



# Annual Report 2008

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# 1 The First Year of Operation

FORS went operational officially on January 1, 2008. However, the existing teams of SIDOS, the Household Panel, SELECTS, as well as some new core administrative staff (director, finance, and office manager) had to move into the newly rented locations at Lausanne Vidy first. This move happened subsequently during the month of January so that at the opening reception on January 31 the President of the Foundation could welcome all 19 collaborators that were employed at that time.

The immediate task in the first weeks was to ascertain the day-to-day operation of the productive units (surveys, data services). Most importantly, care was taken so that users would not suffer from any unnecessary delay or interruption of services. This goal could be accomplished due to the commitment of all staff members and due to the support and understanding of the host university's central services, especially the IT centre.

Once FORS had been installed and was running smoothly, several challenges had to be met in order to achieve the overall strategic goals set down in the Deeds of Foundation and in the contract with the State Secretariate for Education and Research:

- **Developing core scientific activities:** It was mainly the Household Panel and the data documentation services that needed strategic and operational development. The SHP has to deposit a new proposal by mid-2009. Therefore preparatory discussions in the SHP group and with the Scientific Board had to start during 2008. Data documentation has to catch up with international developments in the field (especially the implementation of the open source DDI standard for documenting data); IT infrastructure and daily routines had to be adapted to these new perspectives as soon as possible.
- **Management and team building:** Management tools for accounting, time control, internal communication flows, meeting schedules etc. had to be developed and implemented. Staff was by far not complete by end of January: senior (data services, COMPASS, SHP) as well as junior (mainly researchers) staff had to be recruited and integrated into the FORS team. All new collaborators have an academic formation in social sciences. They come from different regions of Switzerland and from different foreign countries, and all are able to communicate at least in two of the three FORS working languages (English, French, German). Several informal events were held to allow for team building activities.
- **Collaboration with the host university, other universities and non-academic partners:** Besides formal agreements with the host university and the Federal Statistical Office, FORS has to establish collaborative relationships with all interested actors in the field. These relationships may rely partly on existing

scientific collaborations like the Swiss Summer School on Methods for the Social Sciences held at the University of Lugano and administered by FORS, and partly on new links like the contact points that have been established at all Swiss universities in 2008 and that will act as “ambassadors” of FORS to the local scientific communities.

- **Integration into international networks:** FORS senior staff and FORS projects have been involved in international networks from the beginning. This international involvement needs to be strengthened and extended. FORS will not only take part in networks, but it will also actively invite scholars for scientific visits, and it will organize workshops, seminars, and conferences on a regular basis.
- **Presence in the scientific community and a wider interested public:** Communication tools like the website and the regular newsletter “ForsInfo” will help to position FORS as an important centre of expertise in the social sciences. Media presentations of products like SELECTS or the Social Report have proved of a considerable public interest in FORS activities. This is a valuable base to build on.

The subsequent sections report in detail on the developments of this first year of FORS operation.

## 2 FORS Core Activities

### 2.1 Surveys

#### 2.1.1 Swiss Household Panel

**The survey:** Five main tasks were implemented in 2008. First, the SHP CD 2008, containing the SHP data and documentation for waves 1 to 8 conducted in the years 1999 to 2006 (SHP\_I, waves 1 to 8; SHP\_II, waves 1 to 3), was made available to researchers in March 2008. Second, the field work for waves 9 and 4 was completed in February 2008. With regard to these waves, work related to data cleaning and preparation, variable construction, and documentation was realised from March to December 2008 in order to prepare the SHP CD 2009. Third, the field work for waves 10 and 5 was prepared between March and August (mainly questionnaires, qualitative and quantitative pre-tests, communication to participating households, training of interviewers), and started in early September. Fourth, the SHP data were included in the Cross-National Equivalent File CNEF in January 2008 (see section 3.3.5). Fifth, during the entire year, the Oracle database was developed in order to become operational for data management.

**The SHP team:** The SHP team had to be reorganized during the year 2008 due to integration into FORS and the departure of some members of the former team. During the second half of the year, three new collaborators joined the SHP group: a mathematician, a sociologist, and a social psychologist.

**Publications** (see attached list for details): SHP staff published two SHP working papers, one book chapter, and one article (in *Survey Research Methods*). Moreover, three articles were accepted for publication by Swiss or international journals (*Swiss Journal of Sociology*, *Swiss Political Science Review*, and *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*). In addition, two reports were presented to the FORS Scientific Board in May and October 2008, and preparatory work was done for the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Panel Data Users in Switzerland (that will take place in June 2009).

#### 2.1.2 International Surveys

**European Social Survey (ESS):** In 2008 Switzerland participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> wave of the ESS. As usual, this meant several activities for the team:

1. Construction of the sample, based on a list of buildings, with the information on the number of “private letterboxes” in each.

2. Preparation of the questionnaire. Basically, this means translations, reviews of the translations with countries sharing languages, and harmonisation of the three Swiss versions.
3. Pre-test of the questionnaire and verification of the routing.
4. Discussion of the implementation and follow-up of the work of the field institute.

Even if the fieldwork is always difficult, we hope to finish in early 2009 with a response rate around 50%.

As usual, we participated in the international meetings while preparing for the fieldwork. Furthermore, the team participated in the project “cognitive testing”; Switzerland has not only participated in the project itself, but also in the ESS quality enhancement meeting on pre-testing, where the results of the Swiss experience were presented.

Switzerland participated in the ESSprep project, launched in order to stabilize the ESS in the frame of the ESFRI initiative (see section 3.3.3).

The FORS director has been a member of the ESS Scientific Advisory Board ever since 1998. As in former years, the Board met twice in 2008 (see section 3.3.3).

**European Value Survey EVS:** In 2008 Switzerland participated for the first time in the EVS. This was a very interesting challenge and the first occasion to use the new sampling frame. More than 1200 interviews were completed, and we hope to publish a comprehensive dataset in the first months of 2009. This is especially interesting as Switzerland also participated, with a slightly different methodology, in the World Value Survey in 2007, allowing for comparisons. Furthermore, we conducted a non-respondent survey, obtaining responses from more than half of the non-respondents, in order to obtain a dataset that can be validated on a more reassuring proportion of the sample drawn from the population.

**MOSAiCH / ISSP:** In Switzerland, the yearly ISSP questionnaire is incorporated in a survey done every second year: MOSAiCH. Therefore, as MOSAiCH is fielded during the uneven years, 2008 was relatively calm. Nevertheless, the preparation of the 2009 edition started during the last months of the year.

More generally, the repartition between one year seeing the realisation of the ESS and the other dedicated to the MOSAiCH/ISSP is very functional for the team, contributing to distribute the workload more equally.

### 2.1.3 Swiss Electoral Studies SELECTS

SELECTS completed the 4<sup>th</sup> collection of electoral survey data at national elections in 2007. Data were made available for all interested researchers without embargo partially in April 2008, partially in autumn 2008. The datasets include data of the 2007 voters post-election telephone survey, an additional paper survey that was sent to respondents of the telephone survey, as well as a candidate survey that was

conducted among all candidates for the National Council and the Council of States within SELECTS participation in the "Comparative Candidate Survey" project.

Central results of the 2007 election study were published in a brochure in three languages (German, French, Italian) and presented in a press conference to the public in April 2008. Copies of the brochure were distributed to all 246 Members of Parliament and to the main political parties.

For scholarly oriented publications a call for papers was launched which asked for submission of paper proposals in September 2008. SELECTS plans to publish a special volume of the Swiss Political Science Review in 2010 which will be edited by Georg Lutz, Thomas Milic and Marco Steenbergen. The call attracted more than a dozen interesting paper abstracts. A conference to present and discuss the papers will take place in 2009.

At the universities of Bern and Geneva, two PhD theses based on the SELECTS 2007 project are ongoing.

With the integration of SELECTS into FORS effective from January 1, 2008, a number of institutional changes took place. SELECTS became an SNF funded infrastructure project, and a new project manager was hired from 2008 on. FORS constituted a new SELECTS commission chaired by the political scientist Pascal Sciarini (professor and director of the Political Science Department at the University of Geneva), which has academic responsibility for SELECTS. Other members of the commission are electoral researchers from different universities, as well as representatives from the Federal Office of Statistics and the Federal Chancellery.

## **2.2 Data Management and Consulting Services**

In 2008, FORS incorporated the procedures and practices of the data archive and research inventory of SIDOS. For the first half of the year, in the absence of a head of unit, staff who had made the transition from SIDOS to FORS worked to maintain the status quo of procedures and policies. Activities included primarily the standard archiving tasks of data acquisition, processing, preservation, and dissemination, as well as ordinary maintenance of the research inventory.

Beginning in summer 2008, staff members, as well as the newly hired head of the FORS unit "Data management and consulting services," embarked on a process of self-evaluation to define its strategic goals for the following four years. This process resulted in a paper that was presented to the FORS Scientific Board for their meeting on October 23. At this meeting, the Board discussed and accepted the specifics of the strategic plan described in the paper.

In outline, the plan calls for active engagement of researchers in a variety of ways in order to expose them to high quality datasets and encourage secondary analysis. To accomplish this objective, FORS data management and consulting services will:

- expand activities relating to promotion of data and services (e.g., presentations and seminars at Universities, workshops, email bulletins, online thematic datasets),
- develop online educational modules for training in data use,
- survey and interview researchers and data users regularly to define needs and interests, and
- develop innovative special projects to promote interest among researchers in particular datasets and domains

In addition, achieving these objectives will require a significant shift of resources within the unit, namely by reducing particular archiving activities and enlisting researchers to contribute to the preparation and documentation process. This will involve the following steps:

- streamline data deposit, data processing, and data access procedures,
- provide tools to researchers early in their projects' life cycle so that they can prepare their data and metadata following international standards,
- publish high quality datasets on the FORS Nesstar server to make access more convenient,
- make distribution of data "automated" by way of Nesstar, and
- develop an "open repository" for datasets that do not satisfy the FORS archive (and international) highest standard

After the plan had been accepted by the Scientific Board, unit staff set to work toward the first phase of its implementation, including analysis of requirements for publishing datasets on the Nesstar server (an online system for data access) and ensuring compliance with international documentation standards.

To ensure that its plans were viable and in alignment with international standards and practices, in the fall of 2008 the unit reached out to the European network of archives in the social sciences by way of site visits to four prominent institutions:

- United Kingdom Data Archive – Colchester, England (September 17-18)
- Finnish Data Archive – Tampere, Finland (October 28-29)
- Norwegian Social Science Data Services – Bergen, Norway (November 5-6)
- GESIS – Cologne, Germany (December 3-4)



For each visit, the head of the data management and consulting services unit spoke with institutional directors and staff about their organizations, practices, objectives, and challenges, as well as about the feasibility of the unit's strategic plans. Feedback from these visits confirmed that the unit's plans were realistic and appropriate, given available resources.

Other activities within the unit during the second half of 2008 included the following:

- In October, one new staff member was hired, to fill a position left vacant by a former SIDOS collaborator.
- In December, the research inventory initiated its annual survey to collect information about new and ongoing social science research projects in Switzerland. Attached to this was a special questionnaire which asked the respondents to evaluate the services of the Data Management unit. The result of this survey will give important insights on the demand on the side of researchers.

During October to December, old SIDOS web pages for the archive and inventory were updated and fully migrated to the FORS website.

## **2.3 Communication Portal for Accessing Social Statistics COMPASS**

The COMPASS unit started its activities in 2008 when the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) signed Appendix B (the document that describes the contractual obligations of FORS), and when the head of the unit, Andreas Perret, took up his duties (July 1). The second half of 2008 has been devoted to the detailed conception of the unit's tasks, the acquisition of specific know-how, as well as the hiring of personnel for the unit.

**Detailed conception:** The functionalities expected from COMPASS were discussed in Neuchâtel and in Vidy during five thematic meetings, based on a conceptual plan and matching slides. The following topics were covered:

- A diffusion strategy for the FSO and its meaning for COMPASS,
- IT involvement of the FSO in the COMPASS project, and
- A dedicated database for the data protection contracts

Following two meetings with collaborators in charge of household surveys at the FSO, we identified a need for information for both the management and the

personnel of the office. Consequently several meetings have been scheduled and a leaflet printed, targeted for internal use at the FSO.

The Steering Committee approved during its first meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup> the choices made in the conceptual phase.

**Know-how building:** Since an important part of the mission consists in documenting datasets, the head of the unit took part in a workshop in November on an international standard for metadocumentation, the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI 3). While attending the seminar, the issues COMPASS will face were presented to a broad audience dealing with similar goals at an international level.

**Staff hiring:** During the second part of 2008, needs for additional resources for COMPASS (in terms of personnel) were identified, job descriptions written, and positions advertised. Three micro-data specialists were hired (to begin from February 1, 2009). Hired staff hold academic degrees in sociology, economics, and human geography. A mathematician from FORS, mostly active for the Swiss Household Panel, will bring his expertise with respect to the methodology required for the production of Public Use Samples.

## 2.4 Methodological Research

Work on the FORS methodological research programme started in summer 2008 with the preparation of a strategic discussion on this issue in the Scientific Board. Following the Board's recommendations and taking into account the expertise present in the FORS scientific staff, three research modules were defined:

1. Mixed mode interviewing, i.e., combinations of CATI, CAPI, and CAWI
2. Non-response issues
3. Survey translation

These topics are relevant for all FORS surveys, but they are also at the heart of much what is actually debated in international methodological survey research.

For each module a drafting group has been nominated which is responsible for animating and organising the debate and for authoring a programmatic paper on themes, topics, schedules and resources to be presented at the May 2009 meeting of the Scientific Board.

As soon as the new University of Lausanne research group MISC became operational, consultation and collaboration on the methodological research programme started. There will be a constant scientific exchange between FORS and MISC in developing and implementing research activities.

## 2.5 Social Report

The Social Report 2008 was realised in the old institutional and organisational setting before its move to FORS. It was directed by prof. Christian Suter (University of Neuchâtel) and edited by a group of six persons from the Universities of Lausanne and Neuchâtel respectively. It was successfully announced at a national media conference in Bern in December 2008 (see section 2.8.3).

For the first time, the Social Report was published in three languages (German, French, English). Therefore three books had to be produced. Each book contains a CD with all graphics and data tables. The CD content is also accessible via the Internet ([www.socialreport.ch](http://www.socialreport.ch)). The CD as well as the web site are in three languages too.

The Social Report presents 75 indicators on five thematic fields: distribution of social goods, cultural diversity, social integration, political reshaping, environment and society. For each of these fields there is in addition to the indicators an analytical section authored by distinguished Swiss social scientists. These texts are available in the German and French printed versions only. The overarching thematical orientation of all contributions is to show Switzerland in international comparison: "Switzerland Measured and Compared", as the book title states.

The next edition of the Social Report is planned for 2012. It will be integrated in the FORS structure and will become a FORS product. Preparatory work will start in early 2009.

## 2.6 Swiss Summer School on Methods in the Social Sciences

The 12th Swiss Summer School 2008 on Methods in the Social Sciences was held from August 15 - 29, 2008, hosted, for the tenth year, by the Università della Svizzera Italiana (Lugano).

During the first week, the following courses were scheduled:

- Kelvin Jones: Multilevel models: Practical applications (27 participants)
- Max Bergman: Qualitative Interviewing (19)
- Johanne Boisjoly: Panel Data Analysis/Event History  
(unfortunately this workshop had to be canceled at short notice due to the illness of Prof. Boisjoly, there were 17 registered participants)

During the second week:

- Véronique Mottier: Qualitative Data Analysis: Interpretive Research Strategies (18)
- Peter Schmidt/Eldad Davidov: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) I (22)
- Cédric Dupont: Applied Game Theory (4)

The two day preparatory / refresh workshop (Horber) preceding the Summer School was attended by 17 participants. Nearly 30 percent of the participants stayed for both sessions (two courses). Fifteen percent of the Summer School participants came from outside Switzerland (Italy, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, Ireland, Poland, Japan). Twenty five percent of the participants were working in the field of the educational sciences, 22 percent in business studies, 20 percent in psychology, and 19 percent from other social sciences. Eighty percent were (PhD) students.

## 2.7 Governing Bodies and Management

### 2.7.1 Foundation Board

The FORS foundation's supreme governing body is the Foundation Board. It is chaired by the Rector of the host university who acts as a President to the Foundation. The Deed of Foundation conveys to the Foundation Board the highest authority and the widest powers; the Deed can be downloaded from the FORS website. Actually, the Board consists of eight full members representing the key stakeholders (universities, the Federal Statistical Office, and the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences) as well as two observers from the most important funding bodies (the State Secretariate for Education and Research and the Swiss National Science Foundation). The list of the members of the Board is attached to this report.

The Foundation Board met for the first time on *Sept. 27, 2007* to formally constitute the Foundation according to Swiss law. It had its second meeting on *Nov. 20, 2007*. At this meeting, the Chair and the members of the Scientific Board were appointed (see section 2.7.2 and list of the members attached) as well as the Director. The Board approved of two agreements with the host university on scientific collaboration and on the resource contributions of the university (e.g., office space, IT facilities, administrative support, invitations of guest researchers).

The third Foundation Board meeting was the first to take place on the new premises of FORS in Lausanne Vidy on *Feb. 21, 2008*. The Board decided on the contract between FORS and the State Secretariate for Education and Research, it mandated and appointed the members of the special commission for SELECTS, and it elected the heads of the units Monitoring and Support to be members of the Executive Board. The newly created corporate design of FORS (logo, letterhead, web site) was

presented to the Board and, on the same day, to the wider public via a media conference (see section 2.8.3).

At its following meeting on *May 27, 2008*, the Board appointed the head of the unit Data Management/Consulting Services as fourth member of the Executive Board, thus completing operative management, and it approved of a regulation on practical aspects of the day-to-day functioning of FORS (e.g., signing off of official and bank documents by the Director and the members of the Executive Board); the regulation was formally approved by the Federal Government Foundation Control Agency on Aug. 5, 2008.

At this year's last meeting on *Oct. 22, 2008*, the Board elected a new representative of the Federal Statistical Office, because the outgoing person had accepted a new professional position at UNDP in New York; the Board approved of the proposition of the Office. The main issue at this meeting was the presentation and discussion of the Contact Points that had been established in all relevant Swiss Universities (see section 3.2).

Immediately after this meeting there was a joint meeting of the Foundation and the Scientific Boards (the Scientific Board having its regular meeting the day after, see section 2.7.2). The meeting was chaired by the President of FORS. Almost all members of both Boards were present. The meeting's main goal was to have some exchange on the mission of FORS and the role of the Boards. Participants judged the meeting to be very fruitful and it was decided to hold such meetings at regular intervals with substantive topics.

Due to the initial phase of FORS and to the high number of strategically important issues the Foundation Board had to follow a rather demanding meeting schedule with five meetings in only 13 months. It is anticipated that this will change in future. Typically there will be two meetings per year: in spring (with, among others, audit of accounts of the previous year) and in autumn (with, among others, decision on the budget for the following year).

### **2.7.2 Scientific Board**

The Scientific Board held its very first meeting on *May 22/23, 2008*. Besides a *tour de table* presenting the participants and a general presentation of FORS and its mission as well as the role and functions of the Board, two main substantive topics were discussed: first, goals, organisation, and institutional and thematic framing of the methodological research program within FORS and its relationship to the new university research unit MISC; second, the near future of the Swiss Household Panel in view of the proposal which will have to be submitted to the National Science Foundation by the end of June 2009.

Both issues came up in much more detail at the second meeting on *Oct. 23, 2008*, which followed the joint meeting of the two Boards (see section 2.7.1, and, for the topical parts, sections 2.1 and 2.4). Additionally the head of the unit Data

Management/Consulting Services presented the strategic visions for the development of this unit and its activities in the next few years (see section 2.2).

Despite the large number of members, the international character of the Board, and the workload of the distinguished scholars on the Board, both meetings were attended by almost every member, which is a good indicator of their interest and commitment. The Board has not decided yet about the rhythm of its meetings but is aware of the fact that in the early phase of development of FORS it might be useful to have two meetings per year. It wishes also to continue meeting with the Foundation Board from time to time.

### 2.7.3 Management

The Executive Board is chaired by the Director and comprises the heads of the units Monitoring, Data Management/Consulting Services, and Support. After all members were appointed by the Foundation Board, it started to meet regularly every second week. Decisions are minuted, and the minutes are sent to the Presidents of the Foundation and the Scientific Boards to keep them posted on current affairs.

The President and the Director meet monthly to discuss actual issues and to prepare the Boards' meetings. Intermediate contacts take place if needed.

The collaboration with the University's central services, especially human resources and IT, runs smoothly and facilitates FORS daily operations considerably.

The number of staff grew by 40 percent in 2008. Apart from two office clerks and two IT specialists, all staff members have accomplished studies in different social science disciplines; one third has doctoral/Ph.D. degrees (see table attached). Several dissertations and one habilitation are under way. The Director was nominated *professeur titulaire* by the University of Lausanne.

Staff members originate from six different nationalities and are native speakers of eight languages plus several Swiss-German dialects. A multinational and multilingual working environment is an essential part of the stimulating intellectual atmosphere FORS aspires to offer to its collaborators. Consequently, FORS communicates internally and externally in three languages: English, French, and German. All scientific collaborators are expected to understand these languages passively and to be able to communicate actively in at least two of them.

Apart from newly hired staff, FORS staff moved to Lausanne from different institutions. In order to facilitate the creation and development of a common identity and culture FORS organised several social events during the year:

- *Jan. 31*: opening reception with presence of the President of the Foundation and the Dean of the social sciences faculty;
- *Sept. 12*: half-day staff excursion visiting the Domaine de Greybin (Molondin); dinner at Restaurant La Prairie in Yverdon;
- *Dec. 18*: Christmas apéro at FORS premises.

Regular general staff meetings are intended to initiate and encourage scholarly exchange between the units and groups. There were two such meetings in 2008: *March 13* and *Dec. 18*. At the first meeting, FORS general organisation and operation were presented. The second was used to discuss more in-depth the strategic tasks and development plans of the Data Management and Consulting Services unit (see section 2.2) and COMPASS (see section 2.3). It is planned to have 2-3 such meetings with different topical focus every year.

## **2.8 Communication and Public Relations**

For a national institution like FORS, communication and public relations are of utmost importance to have nationwide outreach. This is especially important in the early phases of operation and with regard to the specific history of establishing and installing the new institution. FORS has therefore invested considerably in communication tools and measures, and will continue to do so to maintain and improve professionalism, effectiveness, and appearance in public. The overall goal is to position FORS as a recognised Swiss centre of expertise in the social sciences.

### **2.8.1 Corporate Design**

The FORS corporate design (logo, letterhead, visit cards) was created by a specialised creative agency by the end of 2007 so that it was ready when FORS operations started in January 2008. The demanding task to create a corporate design that has a modern and functional appearance and that is remembered easily was achieved in an impressive way.

The process of establishing a corporate design and of putting it to work was strongly supported by the University of Lausanne Communication Services (Unicom).

### **2.8.2 Communication Tools: Website, Flyer, Newsletter**

A *communication concept* was developed by the PR agency that was subsequently mandated to implement the concrete measures (Bonhage Gagnebin PR). The concept was approved by the Foundation Board.

The *website* was created following the standards used by the University of Lausanne. Nevertheless it has a recognisable individual look. All information on the website is offered in the three FORS working languages German, French, and English. The website has been online since the end of February 2008. Periodic revisions and continuous updates are essential to keep the website user friendly and up-to-date.

The website and the FORS servers are hosted by the University of Lausanne IT services. The site is maintained by the FORS webmaster after a specific training on technical aspects by university IT staff.

A short *flyer* with some basic information on FORS was produced in autumn 2008. The flyer comes in two editions: German/English and French/English. It contains most importantly contact details of senior staff responsible for the different services provided by FORS. The flyer is available for wide dissemination at congresses, seminars and other appropriate events. It will be distributed also via the contact points at universities (see section 3.2)

The *FORS newsletter* was published the first time in August 2008. “FORS Info” will keep the research community informed on services and developments at FORS. It is available in German and French, and it was sent with personalised letters to all the researchers in our research inventory (ca. 4500) and to ca. 1500 junior researchers, thus covering virtually the whole research community in empirical social sciences in Switzerland. The newsletter is downloadable in pdf-format from our website. “FORS Info” will be published twice yearly. It is anticipated that in a later stage the publication will be distributed exclusively in electronic form.

### 2.8.3 Media Events

There were several media events during 2008:

- On February 21, FORS was presented at a media conference in Lausanne. Media coverage was good especially in the French speaking part of Switzerland. At the same time, the monthly information newsletter of the host university “uniscope” announced the arrival of FORS with a 2-page feature.
- The first new FORS product was the booklet on the 2007 election study *SELECTS* authored by the *SELECTS* project director and senior researcher Dr. Georg Lutz. The booklet was published at a media conference in Bern on April 29. The publication was very successful, with positive articles and reports in all important national newspapers and some radio stations.
- The official *FORS inauguration event* took place at the University of Lausanne on October 22 with political statements of the State Secretary for Education and Research Dr. Mauro Dell’Ambrogio, the Minister for Education of the Canton Vaud Anne-Catherine Lyon, the vice-president of the Humanities and Social Sciences Division of the National Science Foundation Prof. Agostino Paravicini, the representative of the Federal Statistical Office Marco Buscher, and the President of FORS Prof. Dominique Arlettaz. There were also scientific presentations by Prof. Dominique Joye and Prof. Christian Suter. The inauguration was concluded by a programmatic speech on “The Importance of Research Infrastructures for the Development of Social Sciences in Europe” by the President of the FORS Scientific Board, Prof. Max Kaase; the text of his speech can be downloaded from the FORS web site. Some 100 participants



attended the event, and media took advantage of the occasion to interview high level Government officials.

- Finally, we presented the *Social Report 2008* in Bern on December 9. The media echo was overwhelming in quantity and quality and included a two minute feature with interviews with the editors in the prime time evening news of Swiss German TV as well as an extended interview with one editor in the lunchtime news of the main French speaking Swiss radio channel.

Media documentation for all these events is available at FORS. We intend to continue to announce important products widely.

## 3 Scientific Collaborations

### 3.1 Host University

#### 3.1.1 Contractual Agreements

There were two contractual agreements signed with the host university:

- A *scientific* one covering the establishment of a new research unit by the University (which was to become MISC, see section 3.1.3), the scientific collaboration and especially the running of a common methodological research programme, as well as collaboration in teaching courses and in accompanying doctoral dissertations; under certain conditions a professoral status can be assigned to FORS collaborators.
- An *administrative* one covering issues like the provision of fully equipped office space, of IT and human resources services, and of coordination with the University communication services. Office space and human resources services are in kind contributions by the University, and IT and communication services are offered on the same conditions as for University institutes. In turn, FORS covers facility costs such as cleaning, heating, telephone, etc., and coordinates its employment conditions with those of the University.

Both contracts have been signed for four years with the possibility of prolongations.

It is envisaged that – as far as the scientific side is concerned – similar agreements will be signed with other universities.

#### 3.1.2 Collaboration with the Faculty: Invitational Programme

The Faculty of Social and Political Sciences has dedicated a yearly sum of CHF 200'000 for invitations to scholars working on methodological and substantive fields that are close to FORS (and MISC) core activities. This sum was used in 2008 to invite the following scholars for stays of varying lengths:

- Noël Adangnikou, Réseau d'Etude sur l'Enseignement Supérieur, LAPSAC, Université Victor Segalen-Bordeaux 2
- Prof. George Alter, Associate Director, ICPSR, University of Michigan
- Prof. Ken Bollen, Director, Odum Institute, University of South Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Dr. Paul Lambert, University of Sterling, Scotland
- Bertrand Muller, Université de Genève

- Prof. Jürgen Schupp, Deputy Head of Department, German Socio-Economic Panel Study SOEP, Berlin
- Prof. Stefan Svallfors, University of Umea
- Dr. S.C. Noah Uhrig, Chief Survey Research Officer, British Household Panel Study BHPS, ISER, University of Essex
- PD Dr. Christoph Wolf, Scientific Leader of the domain Social Monitoring and Social Change, GESIS, Mannheim
- Prof. Serge Wolikow, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Dijon

FORS and its collaborators, as well as faculty members, have profited from the scholarly exchange and lectures. In several cases the invitations resulted in new or reinforced networks and ongoing scientific collaborations.

### **3.1.3 Collaboration with Institutes: MISC, ITB**

The main FORS collaborative partner on the University side is the newly established research unit “Methodology, Inequalities and Social Change MISC” directed by prof. Dominique Joye ([www.unil.ch/misc](http://www.unil.ch/misc)). Currently, MISC employs nine collaborators: four senior researchers (Maîtres assistants MA/Maîtres d’enseignement et de recherche MER) and five PhD candidates (assistants/doctorants). The FORS director was a member of the evaluation boards for hiring these employees. MISC became operational in autumn 2008.

Further collaborations exist mainly with the Institute for Life Course Studies ITB and the Observatory of Science, Politics, Society OSPS. Among other things, FORS has been involved with submitting the NCCR pre-proposal “Overcoming Vulnerability. Life Course Perspectives” directed by prof. Dario Spini (ITB) in December 2008.

An information meeting on possible collaborations was held with OSPS senior staff on October 3, 2008.

## **3.2 National Partners**

### **3.2.1 Contact Points**

FORS actively seeks to be present in Swiss universities. To facilitate access to faculty members and students and to make FORS services more readily available to them, contact points were created in every Swiss university, including the universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen FHS, Hautes écoles spécialisées HES). The complete list of contact points and responsible persons is in the appendix of this report. It can be viewed also on the FORS website.

The contact points will become operational in 2009. They will be “ambassadors” for FORS at their home institutions, and they will be involved in FORS presentations, courses, and seminars, to be held according to local needs and interests. In this way FORS will follow its general strategy of getting in touch pro-actively with the scientific community.

### 3.2.2 Project-oriented Collaborations

There were a number of project-oriented collaborations initiated with colleagues at different universities in 2008:

- **Basel:** There are good contacts to the sociology department of the University of Basel, especially to prof. Max Bergmann, who among other things directs the Swiss TREE study (a cohort study on Transitions from Education to Employment now hosted in Basel). Prof. Bergmann and the TREE directors Dr. Sandra Hupka-Brunner and Thomas Meyer visited FORS on July 7, 2008. FORS senior researcher Dr. Oliver Lipps is preparing a habilitation under the supervision of prof. Bergmann.
- **Fribourg:** The FORS director is involved in a National Science Foundation funded international comparative project on “Precarious Living Conditions” in four countries, directed by prof. Monica Budowski of the department for social work and social policy at the University of Fribourg. SHP operations manager and FORS senior researcher Robin Tillmann is finishing his dissertation under the supervision of prof. Budowski.
- **Geneva:** Via the intermediary of ITB, FORS is linked to PAVIE which is a collaborative effort of the Universities of Lausanne and Geneva. FORS received the visit of a delegation of the social sciences section of the University of Geneva on May 5, 2008 to discuss future perspectives on scientific collaboration.
- **Lugano:** The Swiss Summer School on Methods in the Social Sciences has continued and will continue to be held at Università di Svizzera Italiana in Lugano (see section 2.6). Since its administration is done by FORS, this creates a concrete collaboration link between the two institutions.
- **Neuchâtel:** Prof. Christian Suter is the chief editor of the Social Report 2008, which was published in December 2008 with an important financial contribution from FORS (see section 2.5). FORS researcher Ursina Kuhn and FORS IT specialist Fredy Kuhn were involved in the preparation of the report.
- **Zurich:** FORS researcher and political scientist Ursina Kuhn is preparing a doctoral dissertation using the political science related data of the SHP under the supervision of prof. Hanspeter Kriesi of the political science department at the university of Zurich.

It is envisaged that these collaborative links will be intensified and made scientifically fruitful in the near future. Other collaborations might develop (e.g., with the Laboratory of Urban Sociology LaSUR at the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne EPFL or the KOF Konjunkturforschungsstelle at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich ETHZ).

### **3.3 International Commitments**

#### **3.3.1 European Research Programmes and Infrastructures**

The FORS director has been nominated as an expert for the EU FP 7 Programme Committee on Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities by the Swiss Government (State Secretariate for Education and Research). As such he took part, together with Government officials, in the meetings of this Committee where the scientific content of future calls was debated and first hand information was given by the Commission on the outcomes of previous calls.

The FORS director was also appointed as an expert to the Swiss delegation to the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures ESFRI, which lays the groundwork for important institutional developments in the direction of European Research Infrastructures, among them most prominently from the social sciences side CESSDA and ESS, in which FORS is an active member.

#### **3.3.2 Council of European Social Science Data Archives CESSDA**

FORS was formally accepted as a full member to the Council of European Social Science Data Archives CESSDA at the General Assembly in Paris on April 4, 2008. FORS is also a consortium member to the CESSDA EU Preparatory Phase Project (CESSDA PPP), designed to develop CESSDA into a more institutionalised research infrastructure.

This demanding task has been the theme of several meetings. The process was underway but by far not finished by the end of 2008.

More substantially FORS participated in Work Package 10 of the CESSDA PPP, which deals with the relations between data archives and national statistical institutes. A questionnaire was prepared and circulated on this topic, and the FORS director took part in a two-day workshop on the premises of Eurostat in Luxembourg which brought together most CESSDA representatives and many national statistical institute officials (December 3-4, 2008). The synergies with COMPASS (see section 2.3) are obvious and were elaborated in detail during a three week stay of the operative manager of Work Package 10, Dr. Paola Tubaro (Réseau Quetelet, Paris), with FORS in September.

### **3.3.3 European Social Survey ESS**

The FORS director has been a member of the ESS Scientific Advisory Board SAB ever since 1998. The ESS is the Descartes-award winning international biannual survey on values, opinions and orientations run in more than 25 countries.

As in former years, the SAB met twice in 2008. Main discussion points were the development and use of the ESS database, the participation in round 4, the call for questionnaire module design teams for round 5, and the mid- and long-term future of ESS as a European Research Infrastructure.

The latter point was also discussed in the ESS Preparatory Phase Project (ESSprep) where Switzerland participates as a member of the consortium. The challenge to develop ESS into an infrastructure is different from that of CESSDA because the ESS has more of a project structure for the time being. Decisions will have to be made in 2009, but they will largely depend on securing the resources for the next rounds.

### **3.3.4 International Social Survey Programme ISSP**

FORS is the Swiss partner for the ISSP. As such, a delegate participated in the General Assembly in Chicago where the move to FORS was approved. Switzerland is not only part of the informal methodological group but is also working on the redefinition of the background variables. Switzerland was also elected for a three year position in the methodological committee (2006-2009) and for the drafting group for the 2011 edition.

### **3.3.5 Others**

FORS was the Swiss partner of the European Value Survey EVS team for the 2009 edition (see section 2.1.2).

FORS hosts the Swiss part of the REPCONG project (“Representation and policy congruence in Europe”). The goal of the comparative project is to find out if and how the political preferences between citizens and elites differ. The three year project, which is coordinated by the European Science Foundation ESF, is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. Project partners are at the Universities of Vienna and Mainz as well as at the Trinity College in Dublin.

The Swiss Household Panel SHP is fully integrated in the Cross-national Equivalent File CNEF, managed at Cornell University; this file allows for comparative empirical analyses of six national household panels.

International relations have been generally strengthened by invitations to distinguished scholars via the Faculty invitational programme (see section 3.1.2).

## 4 Priorities for Short Term Development

The FORS strategic plan puts forward five goals:

1. To become a *centre of expertise* for the production and dissemination of data, for consulting services, and for methodological research
2. To establish collaborative relationships with all interested *Swiss universities*
3. To become actively integrated into *international scientific networks*
4. To have an impact on *national and international audiences*
5. To be implied with *research policy* strategic issues

The first year of operation saw progress in each of these areas, albeit to different degrees as is shown in detail in the preceding sections. We can identify the following potential domains for further development:

- *Data documentation and dissemination services* still rely on outdated functional and technological bases which will have to gain momentum in the direction of modernization and more user-oriented interfaces.
- *Methodological research* is in its very early phases and therefore needs more elaboration and concrete commitment.
- *National collaborations* have to be stabilized institutionally and, at the same time, become more performant on an operational level.
- Implication in *international networks* should become more pro-active, e.g., by organizing scientific events on site in Lausanne.
- FORS as a *label* for high standing research and infrastructure performance for the social sciences has to be profiled with more emphasis and with lasting effects in the interested target audiences.
- FORS has to stabilize its position as an important interlocutor when it comes to *social science research policy issues* like for example the discussion on research infrastructures.

In its second year, FORS will aspire to move forward in these priority fields without, of course, neglecting other ongoing activities.

## Appendix: Facts and Figures

### Publications

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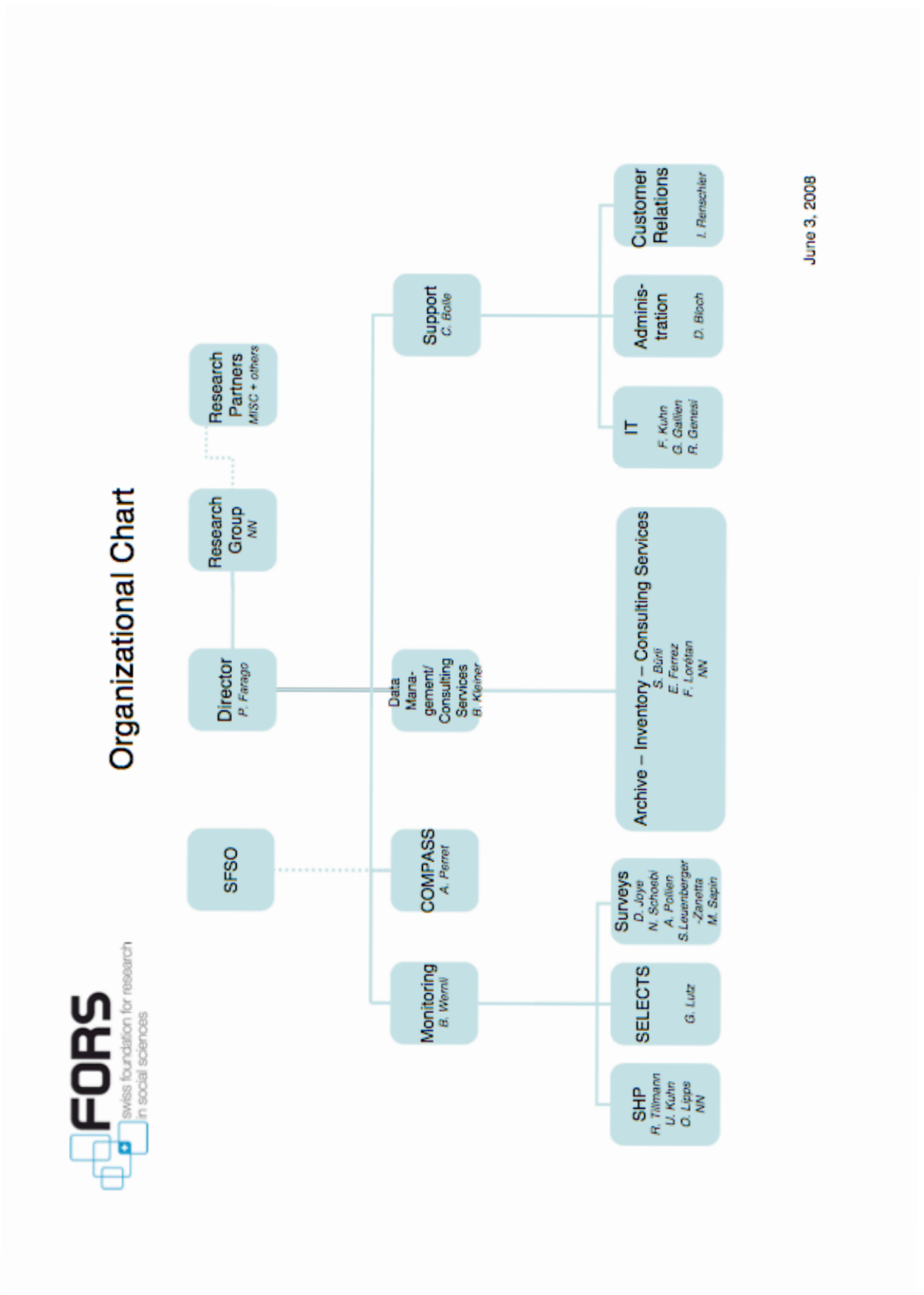
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## Staff Statistics

	<u>1.1.2008</u>		<u>31.12.2008</u>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b><i>Permanent Employees</i></b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><u>1. Sex</u></b>				
Male	13	68	15	56
Female	6	32	12	44
<b><u>2. Nationality</u></b>				
CH	16	84	20	74
other (D,F,I,NL,USA)	3	16	7	26
<b><u>3. Mother language</u></b>				
French	9	48	10	37
Swiss-German	4	21	6	22
German	1	5	2	7
Bilingual (incl. HU,I,PL,Vietn)	5	26	6	22
other (E,NL)	0	0	3	13
<b><u>4. Degrees received</u></b>				
Professional formation	2	11	2	7
Lic./Master/Diploma	13	68	16	59
Dr. / Ph.D.	4	21	9	34
<b><u>5. Disciplines</u></b>				
Sociology	5	26	7	26
(Social) Psychology	4	21	6	22
Political Science	4	21	4	16
other social sciences	1	5	6	22
IT	3	16	2	7
Clerk	2	11	2	7
<b><u>6. Degree of Employment</u></b>				
Full time	7	37	9	33
Part time	12	63	18	67

# Organizational Chart



June 3, 2008