

Knife-Related Crime in Poland (2011–2023): A Criminological Analysis of Social, Situational, and Legal Factors

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Abstract: Over the past decade, Poland has experienced a notable prevalence of knife-related crimes. Forensic and criminological analyses indicate that knives remain among the most frequently used dangerous tools in violent offences, alongside blunt instruments and firearms. Despite this, Polish law does not classify knives as weapons under the Act on Weapons and Ammunition, resulting in limited preventive regulation. This article examines knife-related crime in Poland between 2011 and 2023 from a criminological, legal, and situational perspective. The study integrates official statistical data with criminological theory in order to interpret broader social and institutional contexts associated with knife-related violence. The analysis focuses not only on statistical trends but also on legal ambiguities, preventive challenges, migration-related pressures, situational opportunity structures, and patterns of violent interpersonal behaviour. The central research question of this study is: *How can long-term trends in knife-related crime in Poland between 2011 and 2023 be interpreted in light of selected criminological theories and socio-legal factors?* The study is based on the following hypothesis: Long-term trends in knife-related crime in Poland may be interpreted through criminological frameworks emphasizing situational opportunities, social control, urban concentration, and preventive legal regulation, while broader socio-demographic processes, including migration-related pressures, provide important contextual considerations. The findings indicate that although Poland maintains relatively lower levels of knife-related violence than several Western European countries, important legal and preventive challenges remain and warrant continued criminological and policy attention.

Keywords: knife crime; criminology; violent crime; Poland; situational prevention; legal regulation

1. Introduction

Crimes involving dangerous tools, particularly knives, have long constituted a significant challenge for law enforcement authorities, criminologists, and policymakers. Knife-related violence occupies a distinct position in public perception due to the close physical proximity between offender and victim, the symbolic association of knives with interpersonal aggression, and the strong emotional impact generated by such offences. Media narratives concerning knife violence frequently intensify public fear and contribute to political demands for stricter preventive measures and stronger legal regulation (Brookman, F., 2005; Greer, C., 2007; Greer, C., 2013).

Over the past two decades, knife-related crime has become an increasingly important topic within European criminological research. Public debate surrounding knife violence has intensified particularly in countries such as the United Kingdom and France, where knife-related assaults have been associated with youth violence, urban deprivation, gang activity, and social exclusion (Brookman, F., 2005; Home Office, 2022; Maguire, M., Morgan, R., & Reiner, R. (Eds.), 2012). In these contexts, knife crime has evolved from a criminal justice issue into a broader social and political problem connected with public security, urban governance, and preventive policy (Crown Prosecution Service, 2023; Home Office, 2022; Komenda Główna Policji, 2024).

Despite growing European concern regarding knife-related violence, comparatively little criminological research has examined the dynamics of knife-related crime in Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland. Existing literature has focused predominantly on Western European contexts, while the Polish experience remains underrepresented within comparative criminological studies (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024; Eurostat, 2022; Eurostat, 2023a, 2023b).

This research gap appears particularly important given Poland's distinct legal framework regulating knife possession and dangerous tools. Unlike

several Western European countries, Polish law does not classify knives as weapons under the Act on Weapons and Ammunition (*Act of 21 May 1999 on Weapons and Ammunition*, n.d.; *Code of Criminal Procedure of 6 June 1997*, 2024). Consequently, preventive regulation concerning knife possession remains relatively limited and fragmented. Article 50a of the Petty Offences Code, which penalizes carrying a knife in public without a justified reason, continues to generate interpretative difficulties due to the absence of a precise legal definition of "justified reason" (*Code of Criminal Procedure of 6 June 1997*, 2024; Petty Offences Code of 20 May 1971, 2024; Rudak, O., 2015; Sąd Najwyższy, 2002).

At the same time, Poland has undergone significant socio-demographic and institutional transformations over the last decade, which may have influenced broader patterns of interpersonal violence and public security.

This study contributes to European criminological literature in three principal ways. First, it provides one of the relatively few English-language analyses of knife-related crime in Poland based on long-term official statistical data. Secondly, it integrates legal analysis with criminological interpretation and situational prevention theory. Thirdly, it situates the Polish case within broader European discussions concerning knife violence, preventive policy, and public security governance. These factors suggest that knife-related violence in Poland should not be interpreted solely through descriptive crime statistics but rather may be interpreted through broader criminological and socio-structural perspectives. (Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M., 1979; Clarke, R. V., 1980).

The present article examines knife-related crime in Poland between 2011 and 2023 from criminological, legal, and situational perspectives. The analysis combines official statistical data with criminological theory in order to interpret not only the observable trends in knife-related offences but also the broader institutional and social contexts potentially associated with violent behaviour involving dangerous tools (Komenda Główna Policji, 2024).

The central research question guiding this study is: *How can long-term trends in knife-related crime in*

Poland between 2011 and 2023 be interpreted in light of selected criminological theories and socio-legal factors?

The article adopts the assumption that knife-related violence in Poland may be associated not merely with fluctuations in overall crime rates but also with situational opportunity structures, weakened informal social control, urban concentration, and limitations within preventive legal regulation (Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M., 1979; Clarke, R. V., 1980).

2. Literature Review and Criminological Framework

Knife-related violence has been widely analysed in contemporary criminology through structural, social, and situational perspectives. Criminological theories provide an interpretative framework that allows statistical trends to be understood not merely as numerical fluctuations but as reflections of broader social processes.

Travis Hirschi's social control theory posits that deviant behaviour emerges when social bonds between individuals and their communities become weakened or disrupted. According to Hirschi, attachment to family, educational institutions, employment, and socially accepted norms reduces the likelihood of criminal behaviour (Hirschi, T., 1969). In the Polish context, processes such as social atomization, demographic ageing, weakening family structures, and unequal access to social services may contribute to the erosion of informal social control mechanisms (CBOS, 2020; Sampson, R. J., Raudenbush, S. W., & Earls, F., 1997).

Statistical and sociological evidence suggests that socially marginalized environments are more vulnerable to interpersonal violence, including knife-related assaults. The weakening of community cohesion, especially in urban areas characterized by social instability, may increase the probability of impulsive acts involving dangerous tools (CBOS, 2020). Robert K. Merton's strain theory and Robert Agnew's general strain theory provide an additional explanatory framework. These theories suggest that crime may emerge as a consequence of frustration resulting from blocked access to socially accepted goals (Agnew, R., 1992; Merton, R. K., 1938). Such

mechanisms may become particularly relevant during periods of rapid social transformation, economic uncertainty, or migration-related pressure.

The migration dynamics observed in Poland after 2022 constitute an important contextual factor. The arrival of large numbers of Ukrainian refugees following the Russian invasion generated new integration challenges associated with housing, labour market access, education, and social support systems. Although available statistics do not demonstrate a direct increase in knife crime among migrants, criminological theory indicates that social strain and weakened integration mechanisms may indirectly influence patterns of interpersonal conflict (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024; Eurostat, 2022; Ministry of the Interior and Administration, 2023). Nevertheless, the present study neither examines nor establishes any direct empirical relationship between migration and knife-related offending.

Situational approaches provide a complementary perspective by focusing on the environmental and spatial conditions under which violent incidents occur. Within the Polish context, Routine Activity Theory (RAT), developed by Cohen and Felson, may help explain the concentration of knife-related violence in specific urban environments characterized by weakened guardianship, alcohol-related conflict, and increased situational opportunity structures (Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M., 1979).

This framework is closely associated with the criminology of place and hot spots policing. Empirical studies have demonstrated that crime tends to concentrate in specific micro-locations rather than being evenly distributed across urban environments (Eck, J. E., Clarke, R. V., & Guerette, R. T., 2007; Weisburd, D., 2015; Weisburd, D., Telep, C. W., & Braga, A. A., 2010). The Polish National Security Threat Map (Krajowa Mapa Zagrożeń Bezpieczeństwa – KMZB) represents an institutional example of applying situational prevention and place-based policing strategies.

Situational Crime Prevention (SCP), developed by Ronald Clarke, further emphasizes that crime can be reduced by limiting situational opportunities, increasing the perceived risk of detection, and strengthening environmental control (Clarke, R. V., 1980). In Poland, preventive measures implemented between 2013 and 2023 included intensified police patrols, CCTV expansion, urban surveillance, educational campaigns, and local crime prevention initiatives. The integration of structural and situational criminological theories provides a comprehensive interpretative framework for understanding knife-related crime in Poland (Braga, A. A., Papachristos, A. V., & Hureau, D. M., 2014; Clarke, R. V., 1980; Weisburd, D., Telep, C. W., & Braga, A. A., 2010). While structural theories explain broader socio-economic and social control mechanisms, situational approaches help identify the spatial and environmental conditions that facilitate violent incidents involving dangerous tools.

3. Legal Regulation of Knife Possession in Poland

The Polish legal system does not classify knives as weapons under the Act on Weapons and Ammunition of 21 May 1999. Consequently, knives may generally be possessed without registration or administrative authorization (*Act of 21 May 1999 on Weapons and Ammunition*). Unlike several Western European countries, Poland does not maintain a comprehensive list of prohibited knives or explicit legal limitations concerning blade length, locking mechanisms, or knife construction.

One of the few legal provisions directly addressing knife possession is Article 50a of the Petty Offences Code, which penalizes carrying a knife or another dangerous tool in a public place without a justified reason. Although preventive in character, the practical effectiveness of this regulation remains limited due to the absence of a precise statutory definition of “justified reason.” This ambiguity creates interpretative inconsistencies in law enforcement and judicial practice (Petty Offences Code of 20 May 1971, 2024; Rudak, O., 2015; Sąd Najwyższy, 2002).

Comparative analysis demonstrates that several European countries have adopted significantly more restrictive approaches. In the United Kingdom, for example, carrying a knife in public without valid justification constitutes a criminal offence under Section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. British legislation also imposes restrictions on specific categories of knives, including automatic and locking knives. The contrast between Polish and British legislation illustrates broader differences in preventive criminal policy. Whereas the British legal framework emphasizes preventive control and situational intervention, Polish regulation remains primarily reactive, with criminal liability often emerging only after the commission of a violent offence (*Criminal Justice Act 1988*, 1988; Crown Prosecution Service, 2023; *Restriction of Offensive Weapons Act 1959*, 1959).

In cases involving actual use of a knife during violent acts, criminal liability in Poland is based primarily on the Penal Code. Knife-related offences most commonly involve Articles 148, 156, 157, and 280 §2 of the Penal Code. Importantly, Polish jurisprudence treats knives not automatically as weapons but as “dangerous tools,” with legal qualification dependent on the manner of use and the situational context (*Penal Code of 6 June 1997*, 2024).

From a procedural perspective, the Code of Criminal Procedure plays a crucial role in the securing and forensic examination of knives used in criminal acts. Biological traces, fingerprints, DNA evidence, and injury pattern analysis remain essential elements of criminal investigation and forensic reconstruction (*Code of Criminal Procedure of 6 June 1997*, 2024; Zalewski, P., 2020).

The existing legal framework therefore reveals significant preventive and interpretative limitations. The absence of standardized legal definitions concerning dangerous tools, together with ambiguities surrounding Article 50a of the Petty Offences Code, continues to hinder coherent preventive enforcement.

4. Methodology

The study employed descriptive trend analysis and comparative criminological interpretation based on official datasets collected by the National Police Headquarters (KGP), the Central Statistical Office (GUS), Eurostat, and selected European institutional reports (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024; Eurostat, 2022; Komenda Główna Policji, 2024).

The analysis focused on long-term trends in knife-related offences between 2011 and 2023, proportional changes across offence categories, and comparative interpretation of crime dynamics within broader European criminological contexts.

The analytical framework combined descriptive statistical analysis with criminological interpretation grounded in social control theory, strain theory, routine activity theory, and situational crime prevention theory. Rather than treating police statistics as purely descriptive indicators, the study interpreted fluctuations in knife-related crime through the lens of broader social, legal, and situational mechanisms discussed in criminological literature (Agnew, R., 1992; Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M., 1979; Clarke, R. V., 1980; Hirschi, T., 1969; Merton, R. K., 1938).

The study was not designed to test causal relationships between knife-related crime and specific socio-demographic variables. Rather, the criminological theories discussed in the article serve as interpretative frameworks for understanding long-term statistical trends observed in official datasets (Heinonen, J. A., & LaFree, G., 2010; Kubas, M., 2016).

To improve analytical clarity and reduce descriptive redundancy, only the principal statistical visualizations were retained within the main text. Detailed category-specific charts were transferred to the Supplementary Material.

5. Results and Criminological Interpretation

The analysis demonstrated a long-term decline in the overall number of recorded crimes in Poland between 2011 and 2023. Total offences decreased from 1,159,554 in 2011 to 792,014 in 2023,

representing a reduction of approximately 31.7% over the examined period (Komenda Główna Policji, 2024).

Knife-related offences also demonstrated an overall downward trend. The total number of knife-related crimes declined from 3,196 cases in 2011 to 2,463 in 2023. However, despite this reduction, knife-related violence remained relatively stable as a persistent category of interpersonal crime (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024; Komenda Główna Policji, 2024).

Importantly, the observed decline should not be interpreted solely as evidence of improved public safety. The statistical trends likely reflect a complex interaction of legal, social, demographic, and situational factors. The post-2016 decline in knife-related offences may be consistent with explanations proposed by situational criminological theories, including intensified preventive policing, increased urban surveillance, and changing dynamics of violent property crime, although the present study does not test these relationships directly (Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M., 1979; Clarke, R. V., 1980). At the same time, fluctuations in violent interpersonal offences may be interpreted as being consistent with impulsive and situational forms of aggression described in criminological literature rather than exclusively organized criminal activity (Felson, M., & Boba, R., 2010). Robberies involving dangerous tools demonstrated the most substantial decline throughout the analysed period. This decrease may reflect broader reductions in traditional property crime as well as the growing effectiveness of preventive policing and situational crime prevention strategies (Braga, A. A., Papachristos, A. V., & Hureau, D. M., 2014; Clarke, R. V., 1980). In contrast, offences involving bodily injury and interpersonal violence remained comparatively stable. This pattern may be interpreted as being consistent with forms of spontaneous interpersonal conflict, alcohol-related aggression, and situational confrontation discussed in criminological literature rather than exclusively premeditated criminal activity.

Murders involving dangerous tools displayed periodic fluctuations rather than a consistent long-term increase. The temporary rise observed in 2020–2021 may reflect broader social disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, including intensified domestic tensions, psychological strain, and changes in routine social activity. This fluctuation may indicate instability in patterns of interpersonal violence rather than a sustained increase in overall violent crime. The data therefore support an interpretation of knife-related violence as a phenomenon that can be discussed using concepts such as situational opportunity structures and broader socio-political contexts (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024).

Comparative European data further contextualize Poland's position. Despite the persistence of knife-related violence, Poland continues to record lower levels of violent crime per capita than several Western European countries, including the United Kingdom, France, and Germany (Eurostat, 2022; Home Office, 2022; Office for National Statistics, 2024; Statista, n.d.; Bundeskriminalamt, 2019). These

comparisons are intended solely to provide contextual background and should not be interpreted as a formal cross-national comparative analysis.

Available criminological evidence suggests that knife-related violence in Poland occurs predominantly within interpersonal and situational contexts rather than within highly organized criminal structures. This interpretation may help contextualize why Polish patterns of knife violence differ from those observed in some Western European metropolitan environments, where gang-related violence and youth criminal subcultures play a more substantial role (Brookman, F., 2005; Maguire, M., Morgan, R., & Reiner, R. (Eds.), 2012). However, Poland's relatively favourable statistical position should not obscure the existence of structural vulnerabilities. The absence of comprehensive preventive legislation, ambiguities in knife possession regulation, and the continuing reliance on reactive criminal policy may create conditions conducive to future increases in knife-related violence.

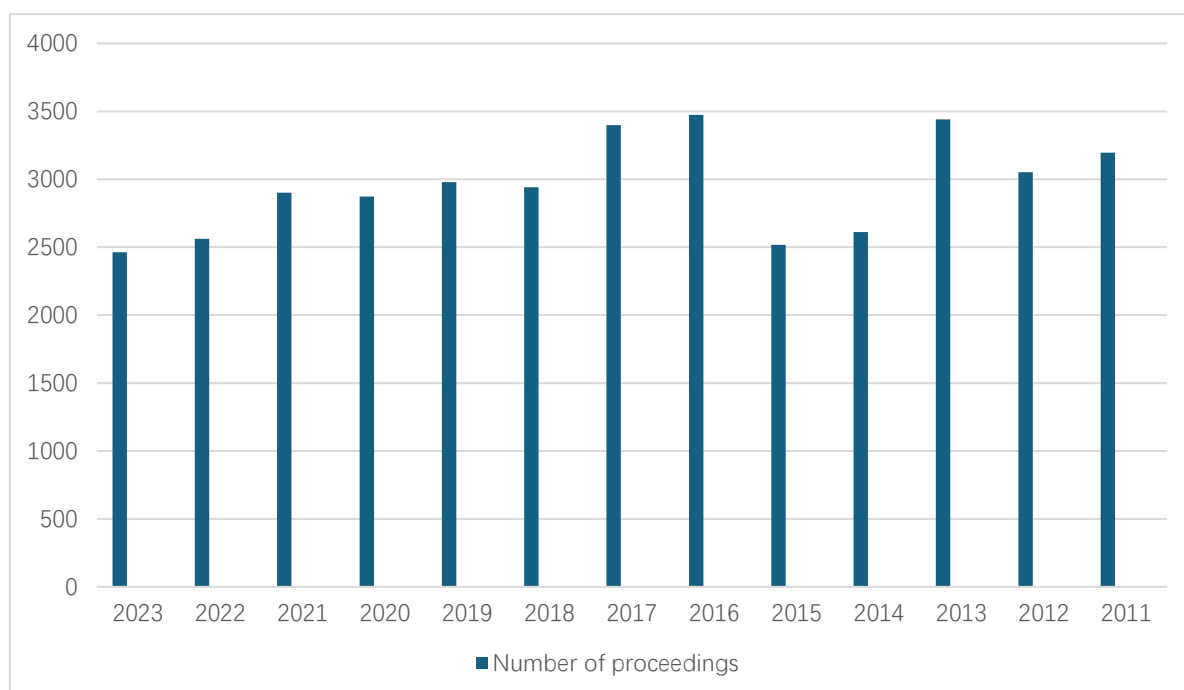


Figure 1. General Trend in Knife-Related Crime in Poland (2011–2023)

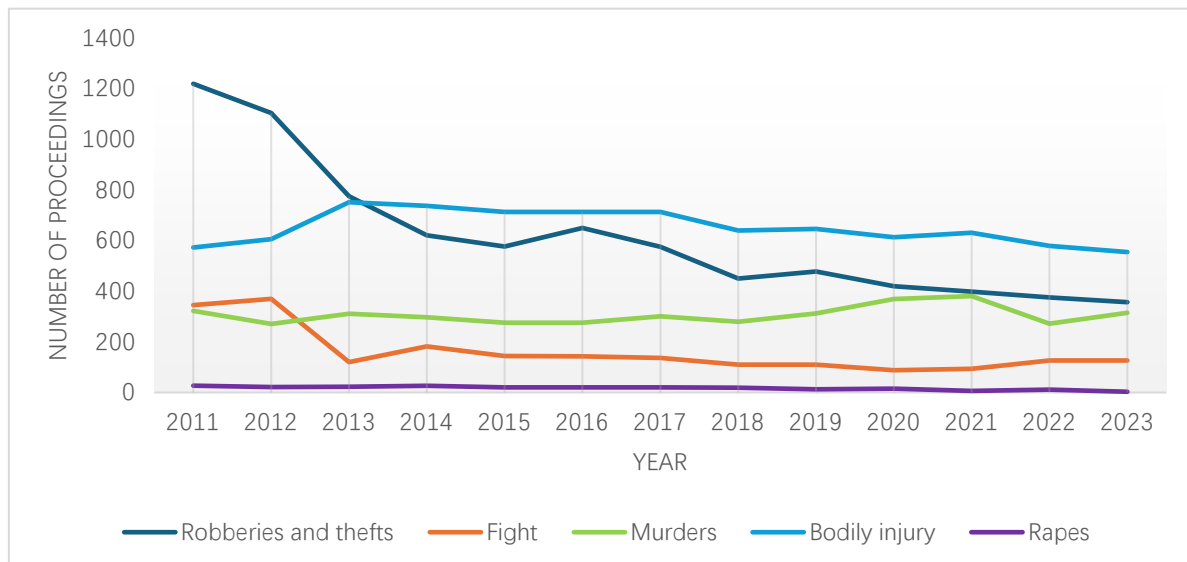


Figure 2. Comparison of Knife-Related Offence Categories

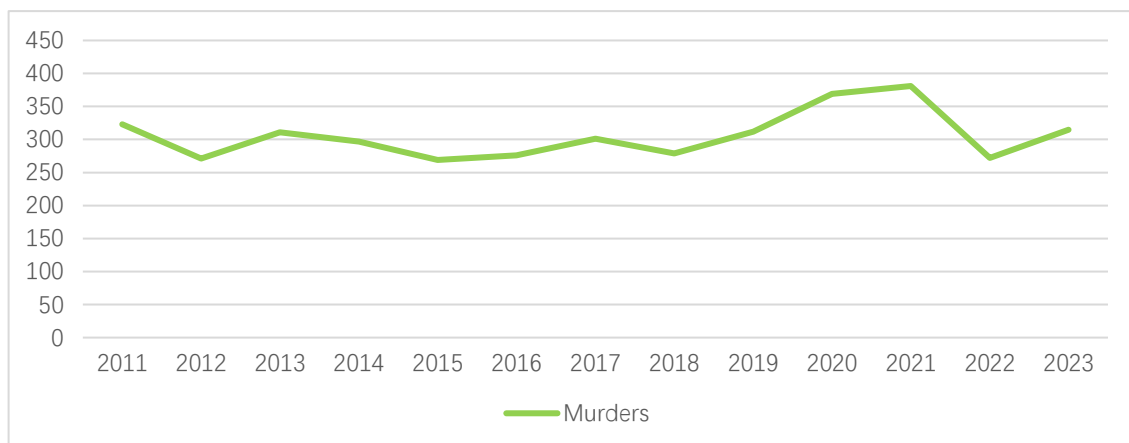


Figure 3. Murders and Robberies Involving Dangerous Tools

Detailed category-specific visualizations were transferred to the Supplementary Material in order to improve analytical clarity and reduce descriptive redundancy within the main text.

6. Discussion

The findings suggest that knife-related crime in Poland may be more fully understood when descriptive statistical trends are considered alongside criminological and legal perspectives. The observed trends reflect interactions between socio-structural transformation, situational opportunity structures, legal ambiguity, and institutional preventive capacity. A central challenge concerns the dark figure of crime. Official police statistics capture only recorded and confirmed offences,

while a significant proportion of interpersonal violence may remain undisclosed or unreported. This problem is particularly relevant in cases involving domestic violence, threats, or alcohol-related assaults (Kubas, M., 2016; Rudak, O., 2015; Zalewski, P., 2020).

The findings also indicate that knife-related violence in Poland differs from patterns observed in several Western European countries. In the United Kingdom, knife crime has increased significantly over the past decade and has become strongly associated with youth violence, gang activity, and urban deprivation. France has similarly experienced increases in violent assaults involving bladed weapons, particularly in metropolitan

environments (Home Office, 2022; Nottinghamshire Police, 2024; Office for National Statistics, 2024).

Several criminological perspectives may provide useful interpretative frameworks for understanding these differences. Compared with the United Kingdom, Poland continues to demonstrate lower levels of gang-related youth violence, lower urban population density in major metropolitan areas, and different patterns of illegal weapon circulation (Nottinghamshire Police, 2024; Office for National Statistics, 2024). Cultural factors, family structures, and variations in reporting practices may also influence the observable differences in knife-related violence between European states. Poland, by contrast, continues to demonstrate comparatively lower rates of knife-related violence. Nevertheless, the persistence of impulsive interpersonal aggression and legal fragmentation indicates that continued monitoring and preventive attention remain warranted despite relatively favourable crime trends.

The findings support the interpretation that knife-related crime in Poland remains strongly associated with situational and interpersonal conflict rather than exclusively organized criminality. This conclusion corresponds with Routine Activity Theory and situational criminological approaches emphasizing environmental opportunity structures and weakened guardianship (Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M., 1979; Clarke, R. V., 1980; OECD, 2023).

Furthermore, the legal framework regulating knife possession remains characterized by significant ambiguity. The undefined concept of a “justified reason” under Article 50a of the Petty Offences Code contributes to inconsistent enforcement and limits the preventive effectiveness of the regulation. From a broader criminological perspective, the Polish case illustrates how relatively low levels of knife violence may coexist with fragmented legal regulation and emerging socio-structural pressures. Consequently, continued preventive attention appears justified despite the relatively stable long-term trends observed in the available data (Rudak, O., 2015; Sąd Najwyższy, 2002).

7. Limitations

This study contains several limitations that should be acknowledged.

First, the analysis was based primarily on official police and governmental statistics, which reflected only confirmed offences recorded by law enforcement agencies. Consequently, the findings did not capture the so-called dark figure of crime, including unreported incidents of domestic violence, interpersonal assaults, or threats involving knives (Heinonen, J. A., & LaFree, G., 2010; Kubas, M., 2016).

Secondly, the study relied on administrative datasets characterized by potential inconsistencies in classification practices and reporting procedures over time. Changes in legal interpretation, police recording standards, or institutional practices may have influenced the comparability of long-term statistical trends.

Thirdly, the absence of victimization surveys and regional micro-level data limited the possibility of examining spatial concentration, offender characteristics, or socio-economic determinants of knife-related violence in greater depth (Heinonen, J. A., & LaFree, G., 2010).

Finally, the study focused primarily on descriptive and interpretative criminological analysis rather than inferential statistical modelling. Future research could therefore benefit from multivariate analysis, spatial criminology approaches, and comparative European datasets. Because the methodology employed in this study relied on descriptive statistical analysis and criminological interpretation rather than inferential modelling capable of testing causal relationships, the findings do not permit conclusions regarding the causal influence of specific socio-demographic, migration-related, legal, or situational factors.

8. Conclusions

The study suggests that knife-related crime in Poland may be more fully understood when long-term statistical trends are considered alongside criminological and legal perspectives. Rather than

demonstrating direct causal relationships, the analysis provides an interpretative framework for discussing knife-related violence within broader socio-legal and criminological contexts.

Although Poland continues to maintain comparatively lower levels of violent crime than many Western European states, the findings indicate that continued monitoring and preventive attention remain warranted despite relatively favourable crime trends.

The integration of criminological perspectives suggests that effective long-term prevention of knife-related violence in Poland requires the combination of legal modernization, situational intervention, and evidence-based public policy. Clarification of knife possession regulations,

strengthening place-based prevention strategies, and expanding community-oriented preventive initiatives appear particularly important within the Polish context. Future preventive efforts should therefore combine coherent legal regulation with social and environmental prevention measures in order to mitigate the long-term risk of escalation in knife-related violence. Detailed quantitative analyses, expanded statistical calculations, and supplementary category-specific visualizations were included in the Supplementary Material in order to preserve analytical clarity and maintain the theoretical and interpretative focus of the main article.

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Appendix

Demographic Data and Crime Rates

Poland, with a population of 37,563,071 in 2023, is one of the larger countries in Central Europe. Its demographic profile showed that 51.7% were women and 48.3% men. Over the past 20 years, the population had decreased by 1.7%, which was the result of a declining birth rate and high levels of emigration. The

average age of the inhabitants of Poland was 42.7 years, indicating an aging society, and forecasts suggested a further increase in the average age in the coming decades. According to demographic projections, by 2050, the population of Poland was expected to reach 33,950,569 (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024).

According to the definition adopted by the National Police Headquarters, a *confirmed offence* referred to an event in which, upon the completion of preliminary proceedings, it had been established that a criminal act had indeed been committed. This category included both felonies and misdemeanours prosecuted ex officio (including fiscal offences), where law enforcement authorities had determined that the act fulfilled the statutory criteria of a prohibited act under criminal law. As such, a confirmed offence differed from a *registered offence*, which referred to any incident entered into police records as a potential offence, regardless of whether it was ultimately confirmed in the course of the proceedings (Komenda Główna Policji, 2024).

The crime rate per 1000 inhabitants is one of the key indicators used to assess the level of crime in a given country. It shows how often crimes occur in relation to the population size, allowing for the comparison of crime levels between countries, regardless of population size.

In Poland, in 2023, 792,014 crimes were confirmed, which gave a crime rate of 21.01 crimes per 1000 inhabitants. This means that for every 1000 inhabitants of Poland, approximately 21 crimes occurred, which is an average level compared to Europe. The detection rate for all crimes in Poland was 71.50%. Per 1000 inhabitants, the most common crimes were of a criminal nature - 12.37 (detection rate of 65%) and property crimes - 10.85 (detection rate of 53%). Furthermore, economic crimes were recorded at 5.99 (73%), road-related crimes at 1.62 (98%), and crimes against life and health at 0.35. It is worth noting that between 2013 and 2023, the crime rate in Poland showed a decreasing trend, although the number of crimes slightly increased in 2022, reaching 22.9 crimes per 1000 inhabitants (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024). The data covered all registered crimes in Poland, based on nationwide police records.

Table 1. Crime Rate per 1000 inhabitants from 2013 to 2023

year	Number of Crimes (in total)	Crime Rate per 1000 Inhabitants (%)
2013	1 061 238	28,2
2014	867 855	23,3
2015	799 779	21,3
2016	748 459	20,1
2017	753 963	20,1
2018	768 049	20,5
2019	796 557	21,2
2020	765 408	20,5
2021	820 846	21,9
2022	862 432	22,9
2023	792 014	21,0

It is worth noting that the decrease in the crime rate between 2013 and 2016, followed by its stabilization in the subsequent years, could have been the result of several factors, such as improvements in police effectiveness, changes in legislation, and evolving social and economic conditions in Poland. Phenomena such as the decrease in criminal offenses, the improvement in the detection of road-related crimes, and changes in the country's migration structure may have influenced these data.

Another important factor influencing Poland's crime rates is migration. Poland, with a population of approximately 37.56 million in 2023 (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024), has experienced significant shifts in migration trends, particularly following the arrival of refugees and migrants from Ukraine since 2014.

According to Eurostat, by the end of 2023, 550,000 Ukrainians had documentation confirming their legal stay in Poland. This figure was likely underestimated, as since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukrainian citizens have been able to stay in Poland under a special law. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration (Ministry of the Interior and Administration, 2023), there are currently about 1.5 million Ukrainian citizens living in Poland. This number includes war refugees as well as Ukrainians who had been residing in Poland prior to 2022. Despite the large influx of migrants, Poland has been able to maintain relatively low crime rates, an achievement that underscores the effectiveness of its migration policies. In 2023, the country recorded 406,099 registrations, with 16,707 people registered from abroad and 9,941 deregistered (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024; Ministry of the Interior and Administration, 2023).

Crime Detection Rate

The crime detection rate was a key indicator used to assess the effectiveness of law enforcement actions. It indicated the percentage of offenders who had been identified and held accountable in relation to the total number of crimes recorded. The analysis of these data allowed for a better understanding of the effectiveness of prosecution in different crime categories. The data on the detection rate in Poland from 2013 to 2023 showed that this rate exhibited some stability, though with slight fluctuations depending on the year. The overall detection rate in Poland averaged 72% in 2023. It is important to note, however, that this rate was not uniform across all crime categories.

Table 2. Crime Detection Rate in Poland from 2013 to 2023 (in percentages)

Year	Overall (%)	Criminal Offenses (%)	Property Crimes (%)	Traffic Offenses (%)	Crimes Against Life and Health (%)
2013	71%	63%	55%	97%	85%
2014	72%	64%	57%	97%	86%
2015	73%	65%	59%	98%	87%
2016	72%	64%	58%	98%	86%
2017	72%	64%	57%	98%	85%
2018	73%	65%	59%	99%	86%
2019	74%	66%	60%	99%	87%
2020	75%	67%	61%	99%	88%
2021	74%	66%	60%	99%	87%
2022	74%	67%	61%	99%	88%
2023	72%	65%	53%	99%	88%

Source: Author's own elaboration based on data from the National Police Headquarters (KGP, 2024) and Central Statistical Office (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024; Komenda Główna Policji, 2024).

Table 3. Crime Detection Rate in Poland (Central Statistical Office Data – GUS, 2024; Komenda Główna Policji, 2024)

Crime category	Rate per 1000 Inhabitants	Crime Detection Rate (%)
Criminal offenses	12,37	65%
Property crimes	10,85	53%
Economic crimes	5,99	73%
Traffic offenses	1,62	98%
Crimes against life and health	0,35	65%

Table 4. All categories of crimes ascertained in Poland from 2011 to 2023, including knife-related crimes (Komenda Główna Policji, 2024)

Year	Offenses ascertained	Knife-related crimes	Percentage contribution
2023	792 014	2463	0,31097
2022	862 432	2561	0,296951
2021	820 846	2900	0,353294
2020	765 408	2872	0,375225
2019	796 557	2978	0,373859
2018	768 049	2941	0,382918
2017	753 963	3398	0,450685
2016	748 459	3474	0,464154
2015	799 779	2517	0,314712
2014	867 855	2611	0,300857
2013	1 061 238	3440	0,32415
2012	1 119 803	3053	0,272637
2011	1 159 554	3196	0,275623

Source: Author's own elaboration based on data from the National Police Headquarters.

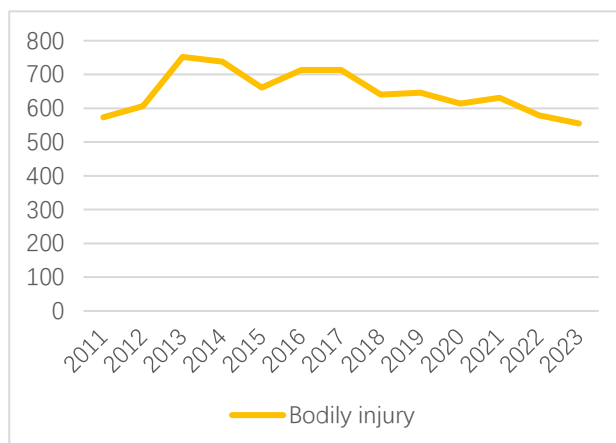


Figure 1. Knife-related crimes that cause body injury

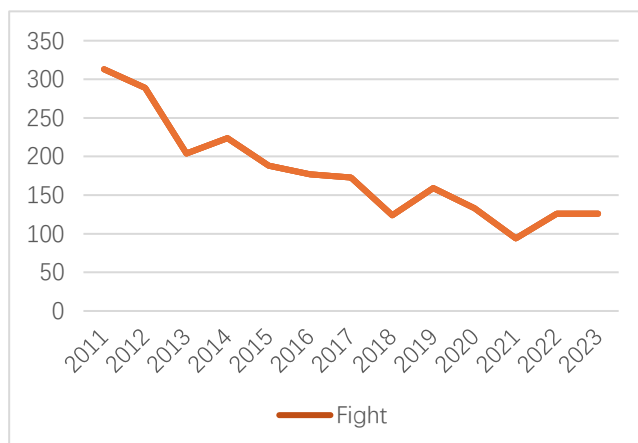


Figure 2. Use of a dangerous tool in a fight

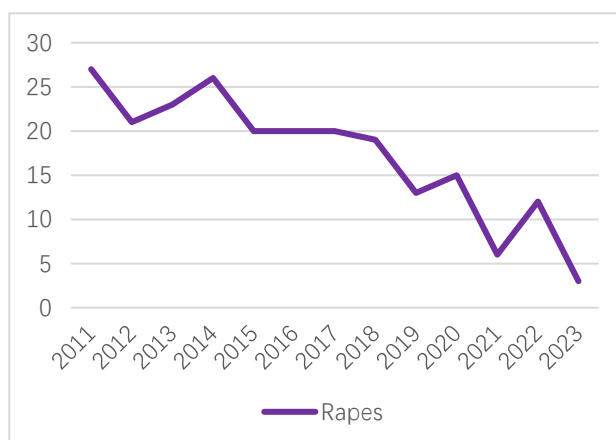


Figure 3. Rapes with the use of dangerous tools

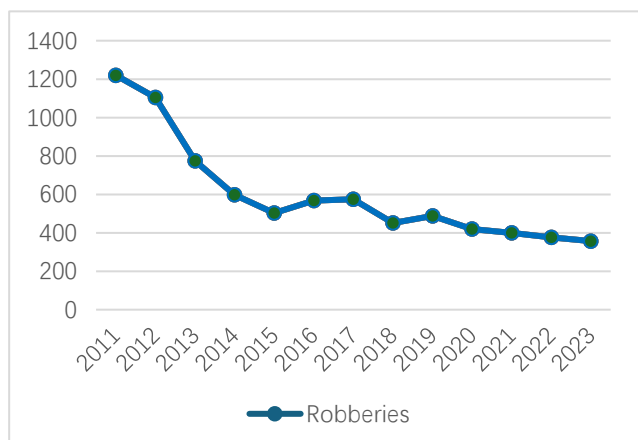


Figure 4. Robberies where a dangerous tool was used

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