

FORS 

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Annual Report 2020

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Contents

1. Editorial from the FORS Director	3
Transitions	3
2. Surveys	5
2.1 The FORS COVID-19 surveys	5
2.2 Swiss Household Panel SHP	6
2.3 International Surveys	8
ESS	9
MOSAiCH / ISSP	11
EVS	14
SHARE	16
2.4 Political surveys	17
SELECTS	17
VOTO	19
3. Data and research information services DARISS	20
Data Archive	20
Data Promotion	21
Data management	21
Other DARISS activities	22
4. Scientific collaborations	23
Host University	23
National commitments	24
International commitments	25
5. Methodological Research	27
6. Projects by the Data collection and analysis team DCA	33
7. Outreach, publications and events	37
7.1 Dissemination	37
7.2 Publications	37
7.3 Events	39
7.4 Performance Indicators	42
8. FORS Governance	47
Foundation Board	47
Scientific Advisory Board	47
Executive Board and Management	48
Organisational Chart	48
9. Staff statistics & finance	49
10. List of Abbreviations	51

1. Editorial from the FORS Director

Transitions

2020 was a year of various transitions for FORS. Like that of many other institutions, the FORS staff moved in and out of home offices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our personal lives and work-related travelling and conference activities was certainly affected by the pandemic, yet the day-to-day functioning of FORS could be ensured at all times. Apart from the face-to-face European Social Survey (ESS) that had to be postponed to 2021, all surveys could take place as planned. It was even possible to implement additional surveys, especially the ones with a longitudinal component (see chapter 2.3 SURVEYS). Further, many research activities and our data archiving continued largely as usual. It is worth noting that almost all publications and collaborations were maintained during this very unusual year.

Another transition was that a four-year funding period came to an end. For 12 years, since the beginning of FORS in 2008, the SNSF and the SERI funded the main FORS activities: the SNSF funded the surveys and the SERI the data infrastructure part. From 2021 onwards, the SNSF will take over the funding of the data infrastructure part as well. To prepare for this new funding scheme, FORS and the SNSF concluded a service level agreement in 2020. One part of the new funding scheme was the establishment of an international expert panel that evaluated the FORS funding application and that will evaluate FORS activities in the future. Another part of the service level agreement is also the requirement to closely coordinate the different activities with the “Data and Service Center for the Humanities DaSCH”, which will also be funded by the SNSF from 2021 onwards.

FORS started to implement its new organisational structure in 2020, a task that will be completed during 2021. A decision on a new structure was taken, following a strategic orientation towards providing tools and services for the Swiss data infrastructure beyond the domain of social science. A new “Infrastructure and Development” unit will be in charge of the technical development and services for the future Swiss research data infrastructure. In addition to IT developments, this unit will also develop and coordinate services to facilitate data archiving and data sharing for all disciplines as well as make sure that the FORS tools and services are well-connected and coordinated with other data service providers in Switzerland and Europe.

To facilitate data archiving and data sharing, FORS developed the data archiving platform SWISSUbase that will go live in 2021 and replace FORS’ current archiving system FORSbase. SWISSUbase, which has been developed in partnership with the Universities of Lausanne and Zurich over the last two years, will allow the deposit of data from different disciplines and may be used by different partner institutions. SWISSUbase will run on the SWITCH infrastructure with the aim to become a key part of the future Swiss research data infrastructure. FORS will support and coordinate the different Data Service Units of the partner institutions that will be in charge of supporting their researchers in depositing and accessing data.

While these activities will cover all disciplines, FORS' core activity will continue to be serving the Swiss social science community in many ways, through collecting research data with our surveys and supporting social science researchers in sharing their data or with their research data management in general.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Georg Lutz', written in a cursive style.

Prof. Dr. Georg Lutz, Director

2. Surveys

FORS is responsible for a number of national and international surveys, mostly funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). The surveys described below took place during the current funding period 2017-20. FORS academic surveys can also use the sample frame “Stichprobenrahmen für Haushalts- und Personenbefragungen SRPH” of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO). This sample frame is based on official registers and allows high-precision sampling of individuals resident within Switzerland. The sample frame centralises information from cantonal and communal population registers which are updated on a quarterly basis.

2.1 The FORS COVID-19 surveys

In addition to its regular data collection, FORS makes an important contribution to the evaluation of the impact of COVID-19 on the population in Switzerland. Questions on COVID-19 were included in various FORS surveys and then made available to researchers in Switzerland.

The Swiss Household Panel SHP has conducted a special wave to assess the living conditions during the COVID-19 semi-lockdown in spring 2020. Thanks to this intermediate measuring point, the SHP offers an interesting opportunity to observe the impact of this period on the daily lives and the changes that it entailed for the Swiss population. The additional wave focuses on the following topics: well-being and health, changes in work and financial situation, time use, home schooling, family and social life and the evaluation of government policies.

In order to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on society in Switzerland, a three-wave online panel survey with questions on the pandemic and the measures to control the spread of the virus was added to the annual social survey [MOSAiCH](#). The focus of this COVID-19 survey is on questions about well-being, work, work-life balance, and politics. The first wave was fielded from end of April to mid-June 2020. The online questionnaire was answered by 2 421 people living in private households in Switzerland and aged 18 or above. The second wave was surveyed during the month of October 2020 and answered by 1 270 respondents. The results were statistically weighted to achieve better representativeness for the Swiss population. The respondents will be invited to a third wave in spring 2021, allowing measurement of the impact of COVID-19 in the longer term.

[SHARE](#) - the Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe - is run jointly by FORS and the UNIL for Switzerland. At the request of the European Commission, a telephone survey investigating the impact of the pandemic

among SHARE respondents was set up. Data collection started in early June and lasted until the end of July. A first set of questions concerns the impact of the epidemic on physical health, mental health, medical follow-up and compliance with health measures. A second set concerns the impact of the epidemic on employment, working conditions and the financial situation, and a final component investigates the impact of the epidemic on social contacts and social support. These data may be linked to other data collected in the framework of SHARE and will be made available to the scientific community at the beginning of 2021. A second CATI COVID-19 survey will be conducted among the households that participated in the first one. It will start in May/June 2021 and should last a maximum of eight weeks.

Finally, the Swiss Election Study [Selects](#) has been investigating the electoral behaviour of Swiss citizens in national elections since 1995. In the next panel wave of Selects, which started on September 28, 2020, there is a block on COVID-19.

In addition to collecting data and making it available to researchers, FORS staff members have written several articles and fact-sheets on the subject, which are available on our website.

2.2 Swiss Household Panel SHP

Five principal tasks

Five principal tasks were achieved for the SHP in 2020:

1. The fieldwork for the three main SHP samples was completed in late February: wave 21 of the SHP_I (2 555 households and 4 038 individuals interviewed), wave 16 of the SHP_II (1 224 households and 1 794 individuals interviewed), and wave 7 of the SHP_III (1 931 households and 3 009 individuals interviewed). In total 5 710 households and 8 841 individuals participated. For detailed information about participation rates, we refer to [this document](#).

The number of individual questionnaires completed online increased to 433. In total 154 interviewers and supervisors carried out telephone interviews. For these waves, the average duration of the individual questionnaire was 41 minutes. The rotating modules administered were social networks and leisure and culture, and new questions about lay explanations of poverty were introduced.

From April to December the SHP team carried out the work related to data checking, cleaning and preparation, variables construction, and documentation in order to prepare the data dissemination via [FORSbase](#) to be released in 2021. The dissemination package contains the following data sets: Cross-National Equivalent File (CNEF) data, imputed income and wealth data, interviewer data, annual household and individual data, unique files (such as social origin), and syntaxes and labels. It also contains documentation such as questionnaires and an annually updated user guide. Further, wave 7 of the LIVES-FORS Cohort ([FORSbase](#)) was conducted and data prepared for diffusion.

2. Between February and August, the SHP team prepared the fieldwork for waves 22 (SHP_I), 17 (SHP_II), and 8 (SHP_III): questionnaire preparation, qualitative and quantitative pre-tests, communication to participating households (various letters and newsletters), training of interviewers and implementation of incentives. The fieldwork started as planned at the end of August 2020. Rotating modules administered are social participation and politics, and new questions about feelings towards LGBTIQ were introduced.

3. A revised and harmonised version of the SHP data waves 1 to 21 (1999 to 2019) with a codebook was prepared for inclusion in the Cross-National Equivalent File (CNEF) at the beginning of 2021. The CNEF focuses mainly on employment, income, and health. It contains equivalently defined variables for the US – Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP), the British Household Panel Study (BHPS/ Understanding Society), the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA), the Canadian Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID), the Korean Labour and Income Panel Survey (KLIPS), the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS-HSE), the Japan Household Panel Survey (JHPS), and the SHP. The SHP has been a longstanding partner in this cross-national collaboration.

4. Following the two-wave SHP_IV pilot study (2018-2019), a request detailing our needs for a new sample was submitted to the SFSO. The SHP_IV (the third refreshment sample) started its first wave of data collection in October. Whereas the questionnaires are identical to the ones used in the other main SHP samples, the SHP_IV follows a different design using web questionnaires for households without an available telephone number and telephone interviews for all others. The proportion of telephone and web is about equal. The [data of the SHP_IV pilot study](#) have been disseminated as a separate study, and are very suitable for methodological analyses focusing on different modes of data collection.

5. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the economic crisis that followed had a profound global impact. The SHP, having followed a large sample of households in Switzerland over time, was uniquely situated to shed light on how the lives of the resident population of Switzerland were affected. For this purpose, the SHP implemented the SHP COVID-19 Study as an additional measurement point between wave 21 and 22. The sample consisted of all respondents who completed the individual questionnaire of wave 21 (2019-2020), with the exception of respondents who left the study since. In total, 8 772 sample members from 5 540 households received an invitation to participate in the study.

The survey was administered by M.I.S. Trend using web questionnaires in May and June, with a paper questionnaire available upon request and sent as a nonresponse follow-up. By the end of the fieldwork period, 5 843 of the 8 772 sample members had completed the COVID-19 questionnaire, which is a response rate of 66,6%. Of these respondents 67% completed the questionnaire online and 33% completed the paper version. The data were made available to researchers in October 2020 with a user guide. The survey was supported by the SNSF and by a post-doctoral student hired for 6 months. The first results were published as a [FORS Working Paper](#).

2.3 International Surveys

The international surveys team was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The MOSAiCH survey, centred on the topic of environment in 2020, was conducted as expected, as it is a self-administered survey. The response rate did not suffer, even though MOSAiCH was used as a carrier for a multiple wave survey on the pandemic.

SHARE stopped its face-to-face field survey but ran a CATI survey on COVID-19. The field survey of ESS - also face-to-face - was postponed, using the time to adapt the questionnaire and survey design to the pandemic situation. The International Survey projects are funded through the SNSF Infrastructure project Nr. 170373 (grant period 2017-2020) except for SHARE (SNSF project grant). Synergies and collaborations between these international surveys are common, for example the ESS Sustain 2 project which includes a collaboration with the EVS, or the current SSHOC project (Social Science and Humanities Open Science Cloud), one of the five European Union H2020 programmes, which started in 2019 and running through to April 2022. The latter gathers 47 organisations, including FORS, with the aim to build a common SSH Cloud to maximise reuse through Open Science and FAIR principles, to interconnect existing and new infrastructures, and to set up a Governance for SSH-EOSC.

ESS

The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted every two years across Europe since 2002, with very high-quality standards. Switzerland has participated at each round since the very beginning. This general population survey measures the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of diverse populations in more than 30 nations.

Field and research: 2020 should have been the year of the 10th Round of ESS. However, the pandemic raised obstacles to this face-to-face survey, postponing the fieldwork to 2021.

The source questionnaire was finalised in spring as usual, with a strong involvement of our team. The rotating modules are the partially repeated “Understandings and evaluation of Democracy” module from 2012, and a new module on “Digital social contacts in work and family life”. The Swiss team initially maintained the timing of the TRAPD translation procedure. We used the online translation tool TC (Translation Control, formerly called TMT, developed through the SERISS project with an active involvement of our team), as did our international partners with shared language. However, as all countries had to delay the start of the fieldwork scheduled for autumn 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the translation process of the other countries was also delayed, so that the shared language steps could not be held as scheduled.

Moreover, ESS decided to adapt some questions of the source questionnaire to the pandemic and to develop a questionnaire supplement on COVID-19. This supplement of 20 questions is optional for the participating countries, yet at the end of 2020 22 countries confirmed their intention to field it. Half of these questions were developed by a team of National Coordinators, including Switzerland. The other half of the questions were developed through an open call. Switzerland was part of the evaluation group and helped develop these questions. This supplement had to be translated in September 2020 and required new national and international harmonisation reviews. The whole translation process was signed-off by the end of the year for the three national languages.

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, ESS urged all countries by mid-march to delay the contract signing with all agencies. The ESS involved the ESS Methodology Board and the national teams to conduct a risk assessment in regard to the ESS Round 10 fieldwork and to develop strategies for a coordinated fieldwork preserving as far as possible the comparability across countries and time. When, how and in what mode will fieldwork be possible? At the end of 2020, the elaborated strategy was to start the fieldwork around March 2021 and to close it at the latest at the end of 2021. The interviews

still have to be face-to-face, allowing however for video interviewing. For countries in which this still is not possible in summer 2021, the alternative of a web-paper survey will be developed. The fieldwork period for the following ESS Rounds from R11 on has been postponed by 6 months, starting in February of odd years and ending in December of the same year.

The tendering process for the ESS 2020 was therefore problematic. The three agencies that placed an offer were auditioned online, with a conditional amendment for when the new fieldwork strategies were somewhat clarified with the international ESS team. In the end, the survey agency performing the fieldwork since the very beginning was appointed in June. However, the contract with the agency was not signed in 2020, as the final design was not yet clear.

Two team members co-authored a paper on *Welfare solidarities in the age of mass migration* presented online in August at the ECPR General Conference. This paper, based on ESS data, is a product of the comparative research project PAWCER, funded by ERA.net, RUS Plus, and will be published in 2021 in *Acta Politica*.

The team leader, with two other researchers, published a paper on the relative impact of mode, translation and scale format on data comparability in a special issue of *SRM* about measurement equivalence. The paper is based on experimental data produced within ESS in 2006 in some countries.

Data: During 2020 the ESS data archive published corrections of previously released ESS8 and ESS9 main and methodological data, as well as the ESS1-9 cumulative file, all containing Swiss data. End of 2020, the ESS data website counts 170 000 registered users (5 100 from Switzerland).

International: In April and November 2020 the biannual ERIC NC Forum Meetings took place online. The first was mainly dedicated to Round 10 field preparation and included an additional whole day around translation issues, with the participation of translators and translation adjudicators of each country and language. The Swiss team was represented by three team members. The second meeting was centred on the discussion of the Round 11 modules (gender and health). However, in both meetings, COVID-19 issues were at the heart of most discussions (questionnaire adaptation, contact and interview mode, timing, etc.). The ESS tried to draw on the countries' various experiences and specific situation through consultations and greater flexibility.

A new project management portal (myESS), developed through the SERISS project, was introduced for Round 10. It is used for all documentation

relating to Round 10 and all communication between national teams and the Core Scientific Team (CST). National teams contribute to improve its user-friendliness.

The ESS ERIC General Assembly, where Switzerland is represented by the FORS Director, met twice in 2020, in April and October. Switzerland is also present in the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) through a member of the UNIL and in the Methods Advisory Board (MAB) through a FORS affiliate researcher (FORS and UNIL). They met throughout the year. All ESS bodies were challenged by the adaptation of the ESS 2020 survey to the COVID-19 pandemic. Another central topic was to ensure continuity of the ESS ERIC after the UK left the European Union in 2021.

The SAB also chose the two rotating modules for ESS R11 (2022/23) among several proposals from the open competition. There will be a new module led by a researcher from the University of Exeter on 'Gender in contemporary Europe: Rethinking equality and the backlash', and a module on 'Social inequalities in health and their determinants', led by a researcher from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Further, there will be a large number of questions asked in R7 (2014), and the effect of COVID-19 on social determinants of health will be examined.

As of June 2020, the ESS ERIC involved 30 countries: 25 member countries, one observer country (Switzerland) and four confirmed guest countries. Most members are from the Research Infrastructure Consortium.

In 2020 the first Topline results brochure on R9 data on the topic of Justice and fairness was published. This publication is currently available in English and French on the ESS and FORS website.

MOSAiCH / ISSP During 2020 the third edition of the MOSAiCH survey took place. This annual self-completion survey (web-paper and push-to-web design) with several waves is realised internally. The content is defined by the ISSP. A public call for contribution addresses the Swiss research community. In 2020, the central topic was 'Environment'. The survey included an extensive incentive experiment and several COVID-19 supplements.

During 2020, the team also finished the data preparation and archiving of the MOSAiCH 2019 data and started preparations for the 2021 edition.

Field and research: MOSAiCH 2020 is composed of the ISSP 2020 module on Environment, a module repeated for the fourth time, and questions from five different proposals, involving fourteen researchers of Switzerland and abroad. The topics of the chosen proposals are: Green taxes, environmental politics, citizens' understandings and engagements, unilateral climate action and international trade law, environmental attitudes, social approval,

and the need for money and perceived interdependences between generations, places and species. While the preparation of the MOSAiCH 2020 questionnaire was mostly achieved during 2019, the survey was set up in early 2020. The MOSAiCH Commission decided to run the 2020 edition in two waves. All respondents of the first wave were invited to the second wave in the mode of their first response. The second wave included retests, information treatment and conjoint experimental designs.

The fieldwork of MOSAiCH 2020 started in February 2020, based on the optimised contact procedure tested in 2018 and used in 2019. The second wave started at the end of April. The COVID-19 pandemic did not modify the timing of this survey, nor the results in terms of response rates. At the time of writing this report, the data are not entirely cleaned, so the final AAPOR response rate cannot yet be given. Roughly 40% of the invited people answered wave 1 and 30% answered wave 2. Slightly less than a fifth of the answers were given on paper. The response rates are similar to those achieved in the 2019 edition; the response rate to wave 2 seems even slightly higher than in 2019 and 2018 (lower attrition).

When the COVID-19 lockdown was announced March 13th, MOSAiCH proved to be one of the ideal FORS surveys to produce valuable insights on this unique societal situation. A COVID-19 module of around 30 questions about well-being, work, work-life balance, and politics was developed internally. Further, a call was addressed to selected external researchers to be implemented online in the second wave of MOSAiCH. Respondents were then asked to be contacted again for subsequent waves on the COVID-19 topics. However, almost a third opted out. A second MOSAiCH COVID-19 wave was fielded in October 2020 (around 1 200 respondents) and a third wave is foreseen for March 2021. The questionnaire was enriched with some new questions, for example about the trade-off between environment, health and economy, but many were repeated to capitalise on the longitudinal aspect.

First data were delivered to the researchers in June, several presentations were given with first results and four Factsheets, and an additional article was published on our website and online on the DeFacto platform. The data of wave 2 were published in December.

To get an up-to-date overview of the effect of incentives on self-administered surveys, we implemented a comprehensive experiment in MOSAiCH 2020. The main aim was to have a sound basis for the incentive decisions of most of our internal surveys, so as to be prepared when cheques are no longer available (see chapter [5. METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH](#) for details).

Thanks to the extensive experience in data preparation and exposure to practices of various international archives, a member of our team contributed to a guide on this topic (Preparation of survey data, [FORS Guide N°13](#)).

2021 preparations: The public call for question contributions to the MOSAiCH 2021 edition including the ISSP 'Health' module was published in January 2020. The FORS Foundation Board elected in March one new MOSAiCH Commission member (Dr. Vivianne Visscher, FHNW: University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland) to replace two members who stepped back, and re-elected four members (full list of members on <https://forscenter.ch/projects/mosaich/> 'Call'). The Scientific Commission received and evaluated seven proposals. During the evaluation meeting in June, it was decided to retain six proposals involving sixteen researchers from Switzerland and abroad. Two proposals have an experimental design. The questions will be administered in a single follow-up wave to the ISSP questionnaire. The accepted questions have been elaborated by the International Surveys team in collaboration with the proposing authors. All the questions have been translated into the national languages with the usual TRAPD procedure, as the ISSP questionnaire.

Data: The complete MOSAiCH 2019 dataset, including ISSP 2019 (Social Inequality V) and all data related to the Call, was documented and published in FORSbase in 2020. As already mentioned, in 2020 we also published the first two waves of the MOSAiCH COVID-19 survey. The international ISSP archive at GESIS published the first release of ISSP 2018 Religion IV in March 2020 with Swiss data, a second intermediary release in August, and a final release in November with the whole documentation. Additional Religion IV data from 14 Asian and African non-ISSP-member countries were also made available in October, thanks to the funding of the Templeton Religion Trust, a project chaired by NORC. Cross-national comparisons of 47 countries are based on the ISSP 2018 Religion module. GESIS also published the 'National Identity I-III' cumulative file in July. The GESIS archive has over 50 000 registered users (over 1 000 from Switzerland) and distributed over 10 000 ISSP datasets including Swiss data. In 2020, the FORS archive distributed over 160 MOSAiCH and Swiss ISSP datafiles.

ISSP international: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual ISSP General Meeting (GM), foreseen in Iceland, was replaced by online exchanges and voting for the vital processes during 2020, such as determining the items and topics of the next editions. It is indeed impossible for the ISSP to hold long online meetings because there is no reasonable common time slot for all countries across the world. The content of the 2021 'Health' module has thus been finalised, which also includes a series of mandatory and supplementary

optional items related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 module will be on 'Family and gender roles', and the main dimensions of the questionnaire were defined. Switzerland has the expert role in the preparation of the 2022 module. The topic of the 2023 module was also established. It will be a combination of 'National Identity and 'Citizenship' (a repetition of the 2013 and 2014 modules). The conceptual closeness of these two modules allows for their combination into a single module and freeing up a slot for potential new topics in the future.

The pandemic situation creates severe difficulties for some participating countries in the ISSP. Half of the countries field the modules using face-to-face surveys that need to be postponed or adapted. The data release of the ISSP 2019, 2020 and 2021 will therefore be slightly delayed to keep the countries experiencing such difficulties in the program, and intermediary releases are planned to deal with the delays. Moreover, due to the cancellation of GM 2020 and to ensure a smooth running of the program, the composition of the Standing Committee (SC) and the Methodology Committee (MC) are kept in 2020/21 as voted at the GM 2019. Switzerland pursued its mandate of Convenor of the MC, and stays member of several Method Groups (Non-response, Demography and Translation). In addition, Switzerland participated in the elaboration of the questionnaire on the COVID-19 pandemic and in the finalisation of the 2021 health module during summer.

Switzerland decided to become candidate for successor of the ISSP Secretariat from mid-2021 onwards, currently managed by Germany. The decision will be taken at the end of April 2021. The hosts of the forthcoming GAs have been postponed by one year: Reykjavik (Iceland) in 2021 and Australia (Melbourne or Sidney) in 2022.

The convenors of the drafting group organised a special issue and wrote the introduction on 'The ISSP 2017 social networks and social resources module', published in the International Journal of Sociology, Volume 50, Issue 1 and 2, early 2020.

EVS

The EVS 2017 was fielded in Switzerland with a very innovating methodological design. In 2020 the final datasets of this survey were published, including all countries and matrix data. The EVS also continued to investigate possible developments for the future of this project. The next edition is planned for 2026.

International: In September 2020, eight new members of the Theory

and Methodology Groups and the Executive Committee were elected electronically in by-elections, as several long-standing members stepped back to allow for renewal and a smoother transition to the next edition, which might present many innovations. The regular elections will be held in 2022. The annual General Assembly of EVS took place virtually on 20th October 2020 and focused on data publication and dissemination. Several presentations and events of 2020 were cancelled, but new ones are scheduled for 2021. The EVS has also created several videos to be consulted on <https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/> and YouTube, and is currently preparing two books on substantial results of the EVS 2017 in the Brill Series. The new EVS data are also used in the EVALUE project, which develops teaching material for secondary schools that encourages thinking about one's own values in comparison of those of other countries.

Data: The full release of EVS 2017 integrated data with 34 countries was published in October 2020. The data brief article in the European Sociological Review, co-authored by the Swiss team (Luijkx et al., 2020) gives useful hints for the use of the EVS 2017 Integrated Dataset - Matrix Design, including additional data from Germany, Iceland, Switzerland and the Netherlands that applied the mixed-mode matrix design. Further, in November the joint EVS/WVS 2017-2021 dataset with 79 countries and about 230 common variables was released. This dataset was standardised and harmonised on the basis of the EVS/WVS Common Dictionary.

Preparing the future and research: In 2020, the EVS has started a transition to rejuvenate its board and to incite a re-conceptualisation of the study. To support the period of change and its activities in the SUSTAIN 2 project with the ESS that started in January 2020, the EVS has convened the EVS Standing Group. This group is composed of members of both the theory and the methodology group and some experts from the EVS community. A member of the team was invited as expert and participated in the activities of the EVS Standing Group. The Standing Group meets regularly, at least four times a year, and nominates different work groups dedicated to specific projects. In 2020, the focus was on consulting the team around the SUSTAIN project that, at this stage, involved the evaluation of items across ESS and EVS in terms of comparability. The second task was to revise the EVS questionnaire and to question all variables for their current and future relevance as well as methodological rigour by topic domains. This team member was involved in the revision of the "Work", "Family" and "Politics and Society" domains. Finally, strategies were discussed in how to proceed with the EVS and innovate the measurement of European values.

During 2020, the International survey team contributed to the article

published in the European Sociological Review (Luijkx et al., 2020) and continued the work on the EVS methodological research program.

SHARE

In 2020, SHARE activities were divided between the main data collection of wave 8, the development and implementation of a CATI survey on the impact of COVID-19, the preparation of wave 9, operational activities related to the project funded by the Leenaards Foundation and the development of research projects promoting and using SHARE data.

Regarding the operational tasks on SHARE, the main wave 8 data collection started in October 2019. It had to be stopped in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When the fieldwork was interrupted, Switzerland was already well underway in the longitudinal sample, with about 2000 completed interviews corresponding to a response rate of 80%, positioning Switzerland among the countries with the highest retention rate for wave 8. Data collection had progressed less in the refreshment sample, with approximately 200 completed interviews out of a final target of 500 interviews.

In order to examine how the risk group of older individuals is coping with the health-related and socio-economic impact of COVID-19, the central coordination of SHARE decided to set up a CATI survey, which was prepared in April and May 2020. The CATI-COVID-19 interviews started in the beginning of June and lasted about 2 months. In Switzerland, the entire longitudinal sample was contacted again. About 2 000 CATI-COVID-19 interviews were conducted and about 90% of the respondents who did an interview in wave 8 also participated in this survey.

In autumn 2020, the SHARE team started the preparation of the pretest of wave 9, scheduled for March 2021. As wave 9 will include the standard CAPI interview as well as a follow-up of the CATI-COVID-19 survey, both questionnaires were updated, translated and tested. In addition, a new paper-and-pencil questionnaire was developed. This questionnaire aims at examining (1) the relationship between gelotophobia (fear of being laughed at), gelotophilia (joy of being laughed at), social avoidance, and loneliness and (2) the role of social cognition on gelotophobia, gelotophilia, and social avoidance. It will be distributed to the Swiss respondents who will do a CAPI interview in wave 9.

Finally, the Swiss SHARE team worked on a new version of the paper and pencil questionnaire that was developed with the grant of the Leenaards foundation. The original plan was to collect information from SHARE respondents on time use and geographical and social environments between the SHARE waves 8 and 9. However, due to the pandemic and its impact on almost all questions that were included in the initial and already finalised questionnaire, the Swiss SHARE team decided to reorient the content of

the entire questionnaire and to collect information on technology use. This required starting the questionnaire development from scratch again. The development of this new questionnaire was done in collaboration with the Centre of Gerontology of Zürich and will be fielded in late Spring 2021.

Concerning research using SHARE data, the Swiss SHARE team published three peer-reviewed papers based on the data of the paper-and-pencil questionnaire on end-of-life issues that was distributed to the Swiss respondents of SHARE at wave 6.

All SHARE meetings were online and the Swiss SHARE team attended the following ones:

- » The general SHARE meeting from April 1 to 3
- » The general SHARE meeting on the fieldwork specifications for the CATI-COVID-19 survey on May 7
- » The TTT for the CATI-COVID survey on May 18 and June 3
- » The NTS for the CATI-COVID-19 survey on May 19, May 25 and June 8
- » The Operator meeting on October 12
- » The general SHARE meeting on October 13 and 14
- » An introductory course on STATA offered by SHARE central on November 23 and November 30.

The SHARE study was also presented at the plenary assembly of the “a+ Swiss Platform Ageing Society” on October 27.

2.4 Political surveys

SELECTS

In 2020, the Selects team members completed four main tasks. First, and most importantly, the first half of the year was dedicated to the preparation, documentation and publication of the various survey data collected within the 2019 Swiss Election Study. In early July, data from the three-wave online panel survey (number of individuals interviewed for wave 1 = 7 939; wave 2 = 5 577; wave 3 = 5 125), the online/paper post-election survey (number of individuals interviewed = 6 664) as well as data from the online/paper candidate survey (number of individuals interviewed = 2 158) were published in FORSbase. The media and social media study, which consisted of an automated content analysis of more than 80 print and online news media as well as of parties' and candidates' social media accounts (Facebook and

Twitter) – was also released.

Second, the Selects team members actively engaged in research and the public dissemination of new findings. In parallel to the publication of all Selects 2019 data in FORSbase, a brochure (available in German, French, and Italian) analysing turnout and party choice in the 2019 federal elections was presented at a well-attended media conference in Berne in early July. Despite the pandemic, the main findings were widely covered in all three language regions on public radio and TV stations and in many newspapers. Additional analyses were also published on the blog DeFacto and in several newspapers throughout the year. Moreover, findings were presented at the virtual annual conference of the *European Political Science Association* in June and were submitted for publication in an academic journal.

Third, in line with the decision of the Selects commission to continue the three-wave panel survey conducted in the election year with yearly waves until the next national elections in 2023, the fieldwork for wave 4 was prepared between April and late August. This involved work related to the questionnaire development and translation, communication with respondents, as well as the implementation of conditional incentives. The fieldwork took place between late September and early November. Almost 3 000 respondents whose consent was obtained at the end of wave 3 were invited to take part in the new wave. After data cleaning, a total of 2 499 valid interviews remained, which corresponds to a response rate of 84.8%. Data release is scheduled for the end of January 2021 in FORSbase.

Fourth, Selects actively participated in international collaborative networks. On the one hand, Selects is part of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), which elaborates common questionnaires for national election studies. In the summer, Selects prepared and delivered the CSES Module V dataset, which had been implemented in the post-election survey 2019. This module examines citizens' attitudes towards democracy, political elites and out-groups. The Swiss data is expected to be part of the next release of the comparative dataset in early 2021. On the other hand, Selects is part of the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) and makes the comparative dataset available in FORSbase. In November, the team released a new version of the CCS Module II dataset, adding data covering four elections from three countries (Australia, Spain, Ireland). The dataset now covers 26 elections from 20 countries. In addition, several team members had an active role (as presenter, chair and/or discussant) in the section organised by CCS at the virtual ECPR General Conference that took place in late August.

VOTO

Since 1977, a survey is conducted after each direct-democratic federal vote to analyse the participation and vote decision of Swiss citizens. Between September 2016 and September 2020, FORS, the Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau (ZDA) and the survey institute LINK had been carrying out these analyses under the name *VOTO studies* on behalf of the Swiss Federal Chancellery.

LINK was in charge of conducting CATI interviews with a representative sample of about 1 500 Swiss citizens, whereas FORS and ZDA jointly developed the questionnaire and were alternately responsible for data coding, analysis and reporting. For each study, the team members of VOTO at FORS coordinated the mailing of invitation letters for sample members, organised the translation of the questionnaire and the final report, and prepared the data for distribution on FORSbase. Since March 2018, the programming of the questionnaire has been done in the Survey Management Tool (SMT) at FORS.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only two popular votes took place in 2020, in February and in September. The two resulting VOTO studies covered seven proposals submitted to voters, two in February (popular initiative for “more affordable housing”, federal act on “Ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation”) and five in September (popular initiative “For moderate immigration”, Federal Act on “Hunting”, Federal Act on “Child tax deductions”, indirect counter-proposal on the Paternity leave initiative, Federal Decree on the “Purchase of new fighter jets”). Like former VOTO studies, the analyses on these two votes are available in three languages (German, French, Italian) as barrier-free documents on the [VOTO website](#) and data from each wave can be accessed via FORSbase.

As a new service to researchers, a new compiled dataset integrating all 13 VOTO studies, covering a total of 29 voting proposals, has been prepared and released in December in FORSbase. Importantly, this dataset is enriched by important contextual information, such as parties’ voting recommendations and measures of campaign intensity.

VOTO will not continue in 2021. The mandate from the Swiss Federal Chancellery has been given to a private survey company to conduct these post-vote surveys. Since academic research institutions are no longer involved in this project, reflections on how to collect valuable data for Swiss researchers interested in studying voting behaviour around popular votes have started among the different Swiss political science departments including FORS.

3. Data and research information services DARISS

Data Archive

The data archive group's core activities are to maintain the research inventory and to archive research data using the FORSbase platform. Available since 2016, FORSbase is increasingly used by the research community to describe research projects and to archive and share research data. At the end of 2020, the number of active users of FORSbase increased to 7 700, compared to about 3 300 in 2016 and 5 300 in 2018. The annual survey was postponed to January 2021 and the new projects in response to the annual survey and database exchanges were therefore not taken into account. All in all, the research inventory comprised over 11 750 published project descriptions at the end of 2020. The data archive group archived 117 datasets in 2020, compared to 80 in 2019 and 65 in 2018. Among those, 59% (69) were new datasets and 41% (48) concerned updates of existing datasets due to new data or corrections. This brings the number of datasets currently published in FORSbase to 748. 2 577 datasets were downloaded from FORSbase in 2020 (see chapter [7.4 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS](#)).

Through its core activities, the data archive group guided researchers from 42 different research projects at various institutions in Switzerland and abroad in best practices for sharing their research data. The group also regularly helps students and researchers find data for secondary analyses. FORS and its data archive service were presented to bachelor students at the University of Geneva in March and to doctoral students at the University of Neuchâtel in September. Among the activities of the archiving group, those engendered by the presentation of our services have been among the most negatively impacted by the health measures related to the management of the COVID-19.

In 2020, the group initiated the renewal of policies, contracts and documentation relative to data depositing, archiving and access at FORS. This work will be finalised in 2021. Finally, members of the data archive group continue their involvement as task members or task leaders in international projects related to archiving and research infrastructure, including the H2020 project "SSHOC – Social Science and Humanities Open Cloud", the CESSDA Training, CESSDA Trust, and CESSDA Widening projects. Among these projects, those members had the opportunity to mentor less mature data archives in Europe, contribute to the preparation of a CESSDA data archiving guide, and develop a new CESSDA newsletter for data archive professionals.

Data Promotion Due to the pandemic the data promotion group was very limited in its outreach activities in the form of presentations and events. The group did, however, intensify its efforts to reach out to underrepresented disciplines within the data archive, in particular in psychology and economics. As part of its active data solicitation strategy, the group sent out customised email messages to researchers in psychology and economics in order to raise awareness about FORS data archiving and data management services. In late 2020, the group sent out another email message to PIs of newly funded SNSF research projects, to promote the same FORS services.

Also in 2020, further specific needs with respect to replication and pre-registration were identified and integrated in our wider infrastructure development strategy. A new FORS Guide was published on the topic of pre-registration.

Data management

As in previous years, the promotion group continued to strengthen its expertise in data management during 2020, with special focus on day-to-day data management, data management planning and ethical and legal issues. A FORS Guide was published on the legal, ethical and strategic considerations concerning data anonymisation. An edited book and a special issue were published in 2020 in collaboration with the UNIL, the University of Geneva, the Free University of Brussels, and the University of Québec at Montréal, based on the contributions received during the ethical colloquium that took place in 2018.

While many planned events were cancelled due to the pandemic, the group was able to provide presentations and trainings on data management at the UNIL on data protection and ethics, at the University of Bern on DMPs and informed consent, and at the University of Zurich's summer school, the University of Fribourg and the HES-SO Wallis on DMPs and the handling of sensitive data. One staff member also participated in a training course for data protection officers (DPOs). In another development, several members of the data promotion group joined an initiative along with UNIL/UNIRIS colleagues to develop a machine actionable DMP.

At the international level, staff members participated in various CESSDA projects, including CESSDA Training, and CESSDA Journal Outreach. With respect to research, the group coordinated and submitted a special issue on data sharing, to be released in early 2021 in the Bulletin of Sociological Methodology.

Other DARISS activities

In 2020, DARISS staff members finalised the documentation of the ch-x survey 2016/2017 data and made full documentation and data available to the scientific community in FORSbase for further analysis.

SSP/UNIL and DARISS staff members formed a team to reflect on bias linked to the archival process and invisibilisation of vulnerable or marginal populations in research.

4. Scientific collaborations

Host University The UNIL hosts FORS and provides as in-kind contribution the office space as well as the IT and human resource services for the 60 FORS collaborators. In addition, the University funds a joint research program that allows to fund fully or partially 14 staff positions at different levels (12 full-time equivalent). In addition, three FORS staff members hold professorial positions at the SSP faculty of the UNIL.

The joint program has as its objectives to develop FORS' and the UNIL's reputation as centres for high-quality research regarding social science methods and substantive research nationally and internationally, develop quantitative skills and know-how in Switzerland, contribute to the improvement of survey methodology, the methodological innovations and substantive research in the social sciences and to the discussion among different stakeholders in the area of social science methods.

A substantial number of publications and other scientific publications result from this program every year, based on data produced at FORS. One other activity of this collaboration is the jointly organised Methods and Research Meetings where invited guests as well as researchers from FORS or from the UNIL exchange knowledge on methodological issues on a regular basis. Members of the SSP faculty also participate regularly at FORS events and vice versa (see the chapter EVENTS). Researchers involved in this program also contribute substantially to the teaching of methods at different levels at the SSP faculty.

The collaboration is regulated in different contractual agreements. In order to strengthen the governance of the joint program, a new agreement between FORS and the SSP faculty came into place in 2020. This agreement clarifies and strengthens the role of a joint steering committee that is composed of members from FORS and the SSP faculty and also increases the visibility of the program through the creation of a joint web platform (to be implemented in 2021).

In order to exchange experiences under this program and the main developments relevant for both institutions, formal meetings between the FORS Directorate and the Dean's Office of the SSP faculty take place. The coordination with the Rectorate of the UNIL is also guaranteed through the fact that a member of the rectorate presides over the FORS Foundation Board.

FORS is involved in a number of international and national projects and collaborations.

- » **SWISSUbase** is new archiving tool that covers the entire data life cycle which FORS develops in collaboration with the UNIL and Zurich and SWITCH for the period 2019/2020. SWISSUbase provides a technical solution and services for the management of research projects and the archiving, dissemination, and promotion of research data and metadata beyond the social sciences.

During 2020, all main functionalities and the metadata schema for linguistics, elaborated in collaboration with the University of Zurich, were implemented. SWISSUbase presently offers three metadata schemas (generic, social sciences, linguistics) to cover domain-specific needs of the respective research community and further provides a discipline-agnostic data archiving solution. SWISSUbase will be available for usage in February 2021.

All during 2020 to promote SWISSUbase, presentations and demonstrations were held at Rectorate or Vice-rectorate level at the following places: Universities of Basel, Fribourg, Lucerne, St. Gallen, Neuchâtel, Università della Svizzera Italiana, Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale, Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana SUPSI, HES Wallis, Haute École Pédagogique Valais, and Swiss Federal Institute of Sports Magglingen. Informal contacts were also established with the University of Berne and the Zurich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW.

To further extend the functionalities of SWISSUbase, a follow-up project will be granted for funding for 2021 from swissuniversities and the partner institutions, particularly to focus on the interoperability with other national and European research infrastructures, the integration of additional metadata schemas, and the transition to a full-fledged service for the entire Swiss research community.

The collaboration with SWITCH was also strengthened at various levels. SWISSUbase is now actively using SWITCH's services (SWITCHengines, Swiss edu-ID). Furthermore, several meetings of FORS and DaSCH took place to initiate future close cooperation and interoperability.

- » FORS participates actively in **SWISS INSIGHTS**, the association that promotes market, opinion and social research in general and scientific research in particular in Switzerland (former "Swiss association of market and social research vsms/asms"). SWISS INSIGHTS is also committed to ensure that the use of data and

the application of data-driven predictive models is transparent, comprehensible and fair. A FORS staff member is representing the client side in the Managing Board and is responsible for the domain 'Innovation/Technology/Science and International collaborations.

- » FORS is strongly involved in building **linkhub.ch**, a joint initiative from different research projects and institutions to facilitate access to private and public data for research in the future. linkhub.ch supports data linkage in the fields of social sciences and medicine to deliver relevant knowledge for society. FORS initiated linkhub.ch and leads the project. Partners are the NCCR Federalism, the Centre LIVES, NCCR on the move, the Swiss National Cohort and TREE. In 2020, the main activity of linkhub.ch was to write a report on "[Accessing and linking data for research in Switzerland](#)". This report has been commissioned to FORS and linkhub.ch by the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Science (SAGW) and Swiss Academies.

This report addresses the importance, current practices, and legal basis for access and linkage of administrative and sensitive data (in particular, personal data) for research in Switzerland. It provides a basis for the development of a research-friendly institutional and regulatory framework that will not only enable wider and more comprehensive access to data for research but also facilitate data linking while respecting the privacy and data protection rights of individuals. Based on this report, further work in proposing a favourable legal and institutional framework will continue in 2021 with various stakeholders.

International commitments

On the international level FORS continued its involvement in building and developing the European and international research infrastructure:

- » The SERI has delegated the official representation of Switzerland in the social science **European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs)** to FORS some years ago. Switzerland has an observer status in each of these ERICs. The FORS Director represents Switzerland in the General Assemblies of the CESSDA ERIC and the ESS ERIC, which each held two meetings in 2020. The head of the Surveys unit represents Switzerland in the General Assembly of SHARE. SHARE had two meetings of the General Assembly in 2020. FORS staff actively takes part in the coordinating bodies of all the three organisations.
- » FORS is responsible for **representing Switzerland in various other European and International projects**. FORS staff represents Switzerland in the ISSP Annual meeting, which decides on modules for the coming period. Switzerland currently chairs the ISSP

Methodological committee through FORS. FORS collaborators represent Switzerland in governing bodies of various political science networks, such as the Comparative Study of Electoral System (CSES) and the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS). A member of the FORS staff also chairs the steering committee of CCS and FORS is responsible for integrating CCS data.

- » In addition, FORS is involved in the creation of the **Monitoring Electoral Democracies (MEDem)** project, which aims to connect various comparative political science project (including CSES and CCS) as well as national election studies in a formal way and aims for ESFRI roadmap status in the coming years. A Horizon 2020 funding application, involving 13 different institutions where FORS would have been the coordinator, was submitted in 2020. While the application received good reviews, it nevertheless did not get funding, so MEDem will explore new funding opportunities in 2021.
- » The FORS Director also represents Switzerland in the **ESFRI Strategic Working Group on Social and Cultural Innovation**. This working group will be responsible for drafting the ESFRI Landscape analysis and to evaluate existing as well as new projects to get on the ESFRI roadmap in 2021.
- » FORS currently covers the fee of the **Luxemburg Income Study (LIS)**. This contribution allows Swiss researchers to gain access to the LIS data resource. FORS continues to pay the Swiss membership fees to the Cross-National Data Centre in Luxembourg so that the data are accessible for free to researchers in Switzerland.
- » The head of the IT group was actively involved in the CESSDA Technical Working Group and CESSDA Product and Service catalogue.

5. Methodological Research

In 2020 methodological research at FORS was combined with additional tasks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As mentioned earlier in this report, FORS took the opportunity to run four additional COVID-19 surveys. While this produced unique high-quality panel data on COVID-19 in Switzerland, it also added additional workload on the various survey teams. Besides the COVID-19 activities, the DCA group collected data for a vignette study on environmental behaviour, and Selects continued in 2020 with its short web panel that began in 2019, and with the Selects-Civique three-wave panel study.

As a consequence, time purely devoted to methodological research was more limited. Nevertheless, research at FORS evolved around a number of topics related to our main methodological research strands and on additional newly collected COVID-19 data. This led to three articles, six presentations and several submissions to scientific journals. In addition, to engage with researchers and the public at large, FORS has published four fact sheets and three DeFacto contributions based on MOSAiCH data.

Switching surveys to the web and mixing modes

For the time being, mostly motivated by cost reasons, the COVID-19 pandemic became a second major driver to switching face-to-face surveys to the web: in the ESS the CROss-National Online Survey-2 (CRONOS-2) panel is a new developmental activity aiming to build expertise in cross-national online data collection. It is designed after the CRONOS panel, implemented in three countries during 2016-18, and scheduled to be fielded in 12 countries during 2021 and 2022. Similar considerations are currently discussed among members of the ISSP, where about half of the countries collect the data via face-to-face.

FORS continues doing research on the usefulness of the web as an additional mode (SHP) or as the main (push-to-web) mode in the SHP IV refreshment sample, the EVS, MOSAiCH and Selects. Nevertheless, adding alternative modes for those not willing or able to respond via the web is still necessary. For example, in a recently published FORS Working paper, we investigated the effect of sequentially mixing telephone and paper mode with a push-to-web survey in the Selects 2015 post-electoral survey. We found that while adding the telephone mode improves sample representation in terms of socio-demographic variables, adding the paper mode does not show further improvements in this respect. However, adding the telephone, and, in particular the paper mode, turns out to reduce bias in voting behaviour.

As for measuring income, the web and the telephone mode perform similarly well. Finally, there is little evidence of measurement differences of income when the same respondents are interviewed first by web or telephone and subsequently by paper questionnaire. An issue arising from adding modes is increased costs, in particular for probability-based surveys. Even adding paper as a follow-up mode is rather expensive since this includes additional postage to invite and remind people, incentives, offering a telephone hotline, and time-consuming data corrections. These cost aspects from adding paper are currently compared with possible gains of representativeness of the respondent sample using the 2019 Selects survey in the framework of a UNIL POSM Master thesis.

A number of publications based on the SHP IV pilot data are in their final phase or recently finished. The SHP team showed that the SHP can be switched from (mainly) telephone to (mainly) web mode without compromising data quality in terms of unit nonresponse and attrition. Concerning item nonresponse and measurement quality there are, however, some issues. A master thesis from a POSM Master student finds that telephone interviewing is an effective strategy in gaining respondent's participation in the second wave. However, adding the web mode improves data quality, while the web mode alone shows promising results for multi-person households.

Other research investigates the dependency of item nonresponse on question characteristics such as form and complexity in web compared to telephone. In addition, the SHP team investigates if the web or the telephone mode underreport events (such as a change of job) or overreport change (such as housing issues that should stay the same if the household did not move) in the same way. That measurement bias of change has not received much research attention yet is surprising. Given that the analyses of causal effects can best be done through panel data and the focus on (generally small) within-individual changes, an accurate measure of change is of prime importance.

The FORS EVS team worked together with the international EVS colleagues on the experiments included in the EVS 2017 survey. These experiments aim at investigating primarily whether a long (i.e., one hour) face-to-face survey can be transformed into 1) one long or 2) two short self-administered push-to-web surveys. The main result is that employing self-administered modes was successful in most of the participating countries. Even fielding a 1-hour questionnaire worked reasonably well as observed in Germany, Iceland and Switzerland. Similar response rates could be achieved in a shorter version of the questionnaire.

Analyses on representation of socio-demographic distributions and item non-response suggested that self-administered modes show slightly higher bias on average but, given the lower cost, still may yield acceptable data quality. The respondent samples of the long push-to-web survey and the push-to-web with matrix designs are no less representative for the Swiss general population than the face-to-face survey with respect to several socio-demographic variables.

Current concepts of representation bias are based on pragmatic considerations and rarely reflect the theoretical assumptions of the context of the analysis: whether one is interested in monitoring a survey or in estimating the risk for bias of estimates using the data in question are different tasks and should be approached differently. This conceptual framework is used in the analysis of risk of bias of the mixed-mode matrix design experiment in the EVS 2017.

A challenge remains to investigate if employing a matrix design, which does not ask all questions to all sample members, impairs the use of the data for substantive research, and whether it is possible to impute the missing-by-design information. Still based on the mixed-mode matrix design experiment in EVS 2017, we investigate how much data is needed to draw valid conclusions.

Turning cross-sectional surveys into panel surveys

An ongoing challenge is to change Selects into a panel including yearly short surveys. Selects needed consent from respondents of the post-electoral survey in 2019 to be legally able to keep the contact information to re-approach them. Since the literature about the best way to ask for consent is inconclusive, Selects ran an experiment to test three different consent forms: a “neutral” procedure with a yes/no question asking whether respondents were willing or not to participate in further surveys, an opt-in design requiring active consent to stay in the panel, and an opt-out design with passive consent, requiring respondents to explicitly state that they do not want to be contacted in the future. Results shows that opt-out works best, opt-in worst and that political attitudes or survey attitudes has no effect. The Selects team is currently planning to analyse which consent form works best in terms of actual retention rates, representativeness, and reported data quality in the first annual short web panel from 2020.

Most surveys at FORS use cash-like incentives (cheques) to increase sample members motivation to participate and to provide a high data quality. With a possible abandoning of cheques and increasingly less counters to cash the cheques, the MOSAiCH team checked alternatives for cheques, running a large-scale incentive experiment in the 2020 MOSAiCH survey using various incentives. A 10 CHF cheque was compared with 10 CHF TWINT/PayPal,

10 CHF cash, a lottery, and no incentive. In the second wave, three random groups were randomly crossed; a lottery with 3 iPads, a lottery with 3 x CHF 300, and no incentive. First results from the first part indicate that 10 CHF cash worked best, both in terms of response rate and response speed and seemed to attract more people with little political interest, who are generally underrepresented. In terms of party choice, there is no relationship. The International Surveys team is currently analysing the combined results from the first and the second wave.

Searching for alternative/complementary data sources and survey techniques

Another important methodological question is related to whether inexpensive data from other sources can supplement or even replace (expensive) survey data. As an example of less expensive alternatives, we are currently analysing if nonprobability-based access panels are an alternative to probability-based web surveys. We used two probability-based web surveys and three opt-in panels to compare conditional distributions of sociodemographic variables, income, and voting behaviour in the Selects 2015 survey. Our innovation is that most variables are included in the sampling frame such that the true values are known for each conditional distribution. Our findings indicate a lack of consistency and reproducibility in the results when using opt-in panels.

As mentioned above, the DCA group collected data for a vignette study which will provide insights whether vignettes may replace or complement traditional surveys in investigating causal effects. In the framework of the vignette study, FORS experimented with two different ways of displaying vignettes, horizontal and vertical, the latter having the advantage of being able to be displayed on a mobile phone without having to rotate it. We measured the time spent in both variants, whether people rotated their phone and when, and asked various questions on the experience and the techniques people used to answer such a difficult question.

In addition, a research collaboration team between members from FORS and SSP at the UNIL examines the potential of big data (social media) to replace and/or complement survey data. In this context, a first study paper has been finalised and submitted focusing on the development of a theoretical framework to guide researchers in their decision process when using social media and survey data.

Turning to survey techniques, the Selects Civique smartphone study (done in collaboration with the UNIL, the Idiap Research Institute and the EPFL) examines similarities and differences between a browser-based and an app-based mobile web survey. It incorporated a methodological experiment (Group 1 = a standard browser-based web survey comparable to the Selects

survey; Group 2 = a push-to-app design) alongside the main Selects 2019 survey. Research includes a number of projects: i) investigation of the representativeness of the achieved samples in the two experimental designs; ii) the role of data privacy attitudes in resistance to participate in surveys, and iii) the potentials for app-based surveys to reduce respondent burden compared to browser-based surveys on mobile devices. We submitted a paper on respondent mobility that analyses a combination of self-report, geo-location and photo data to draw conclusions about when using a smartphone survey app.

Finally, event history calendar (EHC) methods have received increasing attention from the life-course surveys used in recent years. A study, conducted by members from FORS, tests whether the absence of interactive interviewing is associated with a reduction in data quality. Results show that the self-administered mode performs better when the instructions and layout design of the questionnaire are clear and detailed and suggest that the visual properties of the EHC could be a sufficient condition for collecting good retrospective data in the self-administered mode.

Nonresponse, Measurement, and Equivalence issues

In 2020 FORS continued with its research on nonresponse. FORS members from the International Surveys group developed a typology of interviewer strategies, which are based on the interviewer's contact activities and on the strategies reported in an interviewer survey.

To analyse effects of questionnaires on survey response (dropout, follow-up) using automatic text analysis methods is challenging since questionnaires are relatively short compared to the corpus usually used. While in 2020 members from the International Surveys group got an overview of the different methods, a questionnaire text analysis will analyse the evolution of the ISSP themes from 1985 to 2020.

Another study demonstrates a procedure for assessing the relative impact of different sources of non-equivalence in 3MC studies, using data from the ESS and related methodological experiments. The study concludes that in the example analysed, translation, language and culture are more harmful for measurement comparability than response format and data collection mode.

Still using data from the ESS (round 5), FORS investigated the utility of R-indicators as a measure of the risk of nonresponse bias. The study focuses on the relationship between auxiliary (sociodemographic) variables from the register-based sample frame and key survey variables to draw conclusions about how effective R-indicators based on the former can be for predicting bias in the latter. The findings suggest that even where auxiliary variables

are correlated with target variables, more biased auxiliary variables do not automatically imply more biased target variables, nor does adjusted auxiliary variables necessarily reduce bias in the target variables.

Another study investigates democracy as a concept with multiple understandings. In order to develop some existent items and to test new ones, FORS conducted a survey including measures that can assess multiple dimensions of the concept at the same time. The aim of this research is to connect the contested and multidimensional nature of democracy with a consistent measurement of perceptions of democracy.

One article presents the core program of sequence analysis using social data, a method that provides a holistic perspective on the unfolding of individual life trajectories. Using the SHP, we demonstrated the appropriateness of latent class growth curve models for analysing sequence data. In particular, models including heterogeneous dependence structure provide new techniques for assessing goodness of fit as well as yield insights into social processes.

COVID-19 surveys and related research

COVID-19 and the subsequent (panel) data collections have taken considerable resources and time all through the year. Due to this collective endeavour, FORS is now able to provide researchers with data allowing causal examination of the societal and economic consequences of the pandemic and offering great opportunities for methodological research. In that regard, a team from the international surveys started to explore how the COVID-19 pandemic influenced survey sampling, non-response and responses to the MOSAiCH 2020 module. Furthermore, to enhance the visibility of the data and to actively engage researchers, a research network of around 40 members (FORS and other Swiss universities) has been established.

All through the year, FORS continued to offer support to researchers and students in the Social Sciences who intend to engage in survey and data methodology and the challenges of data collection and management. In recent years, the topic of data linkage has gained momentum, given that survey response rates are declining and the demand for high-quality data for causal analyses has increased. Data linkage comes with a variety of methodological challenges related to (i) the data linkage environment and implication for privacy preservation, (ii) the linkage process, (iii) linkage quality and potential bias in linked data. The joint FORS initiative linkhub.ch is in favour of an easy access to private and public data for research in the future and, thus, actively promotes data linkage (see chapter [4. NATIONAL COMMITMENTS](#)).

6. Projects by the Data collection and analysis team DCA

The DCA group at FORS offers help in data collection and analysis to externals. Their services represent valuable additional sources of funding for FORS. Below a description of all the studies and surveys conducted by the DCA in 2020.

Climat 2020 – University of Geneva

The DCA conducted a web/paper mixed mode survey for the Department of political sciences and international relations about attitudes towards climate change and involvement in associations among individuals aged 50 years and older living in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. The DCA's role included reviewing the questionnaire, designing the data collection plan, programming the web and paper versions of the questionnaire, conducting the field phase, and preparing and documenting the data.

Survey on the Human Research act – Federal Office of Public Health

The DCA was commissioned by the Federal Office of Public Health to carry out a study among the stakeholders involved in research on human beings on their understanding and implicit attitudes towards the two main objectives of the Human Research Act (HRA): the protection of participants and the creation of favourable framework conditions for research. Based on the observation that tensions may exist between these two goals, this study aims to understand how actors interpret these two objectives and how they arbitrate between them. The project was divided into three phases, namely an exploratory qualitative phase, consisting of focus groups and individual interviews, a quantitative phase conducted through an online survey and finally a second qualitative phase with interviews and focus groups to deepen the results obtained in the previous phases. In 2020, the DCA focused on planning and defining the project, literature research, consulting experts and mapping the theme. The beginning of the first qualitative phase is planned for spring 2021.

Survey on experience during semi- lockdown among the employees of the UNIL

The DCA was commissioned by the UNIL Rectorate to conduct a survey among the staff of the UNIL on the experience of the first semi-lockdown period in spring of 2020. The main themes addressed in this online questionnaire were the work environment before, during and after the semi-lockdown, as well as the experience of this period in terms of work organisation. The DCA collaborated on the development of the questionnaire, was responsible for data collection, as well as for data analysis and a final report.

Survey on the engagement in advocacy of the UNIL's researchers

The growing involvement of researchers in the public debate led the UNIL Rectorate to initiate a reflection on the issue of advocacy among its researchers, a task that was given the Interdisciplinary Centre for Ethics Research (CIRE) and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Sustainability (CID). The resulting working group mandated FORS to provide its expertise in creating the questionnaire and to collect the data, analyse the results and write a report.

In 2020, FORS worked on the elaboration of the questionnaire and the preparation of the data collection. The data collection will be carried out in 2021, through an online survey sent to all UNIL researchers. The objectives of this study are to better understand the practices of engagement in advocacy of the UNIL scientific community and to measure the attitudes and perceptions of researchers regarding this type of engagement.

Health2040 – University of Lucerne

On behalf of the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), the DCA conducted a research project on the future of healthcare in Switzerland in collaboration with the University of Lucerne. The aim was to identify the needs and preferences of Swiss patients regarding future ambulatory health care. The project was funded by the University of Lucerne, supported by contributions from the FOPH and the Swiss Health Observatory (Obsan). DCA was responsible for the entire data collection and data preparation. The data were collected by means of an online survey in all three national languages among the adult resident population of Switzerland.

Evaluation of Stopgether Program – Tobacco Control Fund

The DCA collaborated with the research group on health psychology from the University of Geneva on the evaluation of the *Stopgether* program aimed at helping people to quit smoking. The DCA was in charge of designing a longitudinal survey among users in order to quantify the program's impact and identify the predictors of success. In 2020, the second and third follow-up questionnaires were elaborated and sent to respondents.

The longitudinal data analysis allowed comparing success rate and predictors with the 2019 wave, the program's previous iteration (2016), as well as data gathered from a sample of smokers and ex-smokers in the general population. The results showed a significantly higher success rate among participants in the program and the results were comparable to the 2016 edition. The DCA collaborated with various actors in the public health sector such as the Tobacco Control Fund and Promotion Santé Valais, from the academic sector such as the University of Geneva and the Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, as well as from the private sector, such as the communications agencies responsible for running the program on social media.

Negative Voting – University of Lausanne

The DCA worked with Prof. Diego Garzia from the UNIL on a study on voting intentions and behaviours and attitudes and feelings in the 2020 US elections. This project was part of a larger comparative international research project on negative voting. The DCA was responsible for finding a partner for data collection in the US, programming the pre- and post-election surveys and coordinating the fieldwork with the panel provider.

Evaluation of an Equality Promotion Program – Deuxième Observatoire

With the support of the OAK foundation, the association *le Deuxième Observatoire* asked the DCA to develop an evaluation of one of their programs, aiming at promoting gender equality in kindergarten and primary schools. In 2020, the DCA developed the methodology, performed most of the field observation phases and designed the program's monitoring tool. The next phase is to design the questionnaire and execute the quantitative part of the evaluation.

Evaluation “P’tite Poubelle Verte” – Canton of Geneva

The DCA collaborated with a researcher from the University of Geneva to conduct a survey on the use of the “P’tite Poubelle Verte”, a publicly funded kitchen waste recycling bin, for the canton of Geneva. The DCA provided support on the design of the questionnaire and was responsible for data collection. A random sample of 3 000 residents from the canton of Geneva was contacted to participate in the web/paper mixed mode survey. The aim of the survey was to gain a better understanding of the use of the bin but also to measure the potential barriers to its use and understand recycling behaviour more generally. The DCA is currently collaborating on an article on the results of this project.

Evaluation Plan for Gender Equality in the Cantonal Administration «PGKV» - Canton of Fribourg

Mandated by the Office for Gender Equality and Family Affairs of the Canton of Fribourg (GFB), the DCA started an evaluation of the first implementation phase of the “Plan for Gender Equality in the Cantonal Administration” (PGKV). The PGKV is an action plan structured according to strategic objectives, consisting of various measures to promote gender equality within the cantonal administration. For this purpose, the DCA conducts a comparative statistical analysis of various equality indicators in employee data of the cantonal administration with the aim of reproducing a previous analysis from 2015 and analyse possible differences. This second data analysis will also include some new indicators that were not part of the previous evaluation.

**Survey for the
municipality
of Muri b. Bern:
Zone mit
Planungspflicht
“Westliches
Zentrum
Gümligen”**

The DCA was commissioned to undertake a survey for the municipality of Muri b. Bern concerning a vote on a building project entitled Zone mit Planungspflicht (ZPP) “Westliches Zentrum Gümligen”. Against the backdrop of a lost vote for the municipality with a clear majority, the question was which factors led to this outcome. The goal of the municipality is to be able to enact policies to match the needs of the population. The survey was conducted at the end of 2020 among all the people of the municipality with the right to vote. The sample size was 8 880 persons with a response rate of about 29%. The DCA was responsible for the questionnaire and conducted the fieldwork, which was mainly online but with the possibility to have a paper questionnaire on request. Data preparation, data analysis and a report are scheduled for the beginning of 2021.

7. Outreach, publications and events

7.1 Dissemination

Social media management

FORS intensified its presence in social media and regularly informed its followers about recent news (publications, online seminars, new data or job opportunities) through Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Most impressions were noticed this year on LinkedIn, due to several job advertisements at FORS and then again on the FORS Twitter account which reached 1 420 followers in 2020.

MailWizz: New platform for mailing campaigns

As portrayed in chapter 3, DARISS has established a data solicitation concept to reach out to new disciplines within the social sciences. The Communication supported DARISS in this endeavour through the establishment of email campaigns sent to new audiences. In close collaboration with the FORS IT team, the platform MailWizz was tailored for our needs. MailWizz is a self-hosted email software that manages email campaigns and email lists for targeted mailings. Through the use of MailWizz, campaigns can now easily be sent to an unlimited number of email addresses. The email lists are connected with FORSbase and are automatically updated after each campaign. The integrated analytical tools give insights into the click behaviour of the target audiences, an important follow-up feature to analyse the campaigns. Further efforts will be needed in 2021 to develop this platform to function as a centralised database for all of our promotion email campaigns. MailWizz will then be extended to all FORS groups for usage. In 2020 FORS has further created a [newsletter subscription webpage](#) where interested people can subscribe to all of our various newsletters. All the subscriptions from this webpage are stored and managed from MailWizz.

7.2 Publications

FORS Guides to Survey Methods and Data Management

The aim of the peer-reviewed open access series *FORS Guides to Survey Methods and Data Management*, initiated in 2019, is a knowledge transfer within and outside of FORS in the domain of survey methods and data management. The *FORS Guides* are specifically targeted to the Swiss research community and researchers working with Swiss data. In 2020 five new *FORS Guides* were published, notably two Guides on Data Management (pre-registration and registered reports and data anonymisation) and three on Survey Methods (measurement of social position in surveys, measuring party-affiliation, preparation of survey data). Several guides are in the pipeline for 2021. Considering the relatively high number of downloads of the pdf

version of the papers, the series has found its readers amongst the research community. The series is regularly promoted via the FORS Bulletin, the FORS website, on social media and through targeted email campaigns. The *FORS Guides* are [available online](#).

FORS Working Paper Series

The *FORS Working Paper Series* regularly publishes papers related to survey research, from both methodological and substantive viewpoints. The series is intended to provide an early and relatively quick means of publication prior to further development of the work. In 2020 three Working Papers were published: one on the first results of the SHP COVID-19 study, one on introducing web in a refreshment sample of the SHP, and one on sequentially mixing modes in an election survey. All papers are open access and can be retrieved from the [series' dedicated webpage](#).

Social Change in Switzerland

The bilingual (French and German) online publication series *Social Change in Switzerland* is co-edited by FORS, the Life Course and Inequalities research unit of the UNIL LINES and the Swiss Centre of Competence LIVES. In 2020 the series published four contributions. The contribution that generated the most press releases discusses the trends in the career ambitions of young women and men in Switzerland. Another contribution that was well-received by the media thematises the contradictory intentions of the Swiss population with regard to their energy consumption. All publications, press, and media releases can be consulted on the journal's [dedicated webpage](#).

The number of single page views of the journal's website continued to rise with 25 651 page views (compared to 24 616 in 2019). The article viewed the most was on Income inequality between men and women that begins long before a family is founded (published 2019), followed by the article on the Working Poor in Switzerland (2018). Like in the previous year, most visits came from Switzerland, followed by Germany, France and the United States.

DeFacto

[DeFacto](#) publishes articles in German, French and Italian that are related to important and relevant political issues in Switzerland in order to make political science research more visible. Until 2016 DeFacto was an AGORA project funded by the SNSF. Between 2017 and 2019 DeFacto was financed by FORS, the Institute of Political Sciences of the University of Zurich, the Institute of Political Science of the University of Berne, and the Department of Humanities, Social and Political Sciences at the ETH Zurich.

In 2019, the Centre for Democracy Aarau and the Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration joined the platform. In 2020, the Department of Political Science of the University of Basel, the Department of political science and international relations of the University of Geneva, the Institute of political studies of the UNIL, the Institute of Political Science of the University of Lucerne and the Department of Political Science of the

University of St. Gallen also participated in the financing of the platform. At its annual meeting in February 2020, the Swiss Political Science Association (SVPW/ASSP) decided to take over the funding of DeFacto and also to contribute to its financing. FORS continues to maintain the DeFacto website and to finance the translations of several articles.

In 2020 DeFacto has published 122 articles (compared to 133 articles written in 2019). Out of these 122 articles, 28 were written by 13 FORS collaborators. Most articles are written in German, followed by French and Italian. The number of articles written in French has risen from 24 in 2019 to 38 in 2020. The DeFacto website obtained 55 133 single visits in 2020 (compared to 43 577 in 2019 and 36 500 in 2018). Most visits came from Switzerland, followed by Germany, France and Austria.

Survey Methods, Insights from the Field

The peer-reviewed online journal [Survey Methods, Insights from the Field](#) (SMIF), co-edited by FORS, [GESIS](#) and [PUMA](#), published a total of 23 articles in 2020. Notably six individual articles and two special issues that included a total of 17 articles. Compared to previous years, this is the highest number of articles published since the launch of the journal in 2013. One special issue was published on [Fieldwork Monitoring Strategies for Interviewer-Administered Surveys](#) and one on [Advancements in Mobile and Online Survey Methods](#). In 2020, 14 papers were handed in (compared to eight in 2019), not taking into consideration the submissions for the special issues. Out of these papers, three were rejected. From January to December, the website had 39 358 single page views compared to 26 495 in 2019. The number of single page views has again risen, which is not only due to the fact that the journal is listed in the DOAJ (the Directory of Open Access Journals) but also to the publication and promotion of two special issues which commonly attract more interest than single articles.

7.3 Events

The following events organised by FORS took place either in person or online.

Conference “The State of Democracy in a comparative perspective”

FORS and the research group on Elections and Political Citizenship GREC of the SSP Faculty of the UNIL organised an academic conference at the UNIL on February 2, 2020. The program contained four panels and ten presentations on various topics around electoral democracy, and attracted more than hundred participants. The event was sponsored by the Monitoring Electoral Democracy (MEDem) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES).

Events around Data Management Plans (DMPs)

As portrayed in chapter [3 DATA PROMOTION](#). FORS provided presentations and trainings on data management: at the UNIL on data protection and ethics, at the University of Berne on DMPs and informed consent, and at the University of Zurich's summer school, the University of Fribourg and the HES-SO Wallis on DMPs and the handling of sensitive data.

24rd Swiss Summer School on Methods in the Social Sciences

Jointly organised by USI and FORS the 24th Swiss Summer School on Methods in the Social Sciences was held from August 14-28 2020 at the Università della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano.

The following workshops were offered (*number of participants in parentheses*):

First week: August 17 - 21:

- » E. Horber: Quantitative methods for Social Research (24)
- » M. Bergman: Qualitative Interviewing (28)
- » S. Kernbach: Designing Your Academic Future (14)

Second week: August 24 - 28:

- » A. Bell: Multilevel Analysis (14)
- » C. Roberts: Survey Methods and Questionnaire Design (19),
- » O. Lipps/U. Kuhn: Panel data analysis using the Swiss Household Panel as an example(11),
- » P. Schmidt/E. Davidov: Structural Equation Modeling (16),
- » T. Hills: Content Analysis and Natural Language Processing (14),
- » V. Mottier: Discourse Theory and Analysis (15)

Optional two-day workshops: August 14-15:

- » S. Kernbach: Visual Thinking (12)
- » E. Horber: SPSS & Statistics Refresher (30)

85 % of the 142 participants were PhD Students from Swiss Universities; 7% from foreign universities or institutions: Italy (3), Germany (2), Singapore, Norway, United States, Belgium and Israel. The largest groups of this year's participants are working in the field of Sociology (19%), Business Studies (14%), Communication (13%), Psychology (10%) and Education (10%).

Two workshops were held online only, while the others had both on-line and on-site participants in Lugano (35 % attended on-line).

GREC

The research group on Elections and Political Citizenship (GREC) founded 4 years ago is a research unit of the Institute of Political Studies [IEP](#) of the UNIL. The GREC serves as a forum for intellectual exchange and discussion for researchers and doctoral candidates from the IEP and other institutions working in the fields of elections and referendums, social movements, activism and political citizenship. Further, GREC's mission is to support the surveys under the responsibility of FORS (in particular for SELECTS, VOTO and the SHP) and to strengthen collaboration between the IEP and FORS. The research group met about 10 times in 2020 for seminars and presentations in person and online. In addition, FORS and GREC organised the scientific conference *The state of democracy in a comparative perspective* (see above).

Methods and Research Meetings

FORS, in collaboration with the Faculty of social and political sciences SSP at the UNIL, has continued to successfully organise the joint seminar series Methods and Research meetings. This series aims to engage researchers and practitioners into a methodological discourse on current hot topics in survey and data methods research. In the second half of 2020 we welcomed three highly renowned speakers covering topics related to Big Data, automated text analyses and mixed methods research designs. The full list of the speakers and presentations can be consulted on the [FORS Methods and Research Meetings webpage](#).

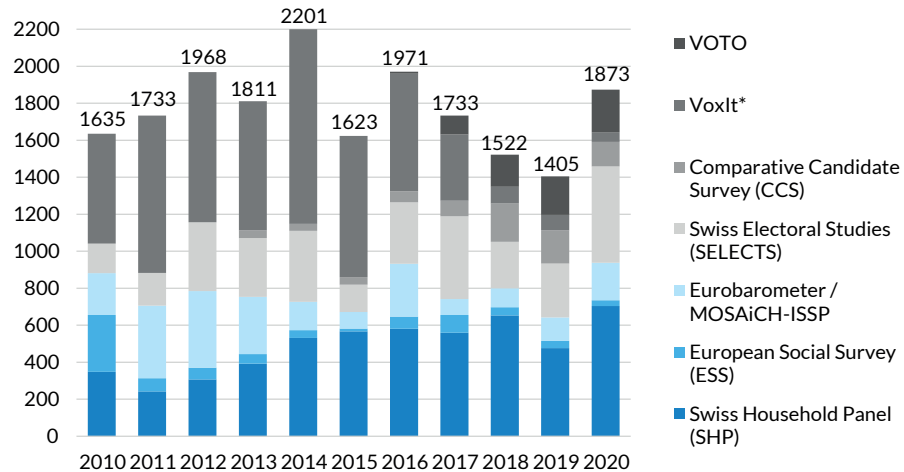
FORS Lunch seminars

The FORS lunch seminars are held to foster scholarly exchange between FORS researchers and related researchers to profit from their diverse scientific and cultural backgrounds. Occasionally, researchers from outside of FORS are invited to present their research findings. In 2020 three lunch seminars were held online. One discussed the first results of the FORS COVID-19 MOSAiCH study on well-being, politics, work, and family, one presented SWISSUbase, our multidisciplinary archiving service for research data, and one linkhub.ch, our initiative to facilitate data linking for research.

7.4 Performance Indicators

FORS maintains a set of indicators that allow us to assess our accomplishments and progress on different fronts. Below are various results for 2020.

Number of datasets produced by FORS surveys that are distributed to researchers

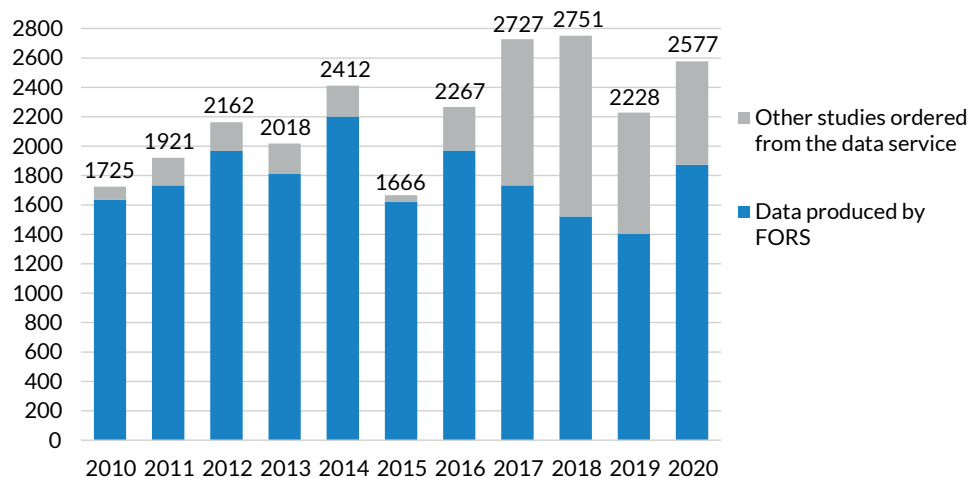


*The reason for the decline in downloads of the Voxit dataset is probably the better availability of the individual Vox datasets on FORSbase.

A total of 1 873 datasets from FORS projects were distributed by FORS to researchers in 2020.

In addition to the distribution by FORS, the Swiss parts of the studies ESS and ISSP data can also be downloaded from the international websites of these projects. The data for the Survey of Health, Aging and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), conducted by FORS, are only available in this way.

Number of datasets from the FORS data service distributed to or downloaded by researchers

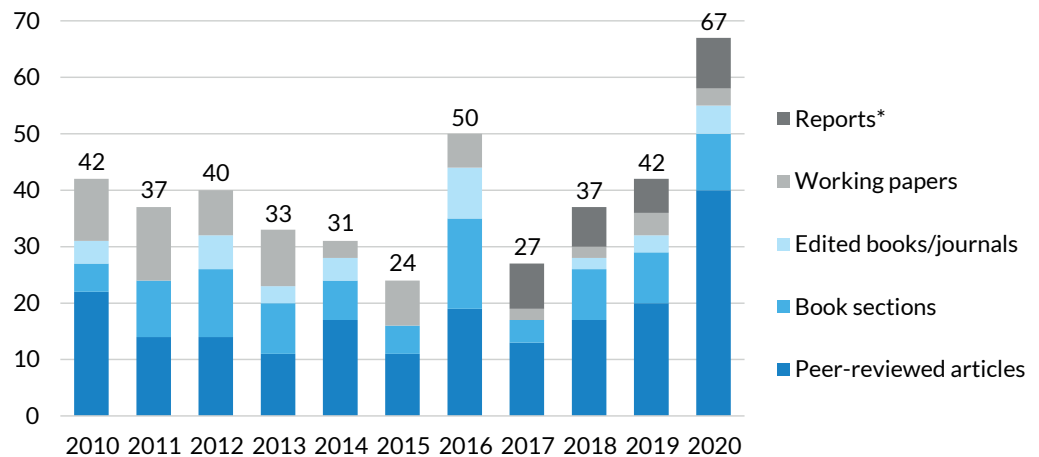


2 577 datasets were downloaded from FORSbase in 2020.

Number of new research project descriptions in the research inventory

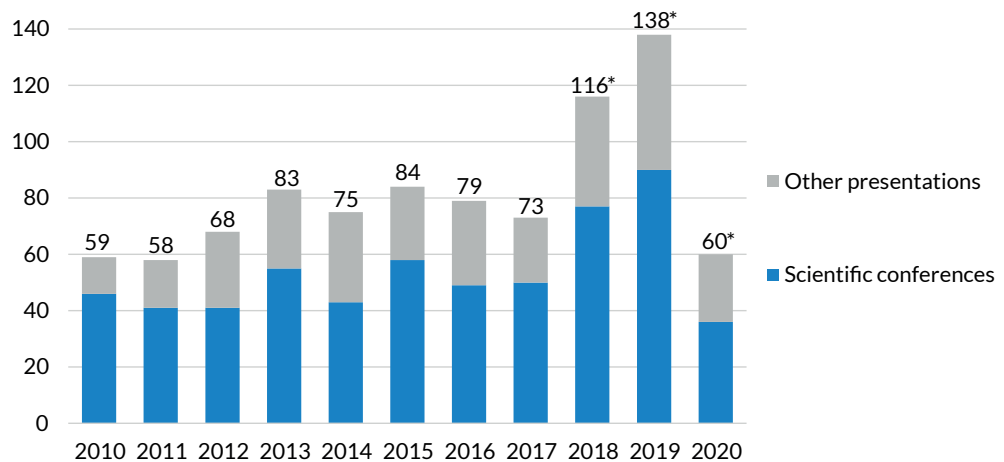
At the end of 2020, the number of active users of FORSbase increased to 7 700, compared to about 3 300 in 2016 and 5 300 in 2018. All in all, the research inventory comprised over 11 750 published project descriptions at the end of 2020.

Publications by FORS staff



* until 2016, the reports were included in the category “Working papers”.

Presentations by FORS staff at conferences and scholarly meetings

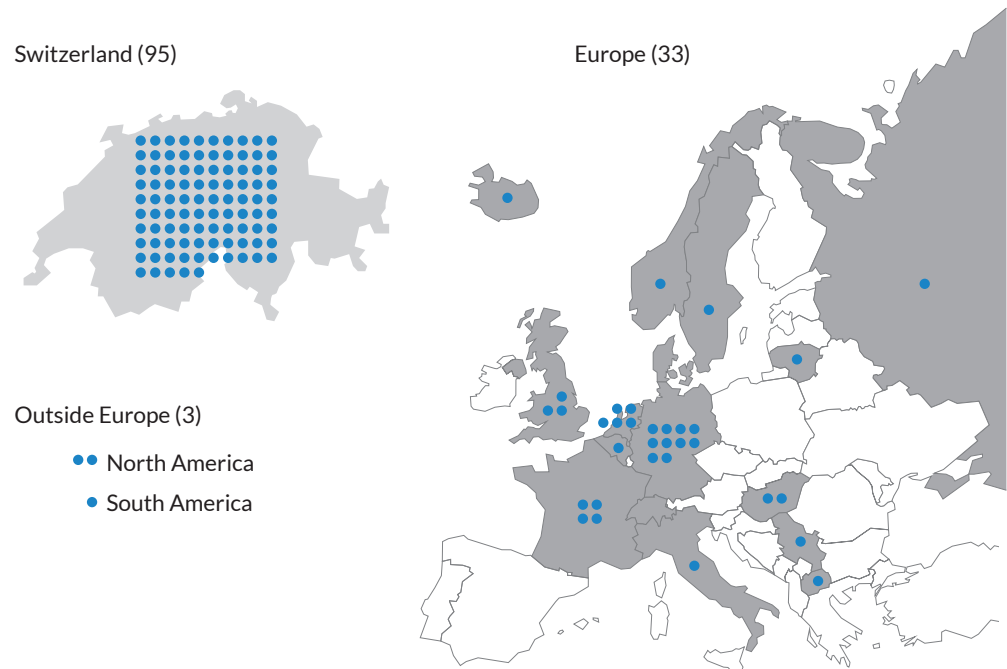


* from 2018 not only the collaborators, but also the associated researchers were asked to hand in their presentations. The associated researchers contributed 12 presentations to the total of 60 presentations in 2020.

There were 60 presentations of FORS staff and associated researchers at conferences and scholarly meetings in 2020, compared to 138 in 2019. This decrease is due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent cancellation of many events during the year.

Also see the [complete list of 2020 publications and presentations by FORS staff on this interactive webpage](#) (click on the year “2020” for full information).

Number of national and international collaborative research projects



The graph above includes projects aiming for publication in peer-reviewed journals. Some projects involve several countries.

Number of collaborative research projects and scientific activities with outside organisations and individuals

Developing and maintaining linkages and synergies between FORS staff and the outside research community is a key activity for FORS. This indicator addresses collaborative links with researchers in Switzerland and abroad.

In 2020, 31 FORS staff members were involved in 117 collaborative projects with outside organisations. Thus, roughly 75% of eligible FORS staff were involved in research activities. We can note a slight positive increase compared to last year (110 collaborative projects), notably due to the scientific network of our newly recruited staff.

About 7 out of 10 (69%) of these collaborative projects were with researchers from the French-speaking part of Switzerland, 12% with researchers from the German-speaking part of Switzerland, and 30% with foreign institutions (some projects involved several institutions from different regions; therefore, the total exceeds 100%). The concentration in the French-speaking part of the country is due in particular to the close ties of some collaborators with other institutions in Lausanne and Geneva (in particular LINES/LIVES). Our international collaborations are very diversified, including a broad range of foreign countries (16).

Characteristics of consultations by FORS collaborators

(in % of all consultations)

Purpose of consultation

Subject expertise
Data analysis
Data access
Methodology
Data archiving
Data management
Other

Type of user

Faculty staff (research/teaching)
Post-doc
Doctoral student
Student (MA or BA)
Journalist/media
Other

Type of institution

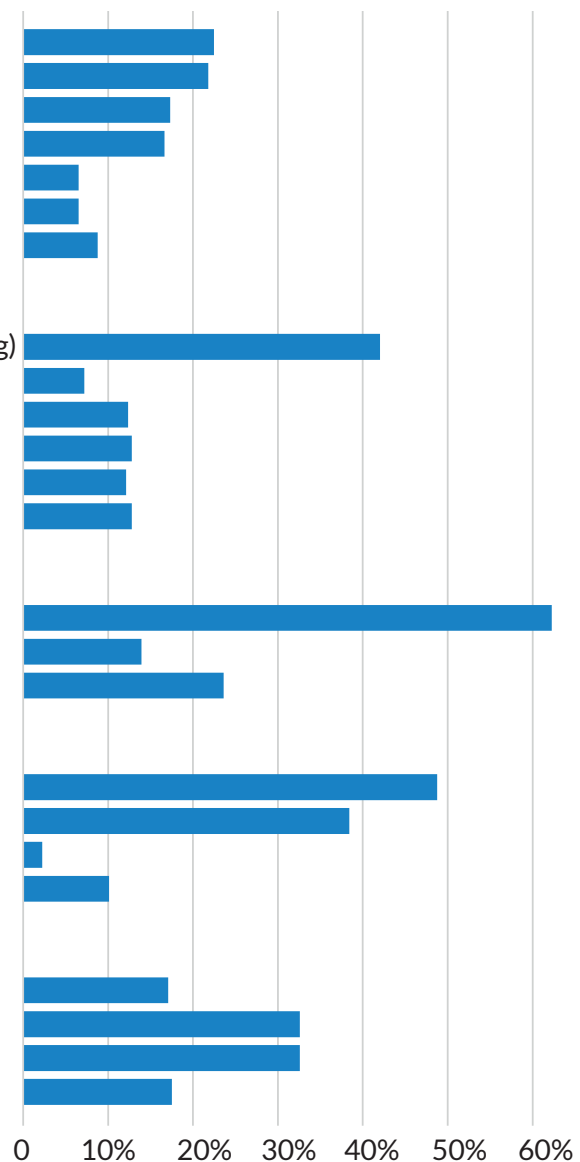
University
University of applied science
Other

Region

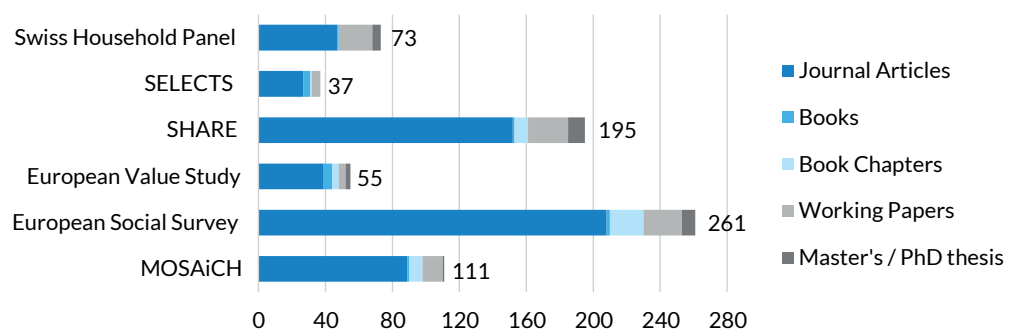
French-speaking Switzerland
German-speaking Switzerland
Italian-speaking Switzerland
Abroad

Time invested

Less than 15 min.
15 to 30 min.
30 min. to 1 hour
More than 1 hour



Number of 2020 publications based on FORS-produced data



In 2020, there were more than 730 publications worldwide that used the Swiss data from surveys produced by FORS, including 261 for the ESS, and 195 for SHARE. Most of these publications (77%) were peer-reviewed articles in academic journals. Seven percent of the publications were methodological in nature.

Number of hours devoted to teaching by FORS staff

Sharing knowledge and shaping future researchers through teaching are important FORS tasks.

In total, nine FORS staff members taught in 2020. They gave 352 teaching hours in 12 different courses at all academic levels (bachelor, master, and PhD), as well as in the context of continuing education. The topics covered primarily concerned data analysis and data management, but also survey methodology. The biggest part (82%) of the teaching hours were provided in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, with the exception of one course given at the University of Berne and another at the Swiss summer school 2020, in Lugano.

Thus, about one quarter of eligible FORS staff were involved in teaching activities. FORS will continue to make a contribution to the training of young scientists according to its possibilities and resources.

8. FORS Governance

By 2021 the SNSF will fund FORS entirely. Based on a funding proposal submitted during summer 2020, the SNSF and FORS agreed on a service level agreement for the new period 2021-24. One change that results from this new funding model will be, that the SNSF has put in place a new permanent international expert panel that will be in charge of evaluating FORS. In addition, FORS is expected to collaborate closely with DaSCH. It is foreseen that a member of DaSCH will join the FORS Foundation Board, while the FORS Director will participate in the DaSCH Association Board.

Foundation Board

[The Foundation Board](#) is FORS' governing body. It is chaired by a representative of the host university, Prof. François Bussy, who serves as President to the Foundation Board. The Board consists of eight full members representing the key stakeholders (universities, the SFSO, and the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences), and two observers from the funding bodies (the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), and the SNSF).

In 2020 the Foundation Board met twice via videoconference. In its March meeting, the Foundation Board approved the accounts, the audit and the Annual Report 2019. In addition, the FORS Foundation Board approved the new convention between FORS and the SSP faculty of the UNIL. In its November meeting FORS nominated Bojana Tasic, Head of the IT group, as Head of the newly formed unit "Infrastructure and Development" and member of the FORS management. In addition, the Foundation Board approved the budget and the annual planning.

A planned joint meeting between the Foundation Board and the Scientific Advisory Board had to be dropped at short notice due to the first Swiss lockdown in spring. The meeting was held online. Holding a board meeting online was a new experience for FORS as not much experience had been gathered in this domain so far.

Scientific Advisory Board

[The Scientific Advisory Board](#) was held on March 26, 2020, chaired by Prof. Mick Couper and unfortunately with a much shorter agenda because a physical meeting was not possible. Instead of more profound discussions on various ongoing topics, the meeting was used mainly to update the scientific advisory board on all major ongoing activities at FORS.

Executive Board and Management

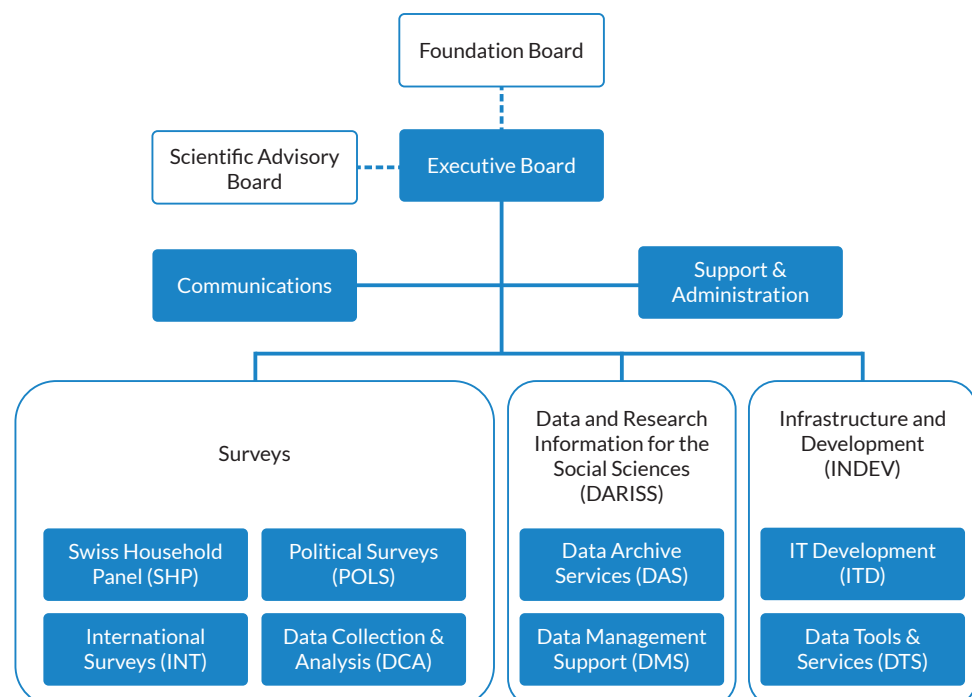
The FORS Executive Board is chaired by the FORS Director and comprises the heads of the units “Surveys”, “Data and Research Information Services”, “Support” and since December also of the new unit “Infrastructure and Development”. The Executive Board usually meets twice a month. Decisions are minuted, and the minutes are sent to the President of the Foundation Board to keep him posted on current affairs.

Especially during the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, the frequency of the meetings substantially increased in order to make quick decisions on how to adapt to the new situation with all staff members in home office. All these adaptations absorbed a lot of management capacities, especially of the senior staff at FORS. Through this effort, and also thanks to having its own competent and flexible IT team, it was possible to install the necessary software for all FORS staff so that it was possible to effectively work from home without major interruptions.

A key organisational decision in 2020 was to form a new unit (“Infrastructure and Development”) with two groups (a newly formed group “Data tools and Services DTS” and the integration of the IT group). The FORS organisational structure was adapted accordingly. This decision is strongly linked to an expanded role FORS is playing through activities around SWISSUbase for the Swiss research community at large. With this organisational change SWISSUbase will be transformed from a project into a permanent service. Two out of three senior positions were filled in 2021, and a new Head of IT will be hired in 2021 after the current Head of IT was promoted to Head of unit.

An important forward-looking instrument for FORS is the planning process to set priorities for the coming year. Each team has to set their priorities that are then consolidated within the FORS Executive Board. This annual plan was approved by the FORS Foundation Board in November 2020. In addition, because of the SNSF project proposal, FORS set priorities for the entire four-year funding period 2021-24 in summer 2020.

Organisational Chart (from 1 Jan. 2021)



9. Staff statistics & finance

Staff

Status of employment

2020 (62 employees, 49.6 full-time equivalents)

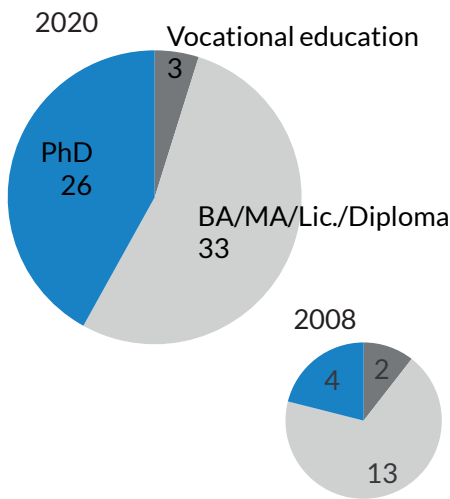


2008 (19 employees, 15.7 full-time equivalents)

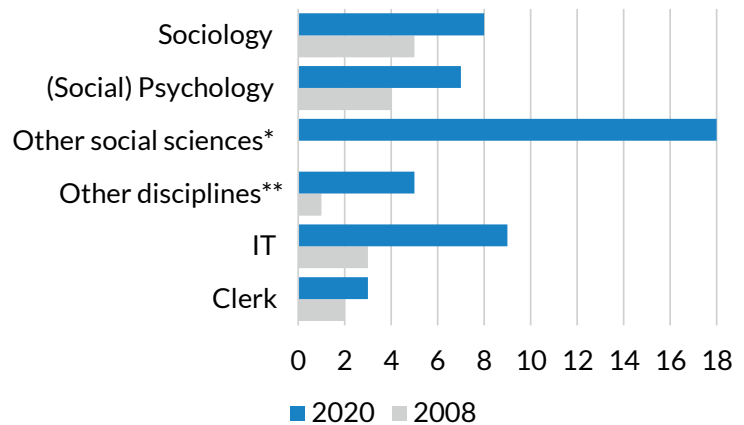


- Full-time
- Part-time
- Permanent
- Not permanent

Degree of formation



Disciplines



* Social sciences, anthropology, behavioral science, communication, demography, economics, education, human geography, survey methodology
 ** History, linguistics, mathematics, statistics

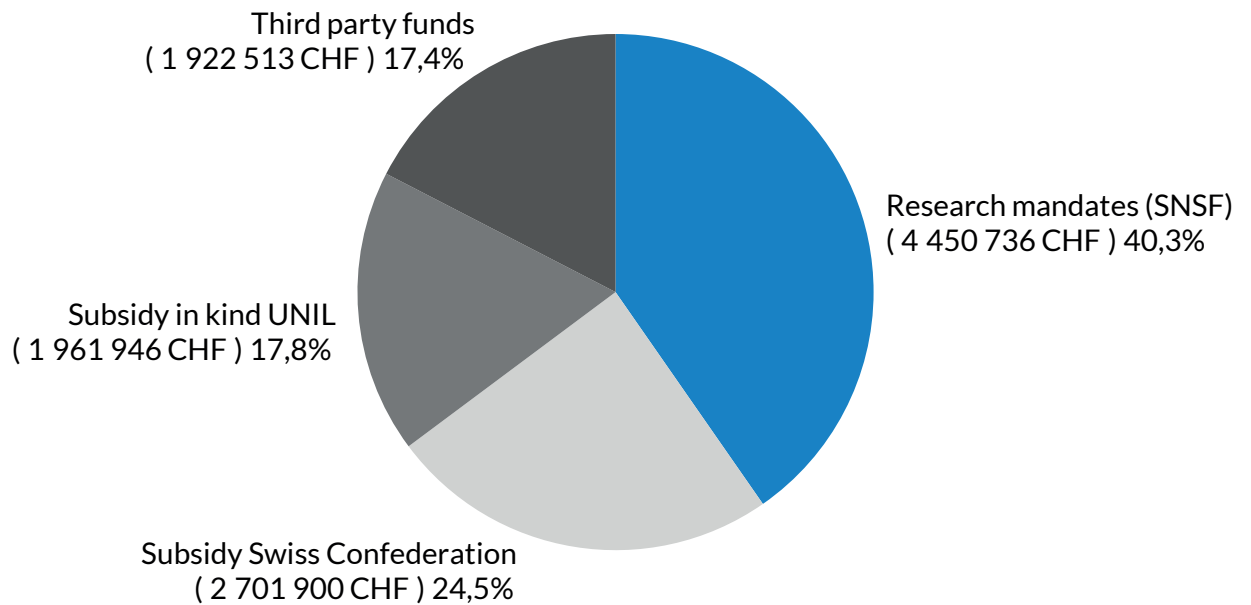
Nationalities and mother languages 2020

- 46 Swiss
- 6 Germans
- 5 French
- 3 Italians
- 2 Portuguese
- 1 Chilean
- 1 Dutch
- 1 Hungarian
- 1 Moroccan
- 1 Serb
- 1 US citizen

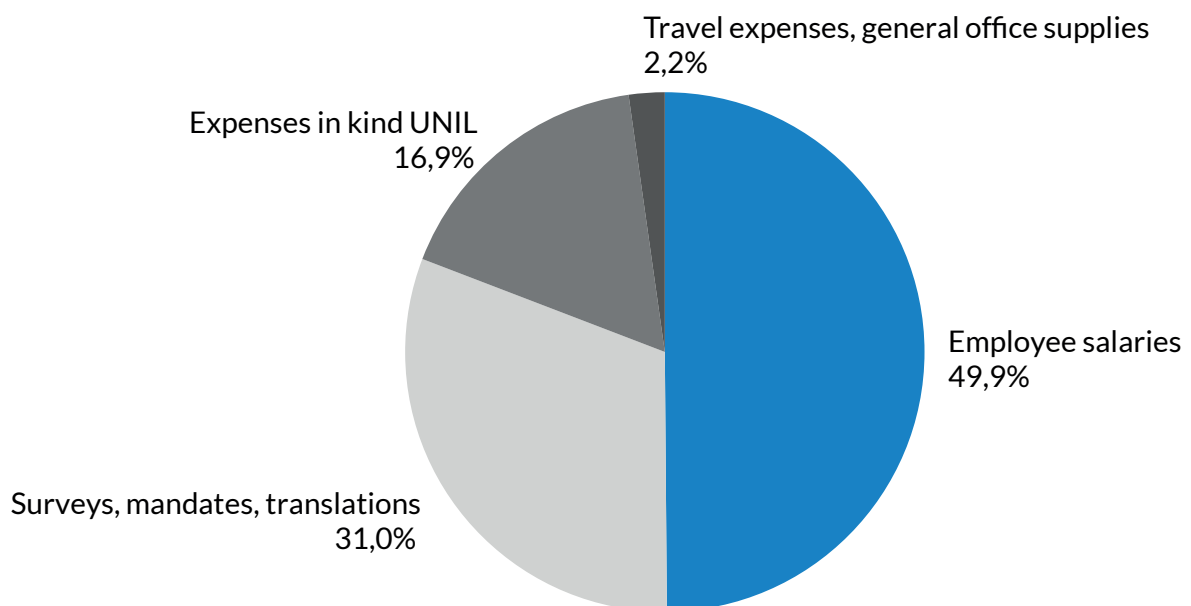


Finances

Income



Expenses



10. List of Abbreviations

CAPI	Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing
CCS	Comparative Candidate Survey
CESSDA	Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives
ch-x	Swiss Federal Surveys of Adolescents
CNEF	Cross-National Equivalent File
CSES	Study of Electoral Systems
DaSCH	Data and Service Center for the Humanities
DMP	Data Management Plan
ECPR	European Consortium for Political Res
ERIC	European Research Infrastructure Consortium
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures
ESS	European Social Survey
EVS	European Values Study
FOPH	Swiss Federal Office of Public Health
GESIS	Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften
ISSP	International Social Survey Programme
LIS	Cross-national Data Center in Luxembourg
LIVES	Overcoming Vulnerability – Life Course Perspectives
MEDem	Monitoring Electoral Democracies (European Research Infrastructure)
MOSAiCH	Measurement and Observation of Social Attitudes in Switzerland
NCCR	National Centre of Competence in Research
PAWCER	Public Attitudes to Welfare, Climate Change and Energy in the EU and Russia
POSM	Public Opinion and Survey Methodology
SELECTS	Swiss Electoral Studies
SERI	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
SERISS	Synergies for European Research Infrastructures in the Social Sciences
SFSO	Swiss Federal Statistical Office
SHARE	Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe
SHP	Swiss Household Panel
SMIF	Survey Methods: Insights from the Field
SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation
SWITCH	Swiss Foundation managing digital services
SWISSUBASE	A national cross-disciplinary archive solution for social science research data
TRAPD	Translation, Review, Adjudication, Pre-testing and Documentation procedure
UNIL	University of Lausanne (Host University)
ZDA	Zentrum für Demokratie Aarau

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