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Beyond Firearms: Mapping Global Patterns of Non-Firearm Homicide in Comparative Criminological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This article examines global patterns of non-firearm homicide from a comparative criminological perspective. While homicide research is often dominated by firearm-centered debates, especially in regions where gun violence drives national homicide rates, lethal violence across the world is not reducible to firearms. Non-firearm homicide includes killings committed with sharp objects, blunt objects, strangulation, suffocation, bodily force, poisoning, burning, and other mechanisms that reflect different social settings, institutional conditions, and interpersonal dynamics. Using a descriptive comparative criminological design, this article maps the spatial and modal pattern of non-firearm homicide across major world regions by drawing on global homicide mechanism data and recent criminological and forensic literature. The article argues that non-firearm homicide is not a residual category after firearm homicide is removed, but represents a distinct field of lethal violence that is often linked to domestic settings, interpersonal disputes, sharp-force access, local conflict, weak guardianship, and situational escalation. The analysis shows that firearm dominance in the Americas does not represent the global structure of homicide. In Europe, Asia, and parts of Africa, non-firearm mechanisms remain central to the study of lethal violence. This article contributes to global homicide studies by developing a mapping framework that distinguishes regional homicide burden, weapon modality, situational ecology, and data limitations. It concludes that non-firearm homicide deserves systematic attention in comparative criminology because it reveals forms of lethal violence that are obscured by gun-centered criminological analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Homicide is often discussed as though the firearm were its central global symbol (Kadir, 2026c). This impression is understandable because firearms dominate homicide trends in several high-violence contexts, especially in the Americas, where gun-related killings have shaped public debate, policing policy, and criminological explanation. Yet this framing becomes analytically narrow when applied globally. Many countries record substantial levels of homicide through sharp objects, blunt force, strangulation, bodily force, poisoning, burning, or other mechanisms. Non-firearm homicide therefore cannot be treated as a marginal or residual category. It is a major component of global lethal violence and requires its own comparative criminological reading. Recent qualitative work on homicide spikes also confirms that lethal violence is shaped by crisis conditions, relational dynamics, and situational settings rather than by weapon availability alone (Densley & Peterson, 2025).

The problem is not that firearm-centered research is irrelevant. It remains essential where firearms shape homicide volume, organized crime, urban violence, and criminal justice policy. The problem arises when firearm homicide becomes the implicit model for understanding homicide in general. Such a model risks misreading societies where knives, machetes, blunt objects, bodily force, or strangulation are more relevant to the structure of lethal violence. A gun-centered lens may also obscure domestic homicide, intimate partner homicide, household disputes, alcohol-related violence, and spontaneous interpersonal conflicts where non-firearm mechanisms are common. Critical homicide

scholarship has therefore called for broader interpretive frames that do not reduce homicide to a single dominant mechanism or institutional setting (Holt, 2024).

Global homicide data support this need for differentiation. The UNODC *Global Study on Homicide 2023* separates homicide mechanisms into firearms, sharp objects, other mechanisms, and unknown mechanisms, and it emphasizes that mechanisms vary strongly across regions. In the Americas, firearms are the dominant mechanism and, according to the UNODC regional report, at least 67 percent of homicides in 2021 were perpetrated with firearms. That pattern is not universal, because Europe and Asia display more mixed mechanism structures where non-firearm homicide remains central to the distribution of lethal violence.

This article focuses on non-firearm homicide as a comparative criminological object. Non-firearm homicide refers to intentional killings committed without firearms. It includes sharp-force homicide, blunt-force homicide, strangulation, suffocation, burning, poisoning, bodily assault, and other physical methods. The category is broad, but it is not analytically empty. Its breadth is precisely what makes it criminologically important. Non-firearm homicide often emerges in settings where lethal violence is situationally close, physically intimate, and less dependent on organized weapon markets. Forensic studies of non-firearm homicide have long shown that stabbing, blunt force, and asphyxial methods carry distinct victim, offender, place, and circumstance patterns (Henderson et al., 2005).

The global relevance of non-firearm homicide can also be seen in comparative homicide research that moves beyond national rates (Kadir, 2026d). Cross-national and subnational analyses increasingly show that homicide must be disaggregated by mechanism, victim profile, local context, and incident characteristics. A study comparing homicide in Finland and South Africa, for example, stresses that homicide research must move from aggregate country-level rates toward more detailed event-based and mechanism-sensitive analysis (Kivivuori, Liem, et al., 2024). This supports the central argument of this article: global homicide cannot be properly understood without distinguishing firearm and non-firearm patterns.

The article is guided by three research questions. First, how can non-firearm homicide be mapped across global regions without treating it as a mere remainder after firearm homicide is excluded? Second, what regional and modal patterns appear when non-firearm homicide is examined through comparative criminological categories? Third, how can ecological criminology explain the territorial and situational variation of non-firearm homicide without reducing it to weapon availability alone? These questions frame non-firearm homicide as a spatial, modal, and institutional phenomenon rather than only a forensic classification.

The contribution of this article is threefold. First, it reframes non-firearm homicide as a central object in global homicide studies. Second, it develops a comparative mapping framework that distinguishes region, weapon modality, social setting, and data limitations. Third, it argues that non-firearm homicide requires a different explanatory vocabulary from firearm homicide. Firearm homicide often directs attention to gun markets, access, organized crime, and ballistic capacity. Non-firearm homicide directs attention to proximity, situational escalation, household objects, bodily force, informal conflict, and guardianship failure. Spatial homicide research supports this shift because place-based variation remains meaningful even when weapons differ across contexts (Mohammadi et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This article uses a descriptive comparative criminological design to map global patterns of non-firearm homicide. The study does not conduct statistical modelling, causal testing, or country-level regression. It synthesizes global homicide mechanism data, regional homicide patterns, and recent criminological and forensic studies to develop a structured reading of non-firearm lethal violence. The main empirical reference is the UNODC *Global Study on Homicide 2023*, especially its separation between firearm, sharp object, other mechanism, and unknown mechanism categories. The analysis treats non-firearm homicide as a mechanism-based category that includes sharp objects, blunt objects, bodily force, strangulation, suffocation, poisoning, burning, and other non-gun methods. Variable selection in spatial crime research must be conceptually disciplined, because inconsistent categories can produce misleading comparisons across places (Groeneveld & Breetzke, 2022).

The article proceeds through three analytical steps. First, it distinguishes firearm-dominant regions from mixed-mechanism and non-firearm-salient regions. Second, it maps non-firearm homicide through broad modalities, namely sharp-force homicide, blunt-force homicide, bodily-force homicide,

asphyxial homicide, and other non-firearm mechanisms. Third, it interprets these patterns through ecological criminology, social disorganization theory, strain theory, routine activity theory, and comparative homicide studies. The article avoids treating non-firearm homicide as a single homogeneous type. Sharp-force homicide, strangulation, and blunt-force homicide often involve different circumstances, relationships, and settings. Spatio-temporal homicide research also shows that lethal violence varies across space and time in ways that require contextual interpretation rather than single-factor explanation (Trejo et al., 2025).

The limits of the study are explicitly acknowledged. Global mechanism data are uneven because many countries report substantial proportions of unknown or unassigned mechanisms. Some states also classify weapons, manner of death, and homicide circumstances differently. The article therefore does not claim to produce a precise global ranking of non-firearm homicide rates. It offers a mapping framework and interpretive synthesis. This approach is appropriate because underreporting and incomplete recording can shape official crime data, especially when mechanism, location, and victim-offender relationship are missing or inconsistently coded (Riascos Villegas et al., 2023). The article's purpose is to strengthen conceptual clarity, not to replace future empirical modelling.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results are organized around regional pattern, weapon modality, and criminological interpretation. The first pattern is the regional imbalance between firearm-dominant homicide and non-firearm-salient homicide. The second pattern is the internal diversity of non-firearm homicide mechanisms. The third pattern is the need to interpret non-firearm homicide through territorial and situational contexts. These patterns are summarized in the following matrix.

Table 1. Comparative Mapping of Global Homicide Mechanisms

Region	General mechanism pattern	Non-firearm relevance	Main criminological implication
Americas	Firearm-dominant in many countries	Lower relative share but still relevant in countries or subregions with mixed mechanisms	Gun markets, organized crime, and state capacity dominate, but non-firearm homicide remains important in interpersonal and domestic violence
Europe	Mixed mechanism structure with strong non-firearm component	High relevance of sharp objects, blunt force, and domestic or interpersonal settings	Non-firearm homicide must be linked to household violence, alcohol, intimate relations, and situational escalation
Asia	Diverse pattern across subregions	High relevance where firearm access is limited or reporting categories differ	Non-firearm homicide reflects legal weapon access, social conflict, domestic violence, and local dispute mechanisms
Africa	High homicide burden in some subregions, mechanism data often uneven	Potentially high but difficult to measure due to data gaps	Non-firearm homicide requires better injury, police, and mortality data integration
Oceania	Smaller absolute numbers, mixed mechanisms	Relevant but context-specific	Case-level analysis is more useful than broad regional inference

The global pattern indicates that firearm homicide cannot serve as a universal model. In the Americas, firearm homicide is often structurally central because firearms shape organized crime, gang conflict, and urban violence. In Europe and parts of Asia, non-firearm homicide often carries more interpretive weight. In Africa, the burden of homicide can be high, but mechanism data are frequently less complete, which makes direct comparison difficult. The UNODC data therefore support a cautious but important claim: global homicide research must distinguish homicide burden from homicide mechanism. A region may have a high homicide rate because of firearm violence, while another may have lower total rates but a higher relative proportion of non-firearm methods.

The second result concerns the internal structure of non-firearm homicide. Sharp objects are the most visible non-firearm mechanism in many settings because knives, blades, machetes, and similar instruments are accessible in ordinary domestic, occupational, and public environments. Forensic work on sharp-force homicide shows that wound location, number of injuries, clothing damage, defensive wounds, and body position can help distinguish homicide from other manners of death (Manso et al., 2021). This means that non-firearm homicide has a strong forensic dimension that should not be reduced to the simple presence of a weapon.

Table 2. Modalities of Non-Firearm Homicide

Modality	Typical instrument or method	Frequent setting	Criminological meaning
Sharp-force homicide	Knife, machete, blade, broken glass	Domestic disputes, street conflict, interpersonal escalation	Close-contact violence, accessible weapons, spontaneous or relational conflict
Blunt-force homicide	Stone, stick, hammer, household object	Domestic space, public fights, robbery, assault	Physical domination, repeated impact, situational anger
Strangulation or suffocation	Hands, ligature, obstruction	Domestic and intimate partner contexts	Control, proximity, gendered violence, private setting
Bodily-force homicide	Hands, fists, feet, kicking	Public fights, intoxication, interpersonal disputes	Escalation from assault to fatality
Poisoning, burning, other means	Chemicals, fire, other methods	Domestic, concealed, or special circumstances	Planning, concealment, vulnerability, intimate access

The third result is that non-firearm homicide is often more relationally proximate than firearm homicide. A firearm can kill at distance and may be used in organized violence, robbery, gang conflict, or mass violence. A knife, ligature, blunt object, or bodily force often requires physical proximity, immediate confrontation, or access to the victim's private space (Kadir, 2024). This does not mean all non-firearm homicides are spontaneous. Some are planned, excessive, or symbolic. Research on overkilling shows that weapon choice, injury number, perpetrator-victim relationship, and circumstances can produce distinct homicide patterns that reveal more than the mere fact of death (Kopacz et al., 2023).

"Non-firearm" is not always recorded consistently across jurisdictions. Some countries distinguish sharp object, blunt object, strangulation, and other means. Others collapse mechanisms into broader categories. Unknown mechanisms may also be substantial. This affects global mapping because a country with a high unknown category may appear less firearm-dominant or less non-firearm-dominant than it actually is. For this reason, non-firearm homicide should be mapped through broad regional tendencies, not rigid country rankings, unless the underlying data are complete.

Firearm homicide prevention often focuses on gun access, illegal firearm markets, licensing, trafficking, and ballistic enforcement. Non-firearm homicide prevention requires attention to domestic violence intervention, alcohol-related violence, public-space conflict management, knife availability in public settings, early dispute mediation, and guardianship in private or semi-private spaces. Studies of weapon use show that victim-offender relationship, racial or social context, and situational conditions

influence weapon selection, which means prevention must be mechanism-sensitive rather than weapon-neutral (Caines & Brown, 2023).

Discussion

1. Regional Mapping and the Limits of Gun-Centered Criminology

The global geography of homicide cannot be captured through a firearm-centered model alone. In the Americas, firearm homicide may dominate the public and statistical imagination because guns account for a large proportion of homicide in many countries. Yet this pattern should not be universalized. In Europe, Asia, and several other contexts, non-firearm mechanisms occupy a larger relative space. The category of non-firearm homicide therefore reveals a different geography of lethal violence. It shifts attention from ballistic lethality to proximity, household access, local conflict, sharp-force availability, and situational escalation. Comparative homicide studies in South Korea show that subnational trajectories of lethal violence can differ according to structural and social conditions, which reinforces the need for region-sensitive analysis (Cho & Harper, 2023).

A gun-centered perspective also risks distorting comparative criminology. It may lead researchers to overemphasize weapon access while underestimating the social settings in which violence becomes fatal without firearms. Sharp objects and blunt objects are embedded in everyday environments. Knives are household tools. Stones, sticks, bottles, and metal objects are readily available. Strangulation uses the body or common materials. These mechanisms do not require specialized illegal markets. Their criminological significance lies in accessibility, proximity, and escalation. Research on land use and homicide also suggests that built environments and routine spatial arrangements can shape homicide patterns beyond classic social disorganization variables (Inlow, 2020).

Europe illustrates the importance of non-firearm homicide particularly well. Firearms exist, but many homicides involve sharp objects or other non-firearm mechanisms. In such contexts, homicide prevention cannot rely only on gun control debates. It must address domestic violence, alcohol-related interpersonal violence, knife-carrying, social disorder, mental health crisis, and private-space violence. Studies of kitchen knives in homicide show that ordinary domestic objects can become lethal instruments, especially where violence occurs in unplanned or relational settings (Carel & Kidd, 2021). This challenges the assumption that dangerous homicide weapons are always exceptional or illegal.

Asia is more heterogeneous. Some countries combine low firearm availability with sharp-force or blunt-force homicide patterns. Others have limited data transparency, making exact mechanism comparison difficult. In countries where firearm access is more restricted, non-firearm homicide may become more visible not because violence is lower in intensity, but because available mechanisms differ. This raises the issue of weapon substitution. If guns are less accessible, violence may still occur through knives, blunt objects, or bodily force, although lethality may vary. Tool-mark and sharp-force forensic studies show that non-firearm weapons can produce complex injury patterns requiring detailed medico-legal interpretation (Weber et al., 2021).

Africa presents a different challenge because homicide burdens in some subregions are high, but mechanism data may be incomplete or uneven. Non-firearm homicide may be substantial, but unknown mechanism categories complicate interpretation. Comparative analysis must therefore distinguish between absence of data and absence of a phenomenon (Mappaselleng & Kadir, 2025). A region with incomplete mechanism reporting cannot be treated as analytically empty. It requires investment in homicide data infrastructure, forensic capacity, police recording, and public health mortality systems. Recent work on homicide in global extremes shows that countries with very different homicide rates require more disaggregated event-level frameworks to make comparison meaningful (Kivivuori et al., 2024).

The most important implication is that non-firearm homicide is not a secondary topic. It is central to understanding global lethal violence outside firearm-dominant regions. It reveals why homicide studies must compare mechanisms, settings, relationships, and institutional data systems. A country with low firearm homicide may still have serious non-firearm homicide problems. A country with high firearm homicide may also contain significant non-firearm domestic violence or interpersonal homicide. The mapping must therefore avoid binary thinking. The relevant distinction is not gun versus no violence, but firearm-dominant homicide versus mixed and non-firearm homicide ecologies.

2. Weapon Modality, Situational Ecology, and Non-Firearm Lethality

Non-firearm homicide is often marked by situational proximity. Sharp-force homicide typically requires closeness between victim and offender. The offender must approach, reach, and apply force. This creates different criminological implications from firearm homicide. Stabbing may occur during domestic disputes, bar fights, street confrontations, intimate partner violence, robbery, or spontaneous quarrels. Forensic research on sharp-force homicide confirms that wound patterns, body regions, and injury multiplicity can reveal whether the violence reflects struggle, overkill, defensive action, or targeted aggression (Handlos et al., 2023). This makes sharp-force homicide a bridge between criminology and forensic pathology.

Blunt-force homicide has another structure. It may involve repeated blows, improvised objects, and high physical force. Its setting may be domestic, public, or robbery-related. Blunt-force homicide often reflects the escalation of assault into fatal injury. Because blunt objects are widely available, prevention cannot focus only on weapon prohibition. It must address conflict escalation, alcohol-related violence, guardianship, and early intervention. Research on fatal blunt injuries shows that weapon type, injury pattern, and force configuration matter in understanding homicide circumstances (Sreenivas, 2020). This confirms that non-firearm homicide needs modality-specific analysis.

Strangulation and suffocation are especially important in domestic and intimate partner contexts. They are not merely methods of killing; they are often forms of control. Strangulation requires direct physical domination and frequently occurs in private spaces (Kadir et al., 2026). Its criminological meaning differs from public stabbing or blunt-force assault. It may signal coercive control, gendered violence, and an escalating pattern of abuse. Research on intimate partner homicide shows that criminal career and contextual factors can shape lethal outcomes, which supports the need to integrate relationship data into non-firearm homicide analysis (Chopin et al., 2024).

Bodily-force homicide also deserves attention. Fatal beating, kicking, pushing, or assault without a conventional weapon is often hidden within broader categories such as “other mechanism.” Such cases challenge simple weapon-based thinking because the body itself becomes the instrument of lethal violence. These homicides may arise from street fights, alcohol-related disputes, elder abuse, child abuse, or group assault. A comparative criminology of non-firearm homicide must therefore recognize that lethal violence can occur even without weapons in the conventional sense. Neighbourhood social control research emphasizes that violence prevention depends on concrete actors and mechanisms capable of interrupting escalation (Linning et al., 2024).

Non-firearm homicide is also tied to ordinary availability. A firearm is a specialized weapon. A kitchen knife, bottle, stick, rope, stone, or household object is not. This difference matters because non-firearm homicide prevention cannot simply remove all potential instruments. Instead, it must address the settings in which ordinary objects become lethal. Domestic dispute intervention, public-space guardianship, alcohol policy, emergency response, and conflict mediation may be more relevant than instrument regulation alone. Research on crime radiation and opportunity formation also supports the idea that crime patterns emerge from the co-production of opportunity and exploitation in specific environments (Carvalho, 2023).

The situational ecology of non-firearm homicide therefore involves four elements: proximity, accessibility, escalation, and guardianship. Proximity means that victim and offender are close enough for physical force. Accessibility means that lethal instruments are available within ordinary environments. Escalation means that conflict intensifies from non-lethal confrontation to fatal violence. Guardianship means that no actor or institution interrupts the process in time. This ecology helps explain why non-firearm homicide may be common even where firearm homicide is rare. It is not a lesser form of homicide. It is a different pathway to death.

Table 3. Comparative Criminological Matrix of Firearm and Non-Firearm Homicide

Dimension	Firearm homicide	Non-firearm homicide
Typical distance	Can occur at greater distance	Usually close-contact
Weapon access	Depends on firearm availability and markets	Often depends on ordinary objects or bodily force
Common criminological focus	Gun markets, organized crime, public violence	Interpersonal conflict, domestic violence, sharp-force access, situational escalation

Prevention focus	Firearm regulation, trafficking control, ballistic enforcement	Conflict mediation, domestic violence intervention, guardianship, alcohol policy, knife violence prevention
Data requirement	Weapon type, firearm source, legal status	Mechanism, setting, relationship, object type, injury pattern

3. Comparative Criminology Problem and Implication

The study of non-firearm homicide depends heavily on data quality. Global datasets often separate firearms from sharp objects and other mechanisms, but the residual category may be too broad. "Other mechanism" can include blunt force, strangulation, poisoning, burning, bodily force, and unknown instruments. Without disaggregation, non-firearm homicide becomes analytically flattened (Kadir, 2026a). This is a major problem for comparative criminology because different non-firearm mechanisms have different prevention implications. Homicide research linked to public health outcomes shows that lethal violence becomes more interpretable when connected to wider indicators rather than treated as isolated counts (van Breen & Liem, 2024).

A second data problem is regional inconsistency. Countries differ in forensic capacity, death certification, police recording, and legal classification. Some systems record weapon type in detail; others record broad mechanism categories. Some distinguish domestic homicide, intimate partner homicide, robbery-related homicide, and organized crime homicide; others do not. These differences affect global comparison. A low recorded rate of strangulation homicide, for example, may reflect low incidence, but it may also reflect misclassification. Research on intimate partner homicide inequities demonstrates why demographic, relational, and institutional variables must be connected to homicide data rather than treated as background information (Rowh et al., 2025).

A third problem is the relationship between homicide mechanism and territorial scale. National data may hide local patterns. A country may have low national non-firearm homicide rates but high concentrations in particular cities, neighbourhoods, rural regions, or domestic settings. Spatial homicide research confirms that homicide should be studied through area-level variation and not only through national rates (Nivette & Peres, 2022). This is especially relevant for non-firearm homicide because local conflict, alcohol economies, household structure, knife carrying, and guardianship practices vary within countries.

A fourth problem is that non-firearm homicide is often less politically visible than firearm homicide. Gun violence produces strong policy debates because firearms are symbolically and politically charged. Non-firearm homicide is more dispersed across domestic spaces, interpersonal disputes, and ordinary objects. It may therefore receive less policy attention, even when it accounts for a large share of homicide. This is especially problematic for intimate partner homicide, child homicide, elder homicide, and private-space killings. Research on inequality and interpersonal violence at neighbourhood scale shows that violence patterns may be embedded in broader social conditions that are not visible through weapon categories alone (McLaughlin & Pound, 2025).

Prevention must therefore be mechanism-sensitive. Sharp-force homicide prevention may require knife-carrying interventions, domestic violence screening, conflict mediation, and emergency medical response. Blunt-force homicide prevention may require alcohol policy, public-space guardianship, and assault interruption. Strangulation prevention requires domestic abuse intervention and recognition of non-fatal strangulation as a serious warning sign. Bodily-force homicide requires attention to group violence, street conflict, and vulnerability. Research on inequality and homicide also shows that grievances and legitimacy may matter in explaining why disputes escalate into lethal violence (Daly, 2023).

Comparative criminology should also connect non-firearm homicide with broader social structures. Poverty, inequality, urban density, policing, community trust, and informal control may influence homicide differently depending on mechanism (Kadir, 2026b). A firearm may intensify lethality where disputes already exist. A knife may become lethal where conflict occurs in close proximity. A blunt object may become lethal where assault is repeated and uninterrupted. A ligature may become lethal where private coercive control is already present. Socioeconomic disadvantage

research supports this mechanism-sensitive approach because absolute and relative disadvantage can operate differently across homicide contexts (Gobaud et al., 2022).

The methodological implication is clear. Future global homicide research should not ask only how many people are killed, but how they are killed, where they are killed, by whom, and under what situational conditions. A non-firearm homicide dataset should include at least six variables: mechanism, object type, location, victim-offender relationship, domestic or public setting, and event context. Spatio-temporal crime prediction research shows that richer data structures can reveal concentrations more effectively than aggregate counts, although predictive models must still be interpreted carefully (Cesario et al., 2024).

The comparative implication is equally important. The Americas should not define the global theoretical model of homicide simply because firearm homicide is highly visible there. Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania require homicide theories that take non-firearm mechanisms seriously. This does not weaken firearm homicide research. It places it within a wider comparative field. Non-firearm homicide reveals that lethal violence is not always a product of specialized weapon markets. It can emerge from domestic proximity, ordinary objects, interpersonal grievances, social disorganization, and failed intervention. This is why non-firearm homicide must be treated as a major field of comparative criminology.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined global patterns of non-firearm homicide through a descriptive comparative criminological framework. The analysis shows that homicide cannot be adequately understood through a firearm-centered lens alone. While firearms dominate homicide in several high-violence regions, especially parts of the Americas, non-firearm mechanisms remain central to global lethal violence. Sharp objects, blunt objects, strangulation, suffocation, bodily force, poisoning, burning, and other non-gun methods reflect different social settings and criminological processes. The article has mapped these patterns across regions and modalities, showing that non-firearm homicide is closely linked to proximity, ordinary weapon access, interpersonal escalation, domestic settings, and uneven guardianship. It is therefore not a residual category, but a distinct field of homicide analysis.

The criminological value of focusing on non-firearm homicide lies in its ability to reveal forms of lethal violence obscured by gun-centered analysis. Firearm homicide directs attention to gun markets, organized crime, and weapon access, while non-firearm homicide directs attention to households, streets, intimate relationships, local disputes, sharp-force availability, blunt-force assault, strangulation, and ordinary objects turned lethal. The article therefore proposes a comparative research agenda that disaggregates homicide by mechanism, region, setting, and victim-offender relationship. Future studies should integrate UNODC mechanism data, forensic records, police data, court decisions, medical examiner reports, and public health mortality systems. Only through such integration can comparative criminology move beyond national homicide rates and build a fuller understanding of how people are killed across different social and territorial contexts.

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