarter (51 - 75%)	25%	30%
highest quarter (76 - 100%)	54%	44%
Gini-Coefficient (x 100)	42.0	33.7
number of districts	63	123

Source: Eisner 1997, 180.

of local culture and identity. The results show a similar pattern as studies in the US, Sweden:

- 10 districts have an offender rate of 0%.
- In 9 districts more than 400 offenders per 100'000 people can be found.
- The distribution is very uneven with many districts having a low offender residence rate and few districts with a high concentration (see Table 9).

This table illustrates that 25% of the population of Basel live in districts where 54% of all offenders reside (highest quarter)! On the other hand, additional 25% of the population live in districts where only few criminals come from (6%, lowest quarter). So, offenders are not randomly distributed in the city. The concentration is even stronger in Basel than in Stockholm.

A weighted-least-square regression analysis for offender concentration (not given here) loaded strong on 3 macro-sociological variables. The significant effects were (see Eisner 1997, 187):

- **Low social status** — a scale based on percentage of unqualified workers, living space per person, percentage of young people (18 – 29

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years) in higher education and percentage of home ownership was chosen on the grounds of a factor analysis. Result: there is a stable and strong effect of low social status on offender rates in a district. The two areas converge in the northern low-cost housing districts, in the southern industrialised area and around the central station in the centre.

- **Social disorganisation** — a second scale based on percentage of unemployed, percentage of foreign residents and percentage of people living for less than 5 years in Basel produced even stronger effects on the offender rates in the district. Again the low-cost housing area in the north and the inner districts around the city centre are relatively congruent in both maps.
- **Inner city milieu of violence** — this variable was drawn from the rate of violent encounters between offenders and victims who both do not live in this district. Therefore, this measure is not related to residents of the district, but it represents the degree of violence in a neighbourhood. Such a violent environmental atmosphere seems to transmit to individuals living there.

A fourth variable termed **individualism** (percentage of childless families, percentage of singles and divorcees) which could be read as indicator for deviant lifestyles did not affect the rate of offenders.

In short, violent crimes in urban areas can be explained in terms of **social marginality** and **weak social integration**. It confirms that inner cities in Switzerland are in a state of crisis because such population groups have increased over the past 30 years, and their spatial and social segregation is more distinct than ever before.

Just to give an impressive example: in some inner city public schools in Zurich or Basel the percentage of foreign students reaches

Table 10: *Victim-offender relationship according to sex of victim, Basel (1991)*

	HOMICIDE		ASSAULT (bodily injury)	
	male	female	male	female
family member, relative	20.0%	76.7%	2.2%	35.2%
friend, acquaintance	32.0%	3.3%	6.1%	18.2%
person met before	28.0%	13.3%	17.6%	17.6%
unknown person	20.0%	6.7%	74.1%	29.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N =	(25)	(30)	(313)	(176)
	$\chi^2 = 18.8; df = 3; p < .01$		$\chi^2 = 142.4; df = 3; p < .01$	

Source: Eisner 1997, 194.

70%. Instead of the normal curriculum special language training is carried out. It goes without saying that Swiss citizens who can afford it, move to other places preferably in the suburbs where taxes are lower and schools better.

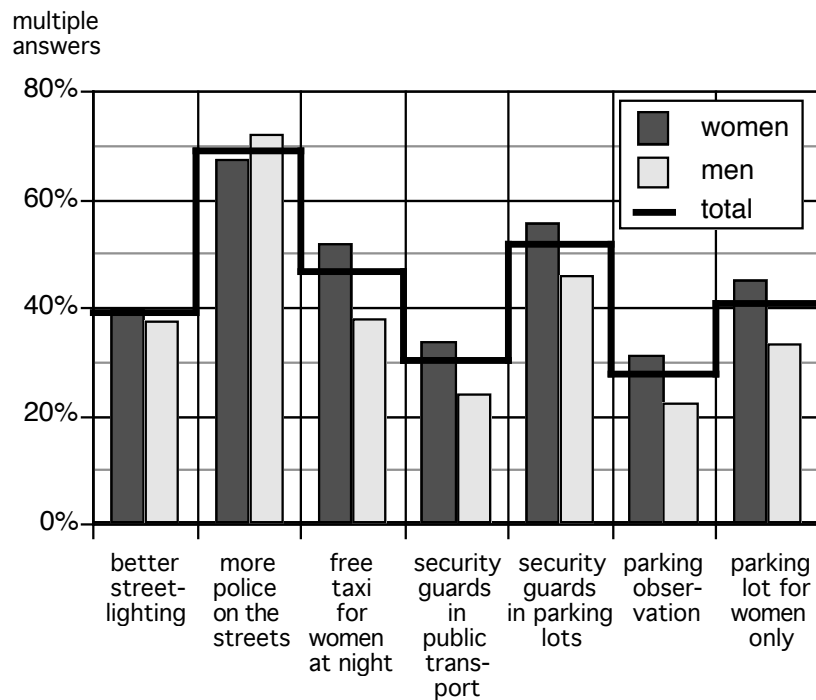
Concerning violent victimisations, important gender differences can be seen breaking down for victim-offender relationship (see Table 10). Women are most often killed or injured by their husbands, children or other relatives. The risk for women to become a victim of domestic violence is much higher than for men. On the contrary, especially in the case of assault, men are most often attacked by unknown offenders and this happens in completely different situational settings (on the street, in bars, restaurants etc., see above). It is also a mirror of sex differences in lifestyle and risky behaviour.

Violent victimisation experiences of men and women are mainly divided along the private sphere - public sphere continuum.

6. *Necessary crime prevention measures in the view of the public*

Usually, experts think that they know best, which measures of

Figure 8: What measure would increase your personal safety at night? (Lucerne 1995)



Source: Niggli / Meyer 1996, 87.

crime prevention, can lead to a safer public environment. Therefore, the opinion of the public on adequate steps is rarely included in survey designs.

The study conducted by Marcel Alexander Niggli (University of Fribourg) in the city of Lucerne at the border the famous lake of Four Forests (at the riverside of the same lake where William Tell fought the Austrian oppressor some 700 years ago) is a welcome exception. Drug addiction and related delinquency problems have put crime on the public agenda of this "tourist attraction".

Of special interest in our context is the question related to prevention measures, the respondents judged necessary to improve their per-

sonal safety at night (see Figure 8).

The majority wants to see more police on the streets; men rate this measure as most important more often than women do. On the other hand, there are several measures related to parking lots or open parking spaces, which find more support, by women than by men. The largest difference between the sexes can be traced in the category "free taxi for women at night". This demand has been on the political agenda of several Swiss and German cities, but mostly failed to gain public funding because conservative parties (i.e. mostly male politicians) oppose this preferential treatment of women. In Zurich a free taxi program is running under a privately funded umbrella.

Respondents are most willing to pay for a better presence of the police on the streets. Over 40% of the sample would also pay for better street lighting and a high proportion of women is ready to financially back "night taxi" programs. Overall, about one third of respondents are willing to pay 10'000 ¥ or more, another third wants to contribute 5'000 to 10'000 ¥, whereas 15% are completely opposing any private donations for crime prevention.

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