PoliSciZurich

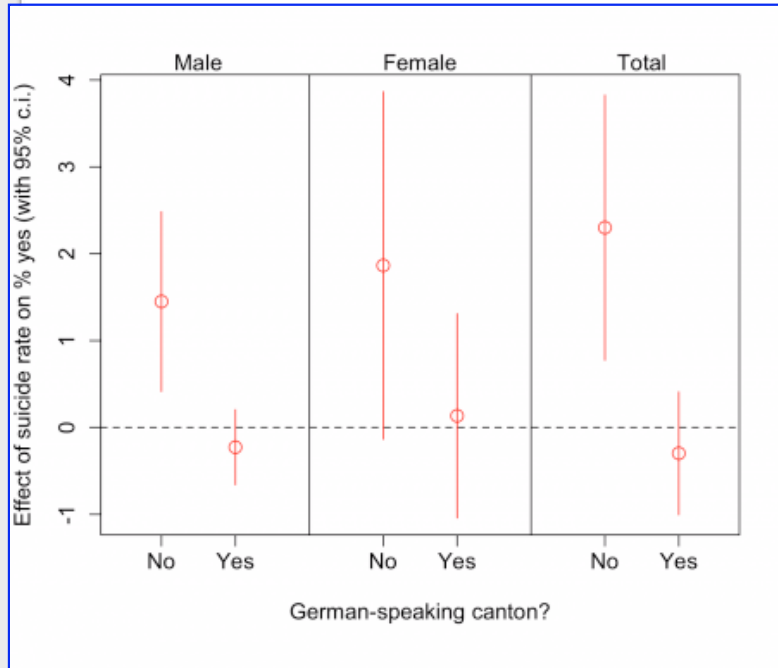A blog by political scientists in Zurich

More on suicide rates and support for the gun control initiative

February 15, 2011 by Fabrizio Gilardi

Some readers pointed out (please, leave a comment here next time!) that the relationship between suicide rates and support for the gun control initiative might be spurious. Well, it looks like it is:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
Suicide rate (females)	0.52	0.64	0.81	0.42
Suicide rate (males)	-0.09	0.26	-0.32	0.75
German speaking	-10.53	2.80	-3.77	0.00
Urbanization	0.09	0.05	1.76	0.09
% Catholics	-0.15	0.07	-2.08	0.05
(Intercept)	47.74	11.52	4.15	0.00

However, controlling for urbanization and share of Catholics, there seems to be a correlation between suicide rates and percent of yes to the initiative — but only in non-German-speaking cantons:

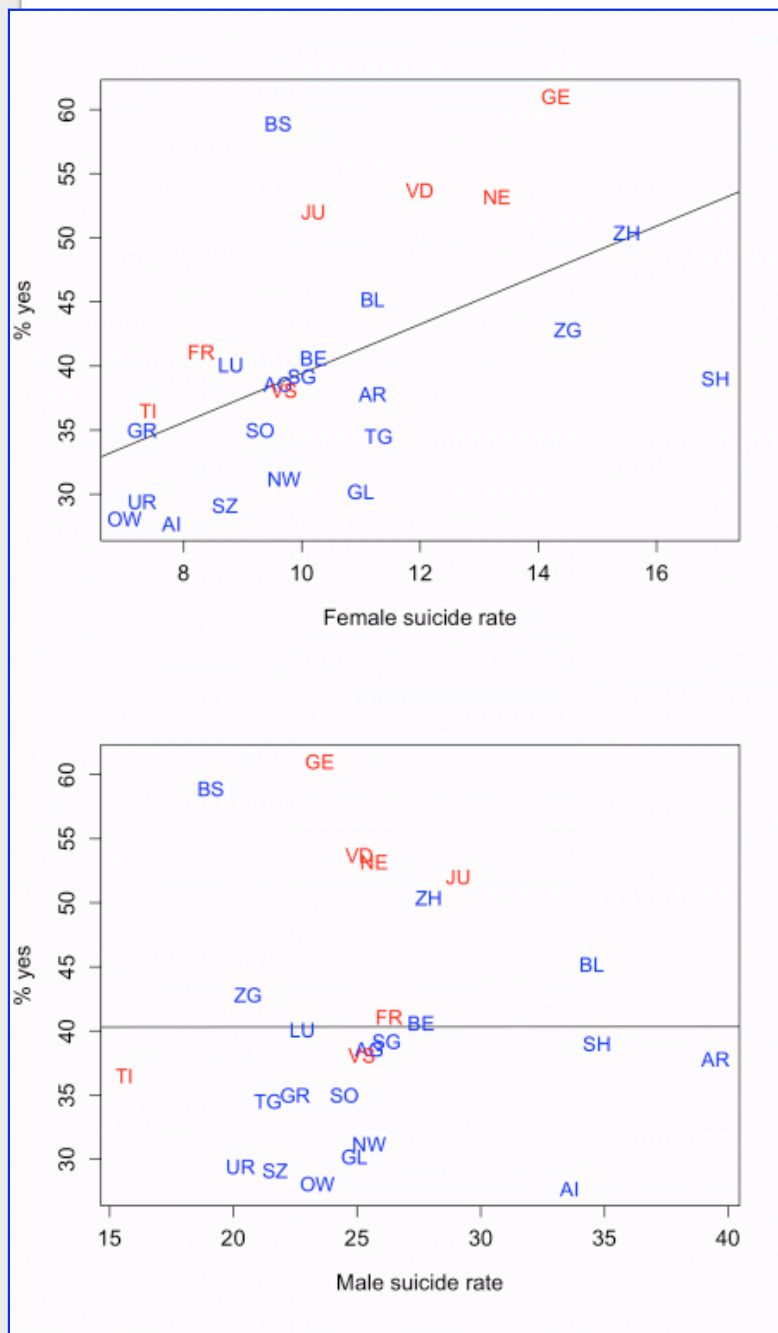Posted in Direct democracy, Switzerland | Leave a Comment »

Suicide rates and support for the gun control initiative

February 14, 2011 by Fabrizio Gilardi

The gun control initiative was rejected yesterday by more than 56% of voters and in all but 6 cantons. One of the arguments advanced by advocates of the initiative was that stricter gun ownership rules would reduce suicide rates. So, was there more support for the initiative in cantons with higher suicide rates? Surprisingly, there is a strong correlation between approval and female, but not male, suicide rates. The relationship holds after controlling for language region:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
Suicide rate (females)	1.94	0.57	3.41	0.00
Suicide rate (males)	-0.20	0.29	-0.68	0.50
German speaking	-9.36	3.18	-2.94	0.01
(Intercept)	31.86	8.03	3.97	0.00

(OLS regression; dependent variable: % yes; N=26; R^2=0.51)

Any ideas how we can explain the difference?

UPDATE: more analyses here.