

FORS 

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# Annual Report 2021

Lausanne, March 2022

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# 1. Editorial from the FORS Director

## Research through research infrastructures

Research infrastructures are becoming increasingly important to enable and facilitate research in many scientific domains. I am very pleased that FORS contributes to the construction, connection and operation of research infrastructures in a variety of ways.

Firstly, there are the data infrastructures. Open research data is not only important for the validation of research results and findings, but is also seen as a crucial factor for excellence in research. Many funders and research organisations have open research policies. However, technical solutions and established institutions dealing with long-term archiving of data do not yet exist in all fields. In the social sciences, there is a tradition of data archiving and related facilities in many countries, and FORS has hosted a national data repository since 2008. While the FORS services for the social sciences will remain, the new technical platform SWISSUbase went into operation in 2021 and the existing archiving solution FORSbase was migrated and closed down. SWISSUbase was developed in collaboration between the Universities of Lausanne and Zurich and FORS and can be very flexibly adapted to the needs of other disciplines and institutions. SWISSUbase is expected to become one of the most important technical solutions for data archiving in Switzerland, used by many different disciplines and universities. To emphasise that SWISSUbase is a joint effort, the three founding institutions have established a joint association in 2021. This association is expected to accept new partners in 2022.

Research infrastructures are also important in relation to specific topics. In the social sciences, such infrastructures focus on long-term and comparative data collections that cannot usually be organised and funded through the established project funding mechanisms. FORS is in a way an “infrastructure for infrastructures” and hosts national long-term projects such as the Swiss Household Panel, Selects or MOSAiCH and the Swiss parts of ESS and SHARE (in partnership with the UNIL) as well as ISSP, CSES and CCS. FORS has taken over the ISSP secretariat in 2021 for a three-year term (renewable), making this the second comparative project after CCS that FORS coordinates.

There are also new developments in the field of social sciences to which FORS is actively contributing. At the national level, FORS participated in a project proposal involving all political science institutes in Switzerland to work towards a national infrastructure around referendums (VOTO 2.0). The possibility of studying voting behaviour in referendums at the national level at regular intervals is a unique selling point for Swiss researchers, and currently there is no such academically-run research infrastructure. With the linkhub.ch project, FORS is working at the political level towards making administrative data more accessible for research. FORS increasingly also supports the data collection of individual research projects as well as public institutions through the “Data collection and analysis” group, which conducts many third party funded mandates.

At the international level, FORS, together with researchers from the UNIL and many other researchers, is committed to Switzerland’s accession to the “Gender and Generations Programme (GGP)”. The GGP has been included in the ESFRI roadmap in 2021, and data collection under the GGP will

make it possible to study population and family dynamics, which are of great importance given the demographic changes in many Western European societies and their consequences for social security systems and the labour market. FORS also contributes to the establishment of the “Monitoring Electoral Democracies (MEDem)” project, an emerging international infrastructure in political science. MEDem brings together many different data collections and comparative projects to comprehensively study and monitor the functioning of democracies, which is of great importance given the many challenges democracies currently face. While the Swiss government was not willing to offer to host MEDem - Austria will instead be the host country - we aim to host one of the centres that will be created in the future MEDem consortium, again in collaboration with partners from different Swiss universities.

A good research infrastructure works best when FORS staff are part of the research community itself. Being part of a research community means actively conducting research. Many of the FORS staff not only provide high-quality services for the operation and development of research infrastructures, but also conduct research themselves, as the numerous publications featuring FORS staff impressively demonstrate.

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 are part of the standard FORS data collection funded during the period 2021-2024. 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.

In addition to the surveys financed by the SNSF, a whole series of projects - sometimes very innovative and with high scientific added value - were carried out by the Data Collection and Analysis team (see [7. Data collection and analysis DCA](#)). Often conducted in close collaboration with their clients, these projects were financed by third-party funds from researchers or public entities.

### 2.1 Swiss Household Panel SHP

#### Six principal tasks

The SHP team achieved six principal tasks in 2021:

1. The fieldwork for the four SHP samples that had started by the end of August 2020, was completed in early March. This concerned wave 22 of the SHP\_I (2 484 households and 3 855 individuals interviewed), wave 17 of the SHP\_II (1 179 households and 1 739 individuals interviewed), wave 8 of the SHP\_III (1 785 households and 2 731 individuals interviewed), and wave 1 of the SHP\_IV (4 380 households and 7 557 individuals interviewed). In total 9 847 households and 15 882 individuals participated. For detailed information about participation rates, we refer to [this online document](#).

The main mode of interviewing remains CATI for the older samples (SHP\_I to SHP\_III). Less than 1% in these three samples is interviewed face-to-face, whereas 1% participated by web (CAWI) on the household level and 9% (SHP\_II and SHP\_III) on the individual level. Web is less common on the individual level in the oldest sample (SHP\_I, 6.5%). The newly started SHP\_IV followed a different design, using CATI if a telephone number was available, and CAWI otherwise. 55% of household questionnaires were completed by CATI and 45% by CAWI. For the individual questionnaires this was 53% and 47% respectively. Response rates in the first wave of the SHP\_IV were

good, especially given the large share of CAWI. In total 175 interviewers and supervisors from MIS Trend carried out the telephone interviews (105 in Bern, 70 in Lausanne) and managed the online data collection. The average duration of the individual CATI questionnaire was relatively long with 43 minutes for the SHP\_I, SHP\_II and SHP\_III; for the SHP\_IV it was even longer as it was the first interview. It lasted 49 minutes, and 43 minutes for the CAWI version of the questionnaire. The rotating modules administered in this wave were social participation, political behaviour and values, and new questions about attitudes towards LGBTIQ+. From April to December the SHP team carried out the work related to data checking, cleaning and preparation, construction of variables, and documentation in order to prepare the data dissemination via SWISSUbase at the beginning of 2022. 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.

2. Between February and August, the SHP team prepared the fieldwork for waves 23 (SHP\_I), 18 (SHP\_II), 9 (SHP\_III), and 2 (SHP\_IV). This involved the preparation of the questionnaires (integrating annual changes and adaptations), a quantitative pre-test (creation of scenarios to test the programming of the questionnaire), communication to participating households (various letters and newsletters), updating the interviewer manual and training the interviewers (several sessions in Bern and Lausanne). The fieldwork started as planned at the end of August 2021. Rotating modules administered in this wave are religion and psychological scales. Also, a revised and enhanced health module (which is part of the core questionnaire) was introduced.
3. The tasks associated with data harmonisation took place during this period as well. A revised and harmonised version of the SHP data waves 1 to 22 (1999 to 2020), with a codebook, was prepared for inclusion in the [Cross-National Equivalent File](#) (CNEF) at the beginning of 2022. The CNEF focuses mainly on employment, income, and health and includes detailed harmonised variables that require additional recoding and imputations. It contains equivalently defined variables for the world's largest household panels. The SHP has been a longstanding partner in this cross-national collaboration. The SHP data are also included in the Comparative Panel File (CPF). CPF delivers the syntax to harmonise data from large household panels, supporting the social science community in the analysis of comparative life course data. Although the SHP is in contact with the CPF, the SHP-team is not involved in the preparation of the syntax for the harmonised variables.

4. The 11th International Conference of Panel Data Users in Switzerland took place on June 10. Because of COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings, the event was held virtually on Zoom. This first experience of a virtual conference was generally a positive one. Notwithstanding the downside of the limited possibility for exchange among the conference participants, the virtual setup allowed many to participate from various locations worldwide who would not have been able to travel to Lausanne in person. Sessions were well-attended and discussions were lively. The scientific program contained regular sessions on different topics (education, labour market, families, health and well-being, politics, attitudes and migration), and contributions were based on SHP but also on other longitudinal studies from Switzerland and abroad (the Swiss labour force survey (SLFS), the Transitions from education to employment study (TREE), the ZEPPELIN longitudinal study, the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), and SHARE). The conference also hosted two invited sessions: one by TREE, and one by the SFSO which was devoted to the use of data linkage to study transitions into the labour market. In total the conference included 27 presentations. Given the virtual nature of the conference, this edition did not include any keynote speakers. The Conference was attended by around 100 participants and was much appreciated.
5. The sixth SHP Methodological Workshop, which due to the COVID-19 pandemic could not be held in 2020, took place on September 13-15 at the UNIL. It was organised as an in-person event. As usual, the first day was dedicated to an introduction to the SHP (presenting the main aims, data collection, structure of the data and data organisation) and an introduction into data management using R (including a general introduction to the R environment and some basic commands). The second day was devoted to data file creation and management (data importation, variables selection, data subsets, matching files and reshaping files), which is an aspect of longitudinal data analysis many users face difficulties with. Finally, the third day was dedicated to data exploration and treated basic descriptive and inference analyses. It also included the presentation of the SHP weighting scheme and allowed participants to get support with the creation of their own data files. The workshop was attended by seven participants, which is fewer than usual. The reason for the lower attendance was not related to the topic, but more likely to the in-person nature of the event, which was held in a period when many people avoided travel and on-site events.
6. An important task in the second half of 2021 was an evaluation of the SHP, including shaping the direction of the SHP in the near future. The SHP team carried out this evaluation by seeking external input and bringing together several sources of information. First, to get a good understanding of not only how many publications are based on the SHP,

but also how the SHP data are used in research. The SHP team gathered all publications that use the SHP data, dating back to 2008. In addition to an overview of the number of publications that appear each year by type, all the peer-reviewed journal articles that have appeared since 2014 were further analysed to gain insight into use of the data by different disciplines, as well as different applications (cross-sectional, longitudinal, comparatively with other household panels, enhanced with other data, etc.), the research questions and the main variables used in the study.

The analysis shows, among other things, that the number of articles per year slightly increases with the duration of the panel, with the largest share in the field of sociology. The number of publications based on SHP data in political science and psychology journals has been on the rise in the last years. Second, all registered SHP data users were invited to complete a web survey asking about their use and appreciation of the SHP as well as their suggestions for future developments. A total of 265 data users completed the web questionnaire. In general, the SHP is seen as an important study and an essential part of the Swiss research infrastructure with unique strengths, notably the long duration, the large sample, the wide variety of topics, and the inclusion of subjective measures such as attitudes, opinions and beliefs. Users highlighted the complex nature of the data and offered suggestions to improve user support. Third, the SHP team conducted interviews with 15 experts. These experts were experienced SHP data users from different disciplines, researchers who do not use the SHP but are experienced in longitudinal analyses of topics covered in the SHP, and heads of other household panel surveys. The SHP team members discussed with the experts the major challenges and opportunities facing the SHP and other household panels and the main direction research is taking in different disciplines and other developments relevant to the future of the SHP. These interviews echoed the findings from the web survey and provided additional insights for the future direction of the SHP. The SHP team started drafting a report to be submitted to the FORS management by the end of January 2022.



## 2.2 International Surveys

As in 2020, the international surveys were strongly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. The MOSAiCH survey, centred on the topic of health in 2021, was fielded as expected as it is a self-administered survey, but included encompassing modules on the pandemic. Further, the response rate did not suffer from to the pandemic in 2021. The fieldwork for the ESS as a face-to-face survey was challenging and is still on-going. The cooperation by the respondents to participate was high throughout the fieldwork, yet finding interviewers ready to do the door-to-door work was challenging.

Synergies and collaborations between the international surveys were established: For example, in the ESS Sustain 2 project (where EVS and ESS collaborate), in the SSHOC project or a European Union H2020 Programme (run between 2019 and 2022) where 47 organisations, including FORS work together to build a common SSH Data Cloud with the goal to maximise reuse through Open Science and FAIR principles.

### 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 in each round since the very beginning. This general population survey measures the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of diverse populations. In Round 10, the ESS ERIC counts 32 countries, 25 member countries, 1 observer country (Switzerland) and 6 confirmed guest countries, thus being the ERIC with most members.

**Fieldwork:** The fieldwork started of the ESS 2020 (Round 10, with rotating parts on the topics “Understandings and evaluations of democracy (repeated)” and “Digital social contacts in work and family life (new)”) having been postponed from September 2020 to May 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Being a face-to-face survey, it was considered too risky to start fieldwork in September 2020. Instead, the ESS asked National Teams to consider postponing the face-to-face fieldwork to summer 2021 or implementing a push-to-web self-completion mode. Given the fact that self-completion data would not be part of the official release but available as an add-on and that Switzerland applied a rather light approach to COVID-19 measures, the National Team in Switzerland opted for a two-step strategy, prioritising a face-to-face version. The first step consisted of a soft fieldwork start with around 30 experienced ESS interviewers for whom briefings could take place virtually. The second step consisted of a decision upon the results of this soft start whether to continue the face-to-face or, if necessary, to switch to self-completion mode.

The fieldwork started as planned in May with 20 experienced interviewers in the field. Incentivisation, letters and information material remained the same as in Round 9. However, as a new option, an online interview using Microsoft Teams could be offered to respondents reluctant to do an in-person interview due to COVID-19. These online interviews were conducted by specialised interviewers at the headquarters of the fieldwork agency to assure technical support.

The field started slower than expected, as only 20 instead of 30 experienced interviewers could be motivated to work for the ESS20. However, the feedback of the interviewers in the field was very positive. There was no sign of respondents being reluctant to participate. Instead, the COVID-19 pandemic seemed to offer a good way of starting a conversation. Thus, it was decided, together with the fieldwork agency, to continue the face-to-face fieldwork and start with the full fieldwork by mid-June. Two full briefings in German and French were held, but not enough interviewers could be recruited to have the expected fieldwork progression. In exchange with other National Teams of the ESS, we learnt by summer that all countries face similar issues. It was thus decided to keep on recruiting interviewers and hold several briefings throughout the year, taking place each month between August and December. By the end of December, fieldwork was still going on with slightly over 1 100 interviews accomplished, with around three quarters of addresses released. The cooperation rate was high throughout the fieldwork; the main issue was that not enough interviewers were active. Of the overall 57 interviewers active in Round 10, each week, only about 25 to 30 were active due to illness, vacations or dropping out. Virtual interviews were not chosen very often. Only 3% of the interviews were conducted online until the end of 2021.

**Data:** The survey agency delivered two interim raw data sets of the interview data on February and December 2019. Thus, the cleaning and coding of the survey data could already be prepared in order to have a smooth and timely delivery to the ESS data archive at NSD in Bergen, Norway at latest in June 2022.

The ESS has over 190 000 registered users (5 500 from Switzerland) as of January 2022, and until mid-2021, more than 5 000 scientific publications used the ESS data. 208 authors were from Switzerland (8th place), proving that there is a high demand for ESS data in Switzerland.

**International:** In April and September 2021, the ERIC NC Forum Meetings took place virtually. The main topics of these meetings were the COVID-19 measures, the self-completion version of the questionnaire and data deposit, the cooperation with the EVS, experiences with video interviewing and

COVID-19 related fieldwork and the preparation for Round 11 and SSHOC. The ESS ERIC General Assembly met in April and October, with the FORS Director representing Switzerland. Switzerland is also represented in other governing boards: the Scientific Advisory Board (through a member of the UNIL) and the Methods Advisory Board (through FORS affiliate researcher (FORS/UNIL)).

**MOSAiCH / ISSP** During 2021, the fourth edition of the MOSAiCH 2.0 survey took place. This annual self-completion survey (web-paper, push-to-web design), conducted in several parts, is implemented internally. The content is defined by the ISSP and by a public call for contributions addressing the Swiss research community. In 2021, the central topic was “health”. In times of pandemic, this topic addresses important and timely societal questions. The second part included an encompassing module about the perception of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to experiences made at home and at work, issued from the public call. During 2021, the team released the data of MOSAiCH 2020 and finalised the data preparation of MOSAiCH 2021 for a release early 2022. The preparation of the 2022 edition of MOSAiCH was carried out. At the international level of the ISSP, Marlène Sapin and Dominique Joye ended their mandate as heads of the ISSP Methodological Committee. With the support of FORS and the International Surveys team, Stephanie Steinmetz and Marlène Sapin took over the Secretariat of the ISSP.

**Field and research:** MOSAiCH 2021 is composed of the ISSP 2021 module on “health”, a module repeated for the second time, including new topics on the pandemic and vaccination on the one hand and questions from a call for contributions on the other. Six proposals were accepted, including 14 researchers from Switzerland and abroad. The topics covered are: sense of purpose and conscientiousness as predictors of health behaviour; practices and experiences with coronavirus risk mitigation strategies; allocation criteria of scarce medical resources; human-animal relationship influencing human well-being; beliefs associated with the vaccination social dilemma; social exchange processes.

While most of the MOSAiCH 2021 questionnaire was prepared during 2020 (call, evaluation of the proposals, development of new questions and translations), the survey has been set up in early 2021. The MOSAiCH Commission decided to run the 2021 edition in two parts, all respondents of the first part being invited to the second part in the mode of their first response. The second part includes a conjoint experimental design.

The fieldwork of MOSAiCH 2021 started at the end of February 2021 and ended in July, based on the optimised contact procedure used since 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic did not modify the timing of the survey and there

is no evidence that it changed the response rate or the quality of responses. At the time of writing this report, the data has been published. The final AAPOR response rate was 55.9% for the first part and 38.9% for the second part, which is among the highest for MOSAiCH. The share of answers on paper was 15.0% in the first part. The high response rates can be attributed to the cash incentive and maybe to an increased usage of the web during the pandemic. The evolution of the share between web and paper towards the web format seems to confirm this hypothesis.

A third wave of the MOSAiCH COVID-19 panel that started in spring 2020 was fielded in March 2021 with around 1 000 respondents. The questionnaire was mainly a repetition of the questions from the second wave to maximise the longitudinal aspects of the design. The cumulated MOSAiCH COVID-19 dataset was released in July 2021 including three COVID-19 panel waves fielded from spring 2020 to spring 2021.

Between February and April 2021, a pilot survey of the new questions drafted for the ISSP 2022 module on Family and changing gender role was organised to support the finalisation of the questionnaire in June. The survey was fielded online and conducted in the French part of Switzerland, based on a non-probability online access panel. Due to time constraints, only quotas on age and sex were implemented. Age groups were detailed with the aim of having enough variations according to family situations. The final dataset includes around 500 respondents.

Data of MOSAiCH 2020 being ready, the team started to analyse the experimentation made on incentives to get an up-to-date overview of the effect of incentives on self-administered surveys. The aim was to adapt to the current evolution of payment methods and to have evidence for the incentive decisions when postal cheques will be no longer available. The usual unconditional incentive used so far (postal cheque or donation for a 10 CHF value) was compared to digital solutions (Twint and PayPal) and unconditional cash of the same value, as well as to a cash lottery (3 times 300 CHF) and a control group with no incentive at all.

The first results show that the Swiss population is not yet ready for digital solutions. Nevertheless, we decided to assess again the evolution in 2022, with a single digital alternative to the postal cheques (PayPal did not work well). The differences between the groups, however, are small. The 'cash' group stands out somewhat, with a higher response rate, but also significantly higher costs. This research provided clear evidence that, for sanitary reasons, a cash incentive could be used in MOSAiCH 2021.

**2022 preparations:** The public call for question contributions to the MOSAiCH 2022 edition including the ISSP ‘Family and Changing Gender Roles’ module has been published in January 2021. The Scientific Commission received and evaluated 4 proposals which included the same number of questions as the previous call. During the evaluation meeting in June, it was decided to retain three of them, involving 10 researchers from Switzerland and abroad to complement the ISSP 2022 module. One proposal has an experimental design.

The selected topics focus mainly on gender ideologies, behaviours, and identity, as well as on knowledge and attitudes towards assisted reproductive technologies. 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 for the ISSP questionnaire.

**Data:** The complete MOSAiCH 2020 dataset, including ISSP 2020 (Environment IV) and all data related to the Call, has been documented and published in SWISSUbase. The team also published the three waves of the MOSAiCH COVID-19 survey in a cumulative dataset file. The international ISSP-archive at GESIS published the first partial release of ISSP 2019 Social Inequality V in March, including Swiss data, and a second one with additional countries in December. An update of the international dataset of ISSP 2006 with additional countries was published in June. The GESIS archive has over 50 000 registered users (over 1 000 from Switzerland) and distributed a bit less than 10 000 ISSP datasets during the year.

**ISSP international:** As in 2020, the program was impacted by the pandemic situation and solutions were taken to secure a smooth operation. The annual ISSP General meeting was held online during four days in June, with 39 of the 42 members represented. The Assembly discussed and voted on the items of the 2022 ‘Family and changing gender role’ module, prepared by the drafting group. During the meeting, it was decided that the new topic of the 2023 module on “National identity and Citizenship”, joining two previously separated themes, will be on attitudes toward populism.

The proposed and accepted theme for the 2024 module will be new with a focus on the “Digitalisation of Society”. Finally, a FORS affiliate researcher and a member of the International Surveys team were elected for taking over the ISSP Secretariat from Germany for a first mandate of three years. During fall, a Secretariat team was constituted with another member of the Internal survey team and an FORS affiliate post-doc researcher to support

the whole coordination of the international program. In close collaboration with the IT Team at FORS, the ISSP website was prepared to be hosted at FORS from early 2022 on.

## EVS

The EVS 2017 has been fielded in Switzerland with a very innovative methodological design. Consequently, not only the main EVS data are frequently used but also the methodological data have led to publications. In 2021, the international EVS data have already been downloaded more than 3 000 times, which shows a high demand for the data. Furthermore, the second version of the joint data set with the World Value Study (WVS), comprising data from 81 countries from around the globe was published in 2021. The EVS also continued to investigate possible developments for the future of this project, one focus was the collaboration with the European Social Survey within the H2020-funded project SUSTAIN-2.

**International:** Two sessions at international conferences in collaboration between the Swiss team and the EVS Executive Committee were organised on the topic of the feasibility of fielding cross-cultural general population surveys on the web. The sessions at ESRA and RC33 were met with high interest and led to animated discussions (both conferences featured presentations of the Swiss International Surveys team. The annual General Assembly of EVS took place virtually in November 2021 and was centred on data publication and dissemination and the SUSTAIN-2 project. Besides journal publications and two book series dedicated to EVS, the new EVS data are also used in the EVALUE project, developing teaching material for secondary schools to learn to think about own values in comparison of those of other countries.

**Preparing the future and research:** In 2020, the European Values Study (EVS) has started a transition to rejuvenate its board and to incite a reconceptualisation of the study. A member of the International Surveys team took an important role in this process as a member of the EVS Standing Group. In early 2021, it was decided to develop two different approaches in redesigning the EVS. The same member was leading the “European Values” idea, or the “complete redesign” strategy. The other idea was the “Individualism vs. Collectivism” idea that followed the “best of” strategy. The best strategy was chosen to be proposed as an ESS module as part of the SUSTAIN-2 project. The module design team held several meetings with the ESS on questionnaire development and submitted a full proposal by November 2021.

In 2021, SHARE activities were divided between the operational activities related to the implementation of two SHARE surveys and the development of research projects promoting and using the SHARE data.

**Operational activities:** 2021 started with the preparation and implementation of a second CATI survey examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the finalisation of a paper and pencil questionnaire on technology use that was distributed to the participants of the second CATI-COVID-19 survey. All materials and tools were prepared at the beginning of 2021. The pretest took place in March and the fieldwork in June and July. Only households that participated in the first CATI-COVID-19 survey were invited to participate again. About 1 750 interviews were conducted in Switzerland corresponding to a response rate of 83%. 1 569 participants (~74%) also completed the paper and pencil questionnaire on technology use.

In autumn 2021, the SHARE team finalised the preparation of the wave 9 main data collection. The main data collection started in October with an international training session (TTT) followed by five national interviewer training sessions (NTS). The NTS lasted two days each and were organised by the survey agency LINK together with the Swiss SHARE team. The NTS took place in Zurich, Sursee, Fribourg, Lausanne and Lugano. Members of the Swiss SHARE team were present at each of these sessions to provide detailed information about the survey and to answer interviewers' questions.

The main data collection started beginning of November 2021 and will last until June 2022. The objective is a total of about 2 300 interviews from the longitudinal sample corresponding to a response rate of 85%. Furthermore, we also aim to interview respondents belonging to the refreshment sample that was drawn for wave 8 and could not yet be interviewed due to the COVID-19 related termination of the data collection. By the end of 2021, about 700 interviews of the Wave 9 data collection were already conducted. The huge majority of SHARE meetings organised in 2021 were online and the Swiss SHARE team attended the following ones:

- » **Second CATI-COVID-19 survey**
  - » TTT on May 31st and June 1st
  - » NTS on June 8th
  - » Data collection debriefings on August 12th and 20th

- » **Wave 9**
  - » TTT for the pretest on March 2d and 3rd
  - » NTS for the pretest on March 9th and 10th
  - » Two post pretest debriefings on March 18th and April 1st
  - » The post pretest meeting of SHARE on April 14th and 15th
  - » TTT for the main collection on October 6th and 7th
  - » NTS for main data collection spread over several weeks from end of October and beginning of November

**Research activities:** The Swiss SHARE team is currently working on three research axes.

The first axis concerns research activities on end-of-life issues, which is conducted in collaboration with the Palliative and Supportive Care Service of the CHUV. The Swiss SHARE team has obtained funding for a postdoc and a PhD position to further investigate research topics in this domain. During this year, three papers have been submitted. In addition, several papers are currently under preparation for submission. Research regarding end-of-life topics were presented at the following conferences:

- » 11th International Conference of Panel Data Users in Switzerland
- » Congress of the Swiss Sociological Association
- » Swiss Summer Academy in Palliative Care Research
- » Geneva Aging Series IX
- » Congrès National des Soins Palliatifs
- » Socio-Economic Perspectives on Aging UNIL-UNIPD Joint Workshop

The second research axis concerns the analysis of the data related to the Leenaards questionnaire on technology use that will be carried out in collaboration with the Center of Gerontology of the University of Zurich. The data, collected in June and July 2021, were prepared for analysis and will be analysed during 2022.

Finally, the last research axis concerns the reinforcement of the collaboration with the Geneva Centre for Interdisciplinary Study of Gerontology and Vulnerability (CIGEV). Funds have been obtained for the creation of a postdoc position whose goal is to promote collaborative research between the SHARE team and the CIGEV team using the SHARE data. The postdoc has been selected and will start in April 2022.



## 2.3 Political surveys

In 2021, the activities of the Political Surveys team were divided between fieldwork and data preparation of wave 5 of the Selects Panel Survey, the development of research projects promoting and using Selects data, and participation in international collaborative networks (CSES, CCS, MEDem).

A panel survey has traditionally been one of the components of the Swiss Election Study (Selects). In the past, however, the panel survey was limited to the study of opinion formation during the election year. In 2019, it was decided to maintain the panel and to conduct yearly follow-up waves until the next federal elections in 2023. This long-term panel allows to a) assess the (in-)stability of attitudes and party preferences between two consecutive elections and b) contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between elections and direct democracy. More specifically, it allows to study the impact of important popular votes on citizens' perceptions of issue salience, party competence and vote intention and to assess how winners and losers of popular votes differ with respect to their populist attitudes, trust in institutions or satisfaction with democracy. To this end, the questionnaire is composed of core questions (repeated in every wave), rotating questions (repeated in some waves) and variable questions (only one wave). Variable questions are related on timely topics. In 2021, like in wave 4 a year earlier, many of the variable questions focused on citizens' preferences and attitudes on the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. These data (from wave 4) were presented at the Swiss COVID-19 Data Symposium organised by FORS in March.

Fieldwork preparation for wave 5 took place between April and late August. This involved work related to the development and translation of the questionnaire, communication with respondents, as well as the preparation of two experiments: an incentive experiment (half of the respondents received a conditional cash incentive, the other half participated in a raffle of 5 x 300 CHF) as well as a contact experiment (half of the respondents received a prenotification letter and an invitation by email, the other half an invitation letter followed by an email containing the weblink to the survey).

The online survey was realised internally at FORS and was in the field between late September and early November. About 2 900 respondents whose consent was obtained at the end of wave 3 were invited to participate in wave 5. After data cleaning, a total of 2 323 valid interviews remained, which corresponds to a response rate of 81% compared to wave 3, and of 93% compared to wave 4. Between early November and the end of December, the Political Surveys team carried out the work related

to data checking, cleaning and preparation, variables construction, and documentation. Data release in SWISSUbase is scheduled for the end of January 2022.

During 2021, the Political Surveys team was very active in research and the dissemination of new findings based on Selects data. One main project is the preparation of a special issue on “The 2019 Swiss national elections” for publication in the Swiss Political Science Review (SPSR), scheduled for June 2022. Following an open call, 12 papers were presented at an author workshop in January 2021. In late March, 11 papers were finally submitted to the SPSR and are currently in the peer review process. These papers use data from all four components of the Selects 2019 study (candidate survey, post-election survey, panel survey, media study) and several of them combine data from different components. This testifies to the success of our efforts to strengthen the linkage points between the different datasets in order to allow for an encompassing view on electoral behaviour and campaigning.

In addition, members of the Political Surveys team presented papers at several national and international conferences throughout the year. One of these papers was recently published in a peer-reviewed international journal (*Acta Politica*) and several others are accepted as book chapters in an edited volume scheduled for publication in 2022. Moreover, the team values the dissemination of findings to a larger public. In 2021, this was done via a contribution to the political blog *DeFacto*, several media appearances of the team leader and the presentation of Selects data to students at the University of Zurich.

The Political Surveys team also actively engaged in several international collaborative networks. First, the team is part of the *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems* (CSES), which elaborates common questionnaires for national election studies. The Swiss Module V data, which had been collected within the framework of the post-election survey 2019, was included in a new CSES advance release in July 2021, which contains data from 31 election studies and 28 countries, and examines citizens’ attitudes towards democracy, political elites and out-groups. Moreover, team members prepared a short video presentation of Selects for the (online) Plenary Session in late October, during which methodological issues were discussed and the new Module VI draft questionnaire was adopted. Second, the team is also part of the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS). The team leader chairs the Steering Committee and the team is responsible for integrating and disseminating CCS data via SWISSUbase.

In 2021, the team harmonised data from three countries (Estonia, United Kingdom, Norway) for inclusion in the existing CCS Module II dataset, which will be released in January 2022. It also issued a call for data for the preparation of the first CCS Module III dataset. Third, the team is involved in the creation of the *Monitoring Electoral Democracies* (MEDem) project, which aims to connect various comparative political science projects (including CCS and CSES) as well as national election studies and aims for ESFRI roadmap status in the coming years. In 2021, Austria has committed to become the host country of MEDem and FORS currently prepares a re-application to host one of MEDem's centres, the Center for Survey Data.

### 3. Data and research information services DARISS

Within the two groups of the FORS unit DARISS, much of 2021 was devoted to preparing for the transition from the current archival platform FORSbase to its replacement SWISSUbase. This included: the creation of a guide for depositing data in SWISSUbase; adapting the DARISS webpages and existing online resources; and training in archival theory and practice for partner data service units (DSUs) at the Universities of Lausanne and Zurich. In addition, the Data archive services group conducted multiple waves of testing of the SWISSUbase application and the Data management group participated in reaching out to FORSbase users and took part in wider reflections towards a promotional strategy, to be implemented in 2022. The migration from FORSbase to SWISSUbase was successfully completed at the end of December.

Another important DARISS achievement in 2021 included the development of a replication portal which went live in December, together with SWISSUbase. The replication portal was the result of an intensive collaboration between the Data management support group and the Data archive services group. Related to this, a new FORS Guide on the topic of replication for the social sciences was published in December.

#### Data archive services

The Data archive services group archived 60 datasets in 2021, compared to 117 in 2020 and 80 in 2019. Among those, 70% (42) were new datasets and 30% (18) concerned updates of existing datasets due to new data or corrections. This brings the number of datasets currently published in FORSbase to 790. 2 413 datasets were downloaded from FORSbase in 2021 (see [8. Performance Indicators](#)). At the end of 2021, the number of active users of FORSbase increased to 8 800, compared to about 7 700 in 2020 and 5 300 in 2018. All in all, the research inventory comprised 11 830 published project descriptions at the end of 2021.

Through its core activities, the Data archive services group guided researchers from multiple 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. In 2021 there were few presentations made by archive staff to students and researchers - among the activities of the archiving group, those engendered by the presentation of our services have been among the most negatively impacted by the continued health measures related to the management of COVID-19.

In 2021, the group continued with the renewal of policies, contracts and documentation relative to data depositing, archiving and access at FORS. This work will be finalised in 2022. In part as a result, FORS will submit in 2022 an application for renewal of the CoreTrustSeal certification. Finally, members of the data archive group continued in 2021 their involvement as task members or task leaders in international projects related to archiving and research infrastructure, including the H2020 project SSHOC, CESSDA training, and CESSDA Widening projects (see [4. Infrastructure and Development](#)).

## Data promotion

As part of its active data solicitation strategy, the group pursued its efforts to reach out to underrepresented disciplines within the data archive. Besides reaching out to the fields of psychology and economics, it also targeted education scholars, by creating new databases of addresses and promoting our services. They also systematically reached out to the PIs of newly funded SNSF projects, an initiative that started in 2020.

Due to the pandemic, the data promotion group launched new events in an online format. These include two data symposiums, one on COVID-19 data in January and another one on educational data in December, as well as a series of four data management webinars throughout the autumn, as a way to promote our services as well as to present the basics of data management (see below).

## Data management

As in previous years, the group continued to strengthen its expertise in data management during 2021, with a special focus on ethical and legal issues around sensitive data, as well as data management planning and day-to-day data management. We provided presentations and trainings both face-to-face and online, including a 5-day course at the Lugano summer school on sensitive data in the era of open science, which resulted in the development of a rich portfolio of training materials. Other trainings and presentations in 2021 included:

- » a presentation at the FORS lunch seminar on legal aspects (February),
- » a data management workshop at the University of Fribourg (March),
- » a practical workshop on Data management planning at the HES-Wallis (March),
- » a data protection workshop at the University of Lausanne (May),
- » an introduction to data management in Schwyz (June),
- » a module on data protection given at the international summer school of the digital humanities center (July),
- » participation in a round table at the “Ateliers Lausannois d’Ethnographie” on data protection (September),

- » organisation and participation in a CUSO course on the ethics of qualitative data (September),
- » a workshop on data anonymisation as part of the Graduate Campus course of the University of Basel (November),
- » as well as a series of four online webinars that took place between September and November and addressed the topics of data management planning, data protection, data security and data archiving and sharing.

In 2021 DARISS also took part as consultants in two work groups, namely the open science group of the HES-SO, as well as a work group set up by the Swiss Anthropological Association that resulted in a position paper on open science requirements within this discipline.

On the research front, a special issue on data sharing was released early 2021 in the Bulletin of Sociological Methodology, with a member of the Data management support group serving as editor.

## 4. Infrastructure and Development INDEV

**IT developments** In 2021, the IT group continued to work on the SWISSUbase platform implementation. Additionally, the FORSbase application has been migrated to SWISSUbase (see below).

The implementation of the new solution for the SHP group to be integrated into the Survey Management Tool SMT has started in 2021. This work will be finalised in 2022, when all the SHP data will be migrated into the SMT. As in previous years, the IT group continued to work on various projects like the new website for SWISSUbase, the customisation of the bibliographical tool Zotero for the FORS Survey unit and the new website for the newly created service for replication data for journal publications.

At the international level, staff members participated in the SSHOC and EOSC Future projects.

### SWISSUbase

SWISSUbase is the new archiving service for Swiss research data that FORS has developed in collaboration with the Universities of Lausanne and Zurich. The application and the data are hosted in Switzerland on cloud infrastructure provided by SWITCH and user authentication makes use of the SWITCH edu-ID. 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.

The project was initially co-funded by swissuniversities for the period 2019-2020. For the year 2021, swissuniversities and the partner institutions granted supplemental funding for the implementation of extended functionalities, 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.

During 2021, extended functionalities were added and the metadata schema for the humanities was elaborated in collaboration with DaSCH. The elaboration of a metadata schema for geosciences has been initiated with partners at the Universities of Lausanne and Geneva and is still ongoing. SWISSUbase presently offers three metadata schemas (general, social sciences, linguistics) to cover domain-specific needs of the respective research community and further provides a discipline-agnostic data archiving solution.

SWISSUbase is available for usage by the partner institutions (UNIL and UZH) since February 2021. SWISSUbase was officially launched for the entire Swiss social sciences community in December 2021. All metadata and data have been migrated from FORSbase to SWISSUbase, namely 11 800 studies, 990 datasets and 8 800 active users.

In order to facilitate the transition into a permanent service, the three partner institutions have agreed to form a joint association as the legal form of the SWISSUbase consortium. Onboarding partner institutions will also become members of the association. The business model and the contribution fees have also been approved by the partner institutions and are available as annexes to the contractual agreement.

During 2021, in order to promote SWISSUbase, online presentations and demonstrations were held at the Rectorate or Vice-rectorate level at the following institutions: Bern University of Applied Sciences, Schwyz University of Teacher Education, Fribourg University of Teacher Education, Zurich University of Teacher Education, Zurich University of Applied Sciences.

Major efforts have been deployed to strengthen the services that are an integral part of the platform. FORS has conducted workshops for the partner institutions on how to set up Data Service Units (DSUs) at the respective institutions and provided guidance on the policies needed concerning support as well as data acquisition and preservation.

Training sessions have also been held for the data curators at the DSUs regarding best practices of the data curation processes. Eight sessions of archival theory were provided to the DSU members, covering the whole data life cycle and addressing topics such as monitoring and outreach, the FAIR principles and the OAIS (Open Archival Information System) framework, and long-term preservation.

Hands-on training sessions for the DSU members on the data curation processes on the SWISSUbase platform have been held at the University of Zurich and are planned for the University of Lausanne and DaSCH.

On the technical side, the process of development, testing and release has been improved and streamlined which allows for more frequent releases of the application to continuously offer improved usability and new functionalities for data producers, data consumers and data curators.

The testing was carried out by the IT team, DARISS as well as representatives from the different DSUs. Bugs and missing features have been recorded in a common bug tracking tool and the prioritisation of future implementation steps have been agreed upon with the partner institutions.



The collaboration with SWITCH was also strengthened at various levels. SWISSUbase is actively using SWITCH's services (SWITCHengines, SWITCH edu-ID).

## Collaboration with other data infrastructures

### DaSCH

Several meetings and workshops of SWISSUbase and DaSCH took place to define the metadata schema for the humanities which is ready to be implemented. DaSCH members who are planned to form the domain-specific DSU for the humanities data in Switzerland have been given access to the presentations of the archival theory training sessions in order to align with the data curation best practices of the other DSUs.

Another meeting has taken place in December between FORS and the newly appointed Director of DaSCH to initiate the future cooperation and interoperability of the two institutions. The new DaSCH director also became member of the FORS foundation board, and the FORS director is a member of the DaSCH board.

### Connectome

FORS has continued to participate as a data provider in the SWITCH-led Connectome project in collaboration with DaSCH, EPFL Blue Brain, eXascale Infolab, SATW, SAGW, BCUL and SWITCH. The Research Data Connectome connects and organises scientific (meta)data sustainably across disciplines to make it widely accessible, interoperable and valuable. Swiss research data that has been collected in domain or institutional silos will be easily connected via the Connectome Knowledge Graph, a data representation most suitable for research, education, and innovation purposes. This graph contains valuable linked research information on research projects, research grants, datasets, publications, organisations and people.

The objective is to have the metadata of data resources available in SWISSUbase harvested, enriched and linked to resources from other data providers to increase the discoverability of the data accessible on SWISSUbase.

### LiRI

LiRI, the Linguistic Research Infrastructure at the University of Zurich, provides a Virtual Research Infrastructure for the linguistics research community. Several meetings have been held between SWISSUbase and LiRI to align the data production and the data curation workflows as well as to define the specifications of the API that will allow for the integration and automatic ingest of linguistic data into SWISSUbase. This final specification of the API as well as its implementation is still ongoing but planned for implementation during the first quarter of 2022.

## **FAIRware**

Following an invitation by the SNSF, the INDEV unit at FORS participates in the FAIRWARE project led by the Center for Biomedical Informatics Research (BMIR) at Stanford University.

In order to meet the challenges posed by automation of the FAIR principles across a range of disciplines, the objective was to allow for quick generation of metadata templates for the description of datasets and other outputs within a given research discipline. The FAIRware tool will use these templates to provide researchers with actionable, real-time advice on how they can structure their datasets to maximise re-use at the point of creation as well as increased findability and discoverability of the data.

Our role was to provide use cases from the social sciences, namely from clinical psychology, as well as to assess and help to improve the usability of the FAIRware workbench for the social sciences.

## 5. Scientific collaborations

**Host university** The UNIL hosts FORS and provides, as an in-kind contribution, the office space, IT and Human Resources services for more than 60 FORS staff. The UNIL also funds a joint research programme that allows for the full or partial recruitment of 14 staff at different levels (equivalent to 12 FTEs). In addition, three FORS staff members hold professorial positions on the SSP faculty.

The joint FORS-SSP programme aims to build on the reputation of FORS and the UNIL as centres for high-quality research in social science methods and substantive research at the national and international level, to develop quantitative skills and know-how in Switzerland, to contribute to the improvement of survey methodology, to contribute to methodological innovation and substantive research in the social sciences, and to promote discussion between different stakeholders in the field of social science methods.

Each year, this programme results in a considerable number of publications and other scientific papers based on the data produced at FORS. Another activity of this collaboration is the jointly organised Methodological and research meetings, where invited guests as well as researchers from FORS or the UNIL regularly exchange views on methodological issues. Members of the SSP faculty also regularly attend FORS events and vice versa. The people involved in this programme also make a significant contribution to methodological teaching at various levels of the SSP faculty.

The cooperation is regulated in various contractual agreements. To strengthen the governance of the joint programme, a new agreement between FORS and the SSP faculty came into force in 2020. This agreement clarified and strengthened the role of a joint steering committee composed of members from FORS and the SSP faculty. The visibility of the programme and its outcomes will be further enhanced when the new Developments in Research and Methods of the Social Science (DReMSS) platform goes online in 2022.

Formal meetings between the FORS Directorate and the SSP Faculty Dean's Office are held twice a year to ensure the good functioning of this collaboration. The link with the Rectorate of the UNIL is also ensured by the fact that a member of the Rectorate is also President.

## National collaborations

FORS collaborators contributed to a number of different SNSF research projects:

- » “Framing FFs: Framing analysis of online discourse of returning foreign fighters and their families” funded by the Collaborative Research on Science and Society (CROSS) Programme. In this project, researchers from FORS, UNIL and EPFL seek to combine expertise in data science and social science, and identify the important actors spreading and contesting main frames and argumentative lines related to returning foreign fighters in Europe from the conflicts in Iraq and Syria.
- » “WELLWAYS: Critical events and transitions in family and work and multidimensional wellbeing” funded by the SNSF for 2019-2022. This collaborative project between FORS, UNIL and INED (Paris) focuses on how critical events and transitions in the two domains of family and work jointly affect different dimensions of wellbeing in Switzerland and France. There is special attention for the concentration of multiple events in specific phases of the life course. The work is carried out by two postdocs. For Switzerland, data come from the SHP and for France from the French Health panel Constances and the French Health and Professional Trajectories (SIP).
- » Parental Investment in Children’s Education (PICE) in Migrant Families in Switzerland, funded by the SNSF 2019-2022. PICE is a collaboration between the University of Bern and FORS. PICE is an add-on study of TREE2 and deals with the educational pathways of young adults. The project analyses young adults’ educational aspirations and how they are supported by their parents.

FORS participates actively in **SWISS INSIGHTS**, an association which 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”). A FORS staff member is representing on the client side in the Managing Board and is responsible for the domain “Regulation Data Science and International collaborations.”

FORS is 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. FORS initiated and leads the project. Partners are the Centre of expertise LIVES, NCCR on the move, Swiss National Cohort, TREE and the Swiss Research on Fiscal Federalism. Linkhub.ch supports data linkage in the fields of social sciences and medicine to deliver relevant knowledge for society. Linkhub.ch participated in the consultation on the new Federal law that is supposed to regulate, among other things, public data (“Bundesgesetz über den Einsatz elektronischer Mittel zur Erfüllung von Behördenaufgaben (EMBaG)”). Linkhub.ch was also involved in exchanges

with the SFSO how to make admin data easier available in the future. Linkhub.ch contributed also a chapter on research data in the publication “Der europäische Datenraum aus Schweizer Sicht. Whitepaper” that was published by the swissdataalliance.

## International collaborations

At the **international level**, FORS continued its involvement in the establishment and development of European and international research infrastructure. These activities are important to connect Switzerland to European and international research infrastructures and to increase the international visibility of Swiss social sciences.

- » FORS hosts the **secretariat of two international cooperation projects, ISSP and CSS**. Switzerland has taken over the secretariat for ISSP from GESIS in autumn 2021. The secretariat is appointed for a period of three years (renewable once) and takes over all organisational and coordinating tasks of this survey programme, which has around 50 members from all over the world and covers many cultures and languages. FORS has also had a coordinating role for CCS for several years. FORS also ensures the integration and harmonisation of the CCS data, and that the data are published via SWISSUbase.
- » FORS is involved in setting up the **Monitoring Electoral Democracies (MEDem)** project, which aims to link various comparative political science projects (including CSES and CCS) and national electoral studies in a formal way and to aim for ESFRI roadmap status in 2025. FORS plans to host the “Centre for Survey Data” as part of the MEDem consortium. Work is underway to establish the MEDem consortium with Austria as the host country.
- » FORS is working with the UNIL to join the **Gender and Generations Programme (GGP)** and establish the national data collection node. An application for Switzerland to join the GGP was submitted at the end of 2021. If the evaluation is successful, this will become part of the strategic international cooperation mentioned in Switzerland’s national infrastructure roadmap.
- » The FORS Director represents Switzerland in the **ESFRI Strategic Working Group on Social and Cultural Innovation**. This working group was responsible in the social sciences and humanities for the preparation of the ESFRI Landscape Analysis and the assessment of new projects to be included in the ESFRI Roadmap published in 2021. The FORS Director was elected “Acting Chair” of the group for the period 2022-23 in December 2021. FORS held a conference “Stay tuned to the Future. Impact of Research Infrastructures 2.0” in 2021, which brought together scientists, research managers and policy makers to reflect on how to create and measure the impact of research infrastructures (see [8. Events](#) for further information on the

- conference).
- » 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 2021. The head of the Survey unit represents Switzerland in the General Assembly of SHARE. SHARE had two meetings of the General Assembly in 2021. 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. FORS collaborators also 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) and the European Value Study (EVS).

FORS, as the Swiss CESSDA ERIC Service Provider, is involved in different CESSDA 2021-2022 Work Plan tasks. In 2021, FORS data archive staff led one task (CESSDA Resource Directory) and was active in four others, described below.

- » **CESSDA Resource Directory:** Together with other CESSDA Service Providers, the FORS archive team developed the CESSDA Resource Directory in 2018, which is a curated inventory of existing resources to support activities of data archive professionals in order to build sustainable and mature data archives and support the development of new services and features within existing data archives. In 2021, the main activities included the elaboration of a policy and development strategy for the resource directory, the ongoing maintenance work, and the addition of new resources with a special focus on the inclusion of technical resources, such as tools and services used and/or developed by service providers around data archiving activities. These activities resulted in an increase of 186 resources (+78%) included in the Resource Directory for a total of 424 resources in December 2021.
- » **Journals Outreach:** Along with partners from different CESSDA service providers, FORS contributed, in 2021, to outreach activities to academic journals in Europe, including the organisation of several online conferences to address how data archives and journals can collaborate to facilitate the sharing of replication materials.
- » **CESSDA Mentorship Programme:** Together with other CESSDA service providers, the FORS archive team developed the CESSDA Mentorship Programme in 2019. In 2021-2022, the FORS archive team is mentoring the Italian CESSDA service provider DASSI in the

establishment of their data service.

- » **Widening the Perimeter of Data:** FORS lead the CESSDA task on handling new data types, including a survey of 24 service providers and publication of findings. The work in 2021 involved assessment of current data collections with respect to new data types, as well as capacities and gaps in handling these. The work resulted in recommendations for how CESSDA service providers can better coordinate and manage the handling of new types of data.
- » **ELSST:** The European Language Social Science Thesaurus (ELSST) is a multilingual thesaurus for the social sciences developed by CESSDA ERIC and its national Service Providers. FORS archive staff was involved in 2021 in the development and review of terms hierarchies and in the translation of terms, definitions and note fields into French.

FORS staff also contributed to the following European projects in 2021:

- » **SSHOC:** FORS is involved in the EU Horizon 2020 project Social Sciences & Humanities Open Cloud (SSHOC). In 2021, FORS data archive staff performed the translation into German of the Male-Female Job Titles for ISCO08 Occupation Database, which includes more than 4 200 job titles. The translations into French and Italian continue in 2022. Task 3.1 also produced a data stewardship terminology in English of about 210 terms. These were translated into German, French and Italian by FORS data archive staff. FORS was also involved in another SSHOC task on remote access to sensitive data, contributing to evaluation of existing systems, minimal requirements, and several task deliverables. FORS also conducted a “case study” to assess needs and possibilities regarding the development of a service that it could offer on this for the Swiss social science research community.
- » **RiTrainPlus:** The European project RiTrainPlus began in fall 2021 with the aim of designing and implementing an international curriculum for the training of research infrastructure managers and operators. FORS leads a task on the development of a course for managers on data policy and data management. The project will continue until 2024.
- » **EOSC Future** is an EU-funded H2020 project that is implementing the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). This project responds to INFRAEOSC-03-2020 call in order to integrate, consolidate, and connect e-infrastructures, research communities, and initiatives in Open Science to further develop the EOSC Portal, EOSC-Core and EOSC-Exchange of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). In 2021, the INDEV unit was involved in the WP2 Project Strategy and EOSC Alignment, Task 2.2 - EOSC Alignment, Activity 2.2.1 - Alignment with EU MS/AC and contributed to the deliverable D2.2 “Mapping of EOSC Readiness of EU MS/AC”.

## 6. Methodological Research

In 2021, FORS researchers worked on publications based on data collected during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to conducting methodological research mostly using experimental data. This led to seven articles in high impact journals, 16 presentations, and a number of submissions to scientific journals. In addition, FORS continued working on topics related to the Joint Methodological Research Programme UNIL-SSP, as outlined below.

### Switching surveys to the web and mixing modes

Motivated by the impossibility to do face-to-face interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FORS continued research about switching from interviewer-based modes to push-to-web modes. Data used still comprised the SHP IV refreshment sample, the EVS, MOSAiCH, and Selects, so adding alternative modes for those not willing or able to respond via the web was necessary. For example, a study investigated the effect of sequentially mixing telephone and paper mode with a push-to web survey in the Selects 2015 post-electoral survey. While adding the telephone mode improves sample representation in terms of socio-demographic variables, adding the paper mode does not show further improvements. However, adding the telephone, and in particular the paper mode turns out to reduce bias in voting behaviour. Adding modes results in increased costs, particularly in - probability-based surveys. Even adding paper as a follow-up mode is rather expensive, since this includes additional postage to invite and remind people, offering a telephone hotline, and time-consuming questionnaire scanning and data corrections. These cost aspects from adding paper have been compared with possible gains of representativeness of the respondent sample using the Selects 2019 survey. Results indicate that the cost of paper amount to about 30% of the total cost. Compared with the Selects 2015 survey, the data quality improvements from adding a mode to the web are smaller which is probably due to an increased familiarity with the web. It is possible that this additional money can be spent in another way to improve data quality in future surveys.

As a general conclusion, the SHP team showed that the SHP can be switched from (mainly) telephone to (mainly) web mode without the risk of compromising data quality in terms of unit nonresponse and attrition. In that context several studies have been completed. For instance, a paper that deals with the dependency of item nonresponse on question characteristics, such as form and complexity in web compared to telephone in the first wave, is accepted for publication in *Field Methods*. Another study showed that item refusal increases when people change from the telephone to the web mode after the first wave. This paper was submitted to the *Journal of Official*



*Statistics.* In addition, a study dealing with the question of whether the web mode reports more or less events or change in the domain of work and family found that web respondents are more likely to report job changes, while a termination of a relationship was more common in the telephone group. This shows that reports of changes across survey modes may depend on the variable in question. These results were published in *methods, data, analyses*.

Results from the experiments included in the EVS 2017 survey aiming at investigating 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 were published in the *European Sociological Review*. Results showed that employing self-administered modes was successful in most of the participating countries. Even fielding a one-hour questionnaire worked reasonably well in the countries that tried it (Germany, Iceland, and Switzerland). There are still issues to be solved. For example, whether all long surveys can be fielded in one-part or are sometimes two-parts needed, or which roles the moods of respondents resulting from length and question order play on item skipping and participation to follow-up surveys.

Using data from the mixed-mode matrix design experiment in the EVS 2017, the International Surveys team currently investigates how much data is needed to draw valid conclusions. They show that using multiple imputation, models can be estimated even if no observations remain due to a matrix design. If variables from all splits are used, and no cases have data on all variables, multiple imputation allows for valid and relatively efficient estimates.

Since 2019 respondents of the Selects post-electoral survey have been re-approached for yearly short panel surveys. To be legally able to keep the contact information, they need to be asked for informed consent. A design challenge is to how to ask for consent to maximise consent and subsequent participation. Since, in the literature, asking for consent is mostly about consent of matching data from other sources, 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 small effects on giving consent. Actual participation in the first panel wave of the consenters is largely independent of the consent form.

A new methodological experiment (to be launched early 2022) will further investigate optimal recruitment strategies in the context of a survey designed to recruit members to the FORS Experimental Panel. In particular, it will examine effects on willingness to participate of the timing of the invitation to join the panel (announced in the invitations letter vs. at the end of the questionnaire). Further the effect of setting a deadline for survey completion, alternative ways of asking for informed consent to data collection and data linkage, and willingness to join mobile-web panel versus a regular web-based survey will be examined. The recruitment survey will also build on ongoing and past research from the Selects-Civique study (described below) investigating willingness to share different types of data with researchers via a smartphone.

### Searching for alternative/complementary data sources and survey techniques

FORS continued research about the question whether inexpensive data from other sources can supplement or even replace (expensive) survey data. As an example of less expensive alternatives to probability-based web surveys, nonprobability-based access panels can possibly be used. In that respect, FORS explores several aspects. For instance, in a study two probability-based web surveys and three opt-in panels have been compared with regard to conditional distributions of sociodemographic variables, income, and voting behaviour in the Selects 2015 survey. The innovation is that most variables are included in the sampling frame such that the true values are known for each conditional distribution. Findings indicate a lack of consistency and reproducibility in the results when using opt-in panels. This paper is currently re-submitted to the *Swiss Political Science Review*.

In the framework of a vignette study, the DCA group 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 turn it. First results indicate that vignette orientation seems to impact the decision reported in discrete choice experiments and that the classic horizontal presentation should be preferred when using a smartphone. Moreover, in collaboration with a PhD student from the University of Stockholm, members from the DCA group programmed a “bot” to collect data on social media platforms. Specifically, a code allowed them to automatically target posts, comment on them with randomised messages and collect reactions (amount and content of text replies, upvotes, downvotes). The main idea is to derive an easily customisable code to be used by researchers to test their experimental design.

The Selects-Civique smartphone study (collaboration with UNIL, the IDIAP Research Institute, and EPFL) conducted in 2019 alongside the main Selects survey, investigated the potential for and barriers to app-based data collection in social surveys, allowing comparisons between a browser-based and an app-based survey design. Research based on data from this study includes:

- i) an investigation of the role of data privacy attitudes in resistance to complete mobile data collection tasks (conditionally accepted for publication in a special issue of the Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology) ;
- ii) an assessment of the potential for app-based surveys to reduce respondent burden compared to browser-based surveys on mobile devices (conditionally accepted for publication in the Journal of Official Statistics);
- iii) a comparison with data from the main Selects survey of the effectiveness of alternative mobile optimisation strategies on participation and fieldwork progression (under review at Social Science Computer Review);
- iv) an evaluation of the representativeness of the achieved samples of alternative strategies for recruiting respondents to an app-based survey;
- v) an analysis of how smartphone usage behaviours influence the willingness to agree to passive data collection via a mobile app;
- vi) an investigation of the extent of respondent mobility when using a research app, combining self-report, geo-location and photo data; and finally
- vii) an investigation of the challenges of integrating visual data capture in surveys and analysing photographs.

The study (i) on privacy concerns highlights the weak correlation between data privacy concerns, self-reported 'hypothetical' willingness to complete data collection tasks and actual completion of tasks in mobile web surveys, providing some promise for the integration of mobile data collection methods in future surveys. The study (ii) on response burden similarly identifies the positive impact of using an app for experienced burden and survey enjoyment, again pointing to the future potential of these methods. New research building on these works is planned in the context of the FORS Experimental Panel Recruitment Study to further investigate sources of resistance to participate in mobile data collection tasks via a smartphone.

## Nonresponse, Measurement, and Equivalence issues

To increase sample members motivation to participate in long web surveys that consist of two parts, FORS tested the optimal combination of incentives in the two parts of the MOSAiCH 2020 survey. While the MOSAiCH survey used postal cheques, they are increasingly less accepted predominantly due to the decreasing numbers of counters to cash the cheques. A 10 CHF postal cheque was compared with a 10 CHF TWINT/PayPal, a 10 CHF TWINT/PayPal with the option of cash on demand (10 CHF), a lottery, and no incentive in the first part. In the second part, three random groups were randomly crossed; a lottery with 3 iPads, a lottery with 3x 300 CHF, and no incentive. Results from the first part indicate that 10 CHF cash worked best, both in terms of response rate and response speed. Moreover, it seemed to attract more people with little political interest, who are generally underrepresented. Conditional effects were minor in the second part.

In 2021, the Selects team carried out two experiments within wave 5 of the Selects Panel Survey: an incentive experiment and a contact experiment. After having used an unconditional incentive in wave 1 (postal cheque of 10 CHF), a conditional cash incentive in wave 4 (10 CHF respectively 20 CHF for respondents who are less likely to participate) dampened survey costs considerably. In wave 5, it was tested whether the budget for incentives could be further decreased without negative impacts on response rates. In an experiment, half of the sample was promised 10 CHF after completion of the survey, while the other half was offered participation in a lottery with 5 x 300 CHF. Results indicate that in terms of response rate the unconditional incentive slightly outperformed the lottery (82.9% respectively 80%). In the contact experiment, alternative design to contact respondents were tested. While in both designs, respondents received the same number of postal letters, in the traditional setting (waves 1-4) the letter had only information purposes, whereas in the new experimental setting the letter allowed participants to directly go to the survey and take the questionnaire. Results show that response rates are highly similar across both groups (81.5% with pre-notification; 79.9% without pre-notification).

Using administrative data from the register-based sample frame, FORS is continuing its research into nonresponse bias in the context of the Selects-Civique study. The study iii) described above, assesses how effective alternative mobile optimisation strategies are at improving the representation of under-represented subgroups, when no mobile optimisation methods are used. The result is that the use of a QR code in survey invitations effectively reduces bias. Meanwhile, study iv) presents R-indicators to describe the relative representativeness of survey samples at different stages of the survey fieldwork.

Members of the International Surveys team study how to conceptualise the analysis of representation bias in surveys. A framework was published in a FORS Guide in 2021 that challenges current practices which are based on pragmatic considerations and rarely reflect the theoretical assumptions. While the idea of a “representative” survey is widely shared among researchers and survey practitioners alike, it is argued that the term rather blurs than helps the understanding of the problem at hand. Similarly, using the Total Survey Error that identifies different sources of errors makes a holistic approach unlikely. Representativeness, however, can only be addressed with a context-dependent interpretation of the data in mind. This conceptual framework is used in the analysis of risk of bias of the mixed-mode matrix design experiment in the EVS 2017, or to investigate the incentive experiment in MOSAiCH 2020.

### COVID-19-related research

The International Surveys team, in collaboration with affiliated researchers from the SSP faculty, started to explore how the COVID-19 pandemic influenced survey sampling, nonresponse and nonresponse bias, 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 as well as other Swiss Universities) has been established.

### New initiatives

A grant application was submitted to the EPFL-UNIL Collaborative Research on Research on Science and Society (CROSS) programme for a project investigating cognitive processes involved in responding to privacy notices and consent requests in mobile data collection apps. The grant was not awarded. However, new empirical research on this project is planned in the context of the FORS Experimental Panel Recruitment Study and a funding application to the SNSF is currently in preparation to exploit these data.

## 7. Data collection and analysis DCA

In addition to conducting FORS surveys internally, the DCA group offers services for the whole survey lifecycle to the research community, as well as for academic institutions, the public sector, and non-profit organisations. These services have several goals. First, they provide valuable additional sources of funding for FORS. Second, they serve as a way of training and maintaining the personnel in key competencies necessary for conducting reference quality surveys, as well as providing opportunities for continuous learning in new methods through challenging new mandates and methodological experiments. When working with researchers, the DCA provides a partner focused on collaborating in finding the best solution and facilitating optimal conditions for conducting a research project. With other client types, the work of the DCA is an opportunity to create bridges between academic and applied research answering specific questions. At the same time, it participates in creating demand for high-quality research with sound scientific methodology in these sectors.

Below is a description of all the studies and surveys conducted by the DCA in 2021:

### **2ème Observatoire on gender equality in schools and preschool – 2020-2022**

Le deuxième Observatoire, a research and education institute on gender relations with support from the OAK foundation, mandated the DCA in 2020 to conduct an external evaluation and a monitoring of a project to promote sensitivity to gender equality issues among educational personnel in schools and preschool in the Canton of Geneva. The evaluation is made by means of collection and analysis of multi-method data (quantitative and qualitative). Based on the intervention's theoretical model of change, the evaluation aims at measuring the predictors of attitudes and behavioural change. Due to the nature of the project and observations planned in schools and preschools, the advancement of the project has been slowed down, but continued in 2021 and will be finished in 2022.

### **Office of Gender Equality of the canton of Fribourg on data on the situation of the cantonal employees – 2020-2021**

The Office of Gender Equality of the canton of Fribourg (GFB) mandated the DCA to evaluate the implementation of their plan to ensure the gender equality in the cantonal administration by means of instituting different measures. The statistical analysis conducted by FORS will analyse the impacts of the measures implemented in the last five years. The baseline is a statistical analysis completed in 2016. 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” – 2020 – 2021**

The DCA was mandated 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 creation of the questionnaire and the fieldwork was realised in 2020. Data preparation, data analysis and a report were completed in early 2021.

### **Survey on the preferences of the French speaking Swiss population aged 50+ regarding the healthcare system, Unisanté - 2021**

Unisanté mandated the DCA to conduct a survey regarding the preferences of the French speaking Swiss population aged 50+ regarding the healthcare system. The core of the survey was a discrete choice experiment (DCE), designed by the client. The survey was conducted as a push-to-web with the paper questionnaire included in the second reminder. Around 3 500 individuals were contacted in the Spring of 2021 and the response rate was about 40%.

### **Survey on quality of life and security, Municipality of Gland – 2021**

In collaboration with the Collaboratoire of the University of Lausanne, the DCA conducted a survey for the municipality of Gland regarding quality of life and security. The mandate included the conceptualisation of the questionnaire, programming, data collection, data analysis and a final report. The logistics were handled directly by the municipality, with the support of the DCA. 3 500 residents of the municipality were contacted in early Summer of 2021 and one reminder was sent. The response rate was 47%.

### **Negative Voting in the Netherlands, University of Lausanne – 2021**

The DCA worked with a professor from the UNIL on a study on voting intentions and voter behaviours, attitudes and feelings in the 2021 Dutch 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 Netherlands, programming the and post-election survey and coordinating the fieldwork with the panel provider.

### **Survey on the engagement in advocacy of researchers, UNIL – 2020 – 2021**

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 was 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.

### **Survey on the Human Research act – Federal Office of Public Health – 2020 – 2022**

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. In 2020, the DCA focused on planning and defining the project, literature research, consulting experts and mapping the theme.

A first exploratory qualitative phase with three focus groups was conducted in the Spring of 2021 and a report on this phase was drafted and submitted. Based on this experience and the feedback from the client, the method was refined, and further focus groups, as well as individual interviews were conducted in Autumn of 2021. A report based on this phase was submitted in late 2021. A final report, based on the feedback from the working group, will be drafted and submitted in 2022.

### **Evaluation “P’tite Poubelle Verte”, Canton of Geneva 2020 – 2022**

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. In the summer of 2020, a survey with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the use of the bin, as well as measuring the potential barriers to its use and understand recycling behaviour more generally, was conducted. In 2021, the DCA collaborated on an article on the results of this project and started work on a second survey that will take place in 2022 with the objective of measuring the impact of the information campaign that took place between the two surveys.



### **Study on the municipal offices, their timetables and cyberadministration among the population – Municipality of Morges - 2021**

The municipality of Morges asked the DCA to study the satisfaction with the different municipal offices, preferences regarding opening hours and the possibility of moving services online. DCA created the questionnaire based on the requirements of the municipality and programmed the online study and prepared the paper questionnaire. The logistics were handled directly by the municipality with the support of FORS. The survey took place in Autumn of 2021 using a mixed mode web/paper design with one reminder that included the paper questionnaire. 3 300 residents were contacted, of which 58.5% responded. The report will be submitted to the municipality in early 2022.

### **Study on the satisfaction of the personnel of the HES-SO Valais-Wallis – 2021**

The DCA was mandated by the HES-SO Valais-Wallis to reconduct an employee satisfaction survey, based on the survey done by FORS in 2018. The questionnaire was revised thoroughly, and various new themes were added. Adaptations were also needed to ensure a comparability with 2018 despite the COVID-19 pandemic. All employees were invited to participate in an online survey in Autumn of 2021 and two reminders were sent. The response rate was 54%.

### **Participation in the training programme on performance indicators, Cour des Comptes, Canton of Geneva – 2021 – 2022**

In the context of a training programme on performance indicators, the Cour des Comptes of the Canton of Geneva asked the DCA to provide training in four modules on the measure of performance and the construction of indicators, survey methodology, data management and analysis, and the presentation and visualisation of results. Each module was comprised of a half-day course and a half-day feedback and discussion session based on group exercises. Three of the modules took place in late 2021 and one will take place in early 2022.

### **Database and survey on past doctoral students of the UNIL - Graduate Campus, University of Lausanne 2021 – 2022**

The DCA was mandated by the Graduate Campus of the UNIL to rework an existing database, set up the procedure for matching information and contact data for yearly surveys, and conduct a survey among the former PhD students who finished in 2018. The latter was conducted in Autumn of 2021. Around 250 persons were contacted, and the response rate was approximately 39%. The data will be prepared and added to a cumulative file in early 2022 and the survey for the PhD students who finished in 2019 will be conducted in late 2022.

### **Population Survey on Integrative Health, Leenaards Foundation – 2021 – 2022**

In the context of a large project from the Leenaards foundation to examine the question of how to better integrate different approaches to health and healthcare, the DCA and the Collaboratoire of the University of Lausanne were mandated to conduct a mixed method research project on integrative health. The role of the DCA was in particular to conduct the population survey and participate in the qualitative study, the latter of which was mainly realised by the CollLaboratoire. The main aim of the population survey was to study the attitudes, needs and preferences of the population of the French speaking part of Switzerland regarding the question of integrative health.

To ensure a coherence between the two parts of the project, the DCA participated in all the phases of the project and helped define the methods and contents used for the qualitative parts of the survey. The DCA conceived the questionnaire based on the first qualitative phase. The questionnaire included a discrete choice experiment (DCE) to better study the preferences of the population for different aspects of healthcare, their relative importance, and the acceptable trade-offs. The survey was conducted as a push-to-web, where a paper questionnaire was included in the second reminder. About 3 100 persons living in the French-speaking part of Switzerland were invited to the survey in Autumn of 2021 and 29% responded to the full questionnaire. The report will be finalised in early 2022.

### **Mobility Survey 2021, EPFL – 2021 – 2022**

The EPFL has conducted a mobility survey of its students and employees since 2003. The DCA was first mandated to take over this survey in 2019 and the survey was realised again in the Spring of 2021. Adjustments had to be made to take into account of the pandemic and a hypothetical behaviour module was added. The survey took place online and two reminders were sent to non-respondents. The response rate was 33.2%. As was the case in 2019, a similar survey was also realised among employees working at the EPFL Innovation Park (EIP), with a response rate of 16.9%. The EPFL data will be integrated into the cumulative dataset in early 2022.

### **Study to evaluate the future data compilation for the Swiss Consumer Sentiment Index, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs – 2021**

FORS, in collaboration with the University of Neuchâtel, won a bid to revise the method used by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) to gather survey data and calculate the Consumer Sentiment indicator, with a particular emphasis on the switch planned by the

SECO to go from a quarterly to a monthly indicator, as well as ensuring international comparability. The project tackled questions including sampling, frequency, regionalisation, and weighting. A report with an analysis and recommendations was submitted to the SECO.

**Expert Mandate on behalf of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) – 2021 - 2022**

FORS gave feedback and inputs on methodology, data collection, the data analysis and the interpretation of the results that were published in a report on “Athlete expression consultation” that was conducted by a survey agency on behalf the IOC.

## 8. Outreach, output and events

### Dissemination

#### Social media

FORS continues to be active on social media and regularly informed its followers about recent news, such as publications, online seminars, workshops, the publication of new data or job opportunities through Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Most impressions were noticed this year on Twitter which proves to be the most efficient platform to reach both, the lay public and a scientific audience. Twitter further allows a direct two-way communication with our audiences. It can be noticed that most of our participants of online workshops heard of our events through Twitter first. Further investigations will be made to see if there are other social media platforms where FORS should be present to increase its visibility amongst the research community.

#### MailWizz: our platform for targeted mailing campaigns

In 2021 Mailwizz, the self-hosted email software that manages email campaigns and email lists for targeted mailings, was further developed, as it proves to be an indispensable tool to manage email campaigns for several groups and units inside FORS. Most of the email lists in Mailwizz are connected with FORSbase (now SWISSUbase) and our [newsletter subscription webpage](#) and the management and update of the email lists and the creation of various newsletters are now easily handled. Further, the analytical tools of Mailwizz analyse the click behaviour of the target audiences, an important follow-up feature to analyse our campaigns. We continue to look into the possibility to develop this platform and use it as centralised database for the promotion of all email campaigns across all FORS groups and units.

### Publications

#### The 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 2021 three new FORS Guides were published, notably one Guide on Data Management (replication in the social sciences) and two on Survey Methods (panel surveys: advantages and disadvantages compared with repeated cross-sectional surveys and representativeness of surveys and its analysis). 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 2021 three Working Papers were published. One on negative voting behaviour in the 2020 US presidential election, one on the measurement of sexism, gender identity and gender discrimination and one on entropy of social mobility. 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 University of Lausanne LINES and the Centre LIVES. As in the year before, the series published four contributions in 2021. The contribution that generated the most press releases discussed the decline in faith; religion and secularisation in Switzerland between 1930 and 2020 and the attitudes toward gender equality in Switzerland between 2000 and 2017. All publications, press, and media releases can be consulted on the journal's [dedicated webpage](#).

The number of single page views of the journal website is, with 22 035 views, similar to the previous year (25 651 page views). The article viewed the most was, like the year before, on income inequality between men and women that begins long before a family is founded (published 2019), followed by the article on school inequality in Switzerland (published 2017). Like in the previous year, most visits came from Switzerland, followed by Germany, France, the United States and Austria.

## 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.

At its annual meeting in February 2020, the Swiss Political Science Association decided to take over the patronage of DeFacto and also to contribute to its financing. From 2021 on, DeFacto is also financially supported by the Swiss Academy of Humanities (SAGW/ASSH).

FORS continues to maintain the DeFacto website and to finance the translations of several articles. In 2021, DeFacto has published 114 articles, a decrease of almost ten percent compared to the previous year. It seems reasonable to assume that this has to do with the pandemic-related circumstances. The main language of the articles is still German, but over the long term the proportion of French articles has increased and is currently

around a quarter. The DeFacto website reached 60 467 single page visits (compared to 55 133 in 2020, 43 577 in 2019 and 36 500 in 2018). Most visits came from Switzerland, followed by Germany, France and the USA.

### Survey Methods, Insights from the Field

The peer-reviewed online journal [Survey Methods, Insights from the Field](#) (SMIF) published a total of 9 articles in 2021. In 2021, a total of 19 papers were handed in (compared to 14 in 2020). This is the highest number of articles submitted, since the launch of the journal in 2012. Out of these papers, 3 were rejected. At the end of the year, 13 articles were either in review or on rework by the authors. From January to December, the website had 40'103 single page views compared to 39 358 in 2020. Most visits came again from the States, followed by Germany and the United Kingdom.

## Events

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

### Swiss COVID-19 Data Symposium

The Swiss Covid-19 Data Symposium, organised by DARISS, took place online on March 23. It gave social science researchers an overview of different Swiss datasets that can be analysed to assess the impact of the Covid-19-pandemic on numerous aspects of individuals' everyday lives. COVID-19 data, mostly archived by FORS, from the following surveys and studies were presented: MOSAiCH, Swiss Corona Stress Study, Selects, Swiss Household Panel, COVID-19 Social Monitor ZHAW, SHARE and the COVID-19 Edition of the Science Barometer Switzerland. The online format was greatly appreciated by all participants. Around a hundred researchers got the chance to talk to the producers of the data and ask detailed questions. All presentations can be consulted on the [symposium webpage](#).

### 11th International Conference of Panel Data Users in Switzerland

This conference, organised by the SHP, took place online on June 10. The conference included topics like education, labour market, families, health and well-being, politics, attitudes and migration. Apart from the SHP, the following studies took part in the conference: the Swiss labour force survey (SLFS), the Transitions from education to employment study (TREE), the ZEPPELIN longitudinal study, the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), and the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). All in all, 27 presentations were given and were attended online by around 100 participants (for a detailed description of the conference, see [2.1 Swiss Household Panel](#)).

## The 25th Swiss Summer School on Methods in the Social Sciences

Jointly organised by USI and FORS the 25th Swiss Summer School on Methods in the Social Sciences (August 12-27, 2021) took place at the Università della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano.

The following workshops were offered (number of participants in parentheses, a \* denotes an online-only workshop):

### First week:

- » Bell: Multilevel Modelling (16)\*
- » Drzewiecka: Qualitative Analyses of Interview Data (20)
- » Gagliardini: Panel data and non-linear models (23)
- » Hills: Content Analysis and Natural Language Processing (16)\*
- » Horber: Quantitative methods for Social Research (25)
- » Kernbach: Design Thinking for Research (9)
- » Samuel: Latent Class Analysis & Factor Analysis (10)

### Second week:

- » Bergman: Mixed Methods Research and Design (23)
- » Diaz/Stam: Data Management for sensitive data in the era of Open Science (7)
- » Gibbert: Qualitative Methods (15)
- » Lepori/Rocci: Argumenting Science (8)
- » Mello: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (18)
- » O'Reilly: Ethnographic Methods (17)\*
- » Schlüter: Multilevel Structural Equation Modeling (12)
- » Schmidt/Davidov: Structural Equation Modeling (20)\*

### Optional two-day preliminary workshops:

- » Gruber: R-Data-Bootcamp (25)\*
- » Horber: SPSS and Statistics Refresher (27)\*
- » Kernbach: Visual thinking for (PhD) researchers (14)

56% of the 215 participants were PhD students from Swiss universities, 26% from foreign universities.

33% came from outside Switzerland: Italy (17), Germany (9), Austria (8), Belgium and Romania (4), Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, United Kingdom (3), Poland, Spain (2), Afghanistan, Cameroon, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia (1). The largest groups of this year's participants are working in the fields of Business Studies (15%), Communication (14%), Sociology (13.0%), Psychology (13%), Educational sciences (13%), followed by Political Science (9%). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, several workshops were held on-line only, while others had both on-line and on-site participants in Lugano (40 % attended on-line).

## SHP Workshop

This workshop, organised by the SHP took place on September 13-15, at the University of Lausanne. It offered an introduction to the SHP and an introduction into data management using R. The second day was devoted to data file creation and management. Finally, the third day was dedicated to data exploration and treated basic descriptive and inference analyses. The workshop was attended by fewer people than expected, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions (for a detailed description of the conference, see [2.1 Swiss Household Panel](#)).

## Data Management Webinar Series

This online series of four free webinars offered by DARISS between September and November 2021 attracted a lot of researchers from all over Switzerland and beyond. The webinars consisted of an introduction to the context of open research data, the requirements of funders and journals with respect to data sharing, an introduction to the legal and ethical framework in which research is embedded and the key data management practices that aim to protect research participants and make data sharable (such as security issues, informed consent, and anonymisation). Further, the participants got an insight into different data sharing solutions, with a focus on the new FORS data sharing tool SWISSUbase. All presentation slides and the video recordings can be found on the [series' webpage](#).

## Stay tuned to the Future. Impact of Research Infrastructures 2.0.

Taking as point of departure the conference organised by the ESFRI Strategic Working Group on Social and Cultural Innovation on the impact of research infrastructures (Bologna, 2018), the ESFRI Strategy Working Groups have joined forces to organise a follow-up conference to discuss the meaning and the possible measurement of impact further. With the FORS Director representing Switzerland in the ESFRI Strategic Working Group on Social and Cultural Innovation, this conference was hosted by FORS. It brought together scientists, research managers and policy makers to reflect on how to create and measure the impact of research infrastructures. The conference was held online on September 16-17 with a satisfying number of participants. All presentations and video sessions can be consulted on the [conference's dedicated website](#).

## Swiss Educational Data Symposium

The Swiss Educational Data Symposium, organised by DARISS, took place on December 9. It gave educational researchers an overview of a variety of Swiss datasets that can be obtained via FORS and reused for secondary analyses. Data from the following studies were presented: TREE, PICE, ch-x 2016/2017, DAB, Checks in Bildungsraum Nordwestschweiz (BR NWCH), WiSel and ÜGK. The symposium was attended by over 70 participants. The online format attracted people from all over Switzerland and abroad.



A short follow-up survey was carried out to get some feedback from the participants. The presentations are found on the [symposium's dedicated webpage](#).

## 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, the GREC's mission is to encourage 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 2021 for seminars and presentations in person and online. Further information on GREC and their events are [listed here](#).

## Methods and Research Meetings

FORS, in collaboration with the Faculty of social and political sciences SSP at UNIL, has continued to successfully organise the joint seminar series Methods and Research meetings either in person or online. This series aims to engage researchers and practitioners into a methodological discourse on current hot-topics in survey /data methods research. In 2021 we held five presentations with speakers from Switzerland and abroad on various topics (i.e., the PICE study, smartphone in research on mobile media use, data quality in online panels, interactions with panel data and implications of specification strategies and Web face to face mixed-mode design and attrition in longitudinal surveys). The full list of the speakers and presentations can be consulted on the [FORS Methods and Research Meetings webpage](#).

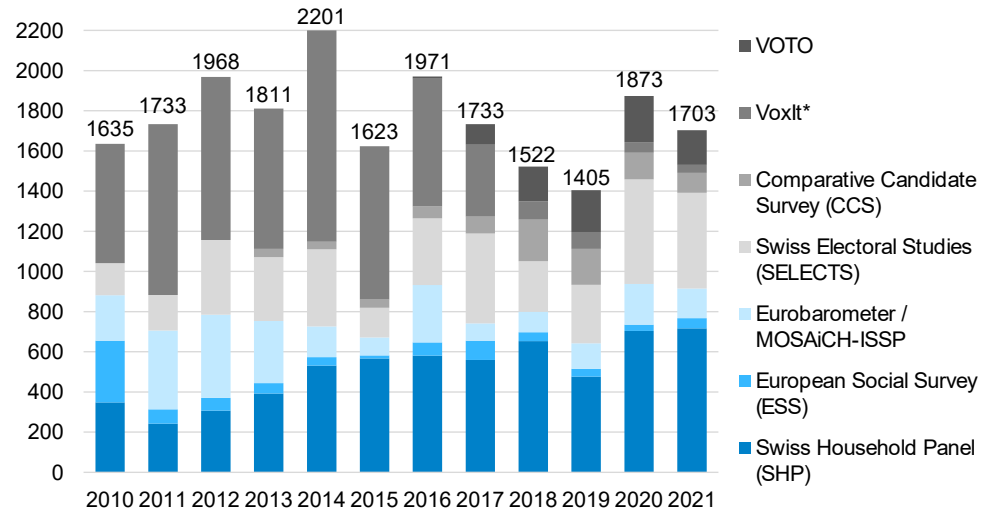
## FORS Lunch seminars

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 2021 seven lunch seminars were held and generated a lot of interest. The topics ranged from data protection, to infrastructures, methodological considerations, liberal democracies, gender studies, trajectories of quality of life or the SHP COVID-19 study. The detailed programme can be viewed on the [seminar's dedicated webpage](#).

## 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 2021.

### Number of datasets produced by FORS surveys that were distributed to researchers

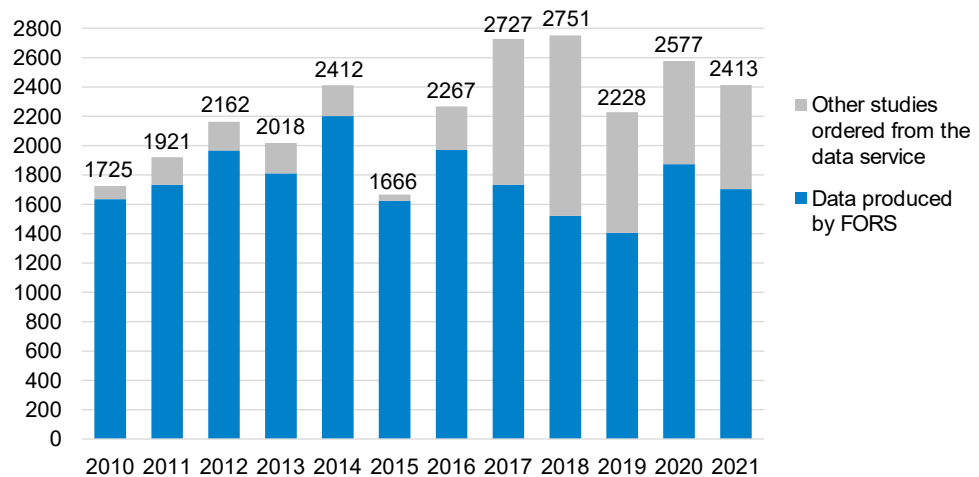


\*The reason for the decline in downloads of the Voxit dataset is probably the better availability of the individual Vox datasets on FORSbase.

A total of 1 703 datasets from FORS projects were distributed by FORS to researchers in 2021.

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

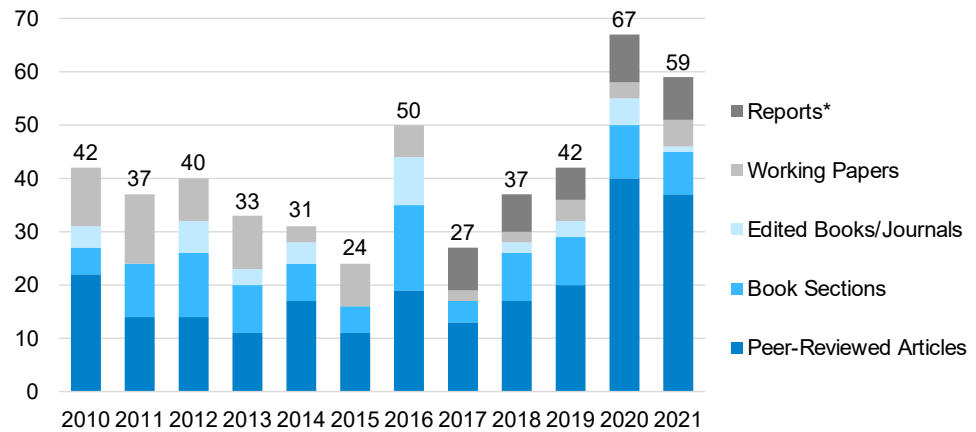


2413 datasets were downloaded from FORSbase in 2021.

## Number of new research project descriptions in the research inventory

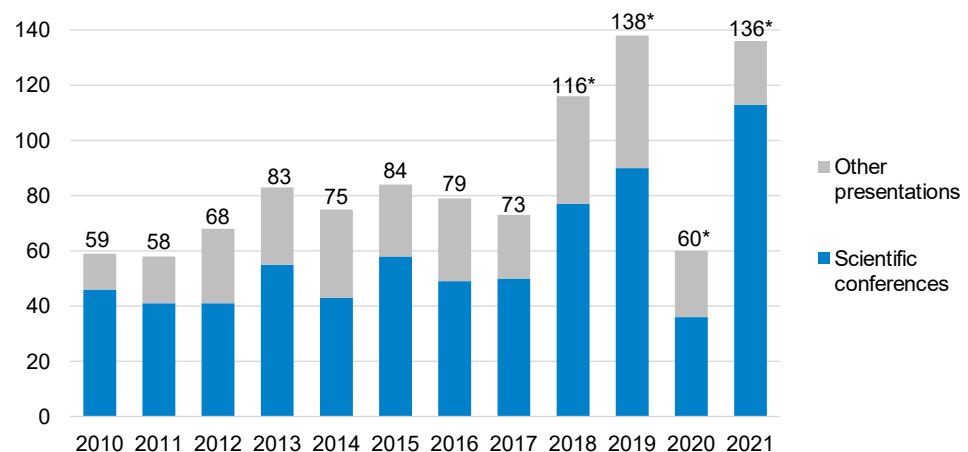
At the end of 2021, the number of active users of FORSbase increased to 8 800, compared to 7 700 in 2020. All in all, the research inventory comprised over 11 830 published project descriptions at the end of 2021.

## Publications by FORS staff



\* until 2016, the reports were included in the category "Working papers".

## Presentations by FORS staff at conferences and scholarly meetings

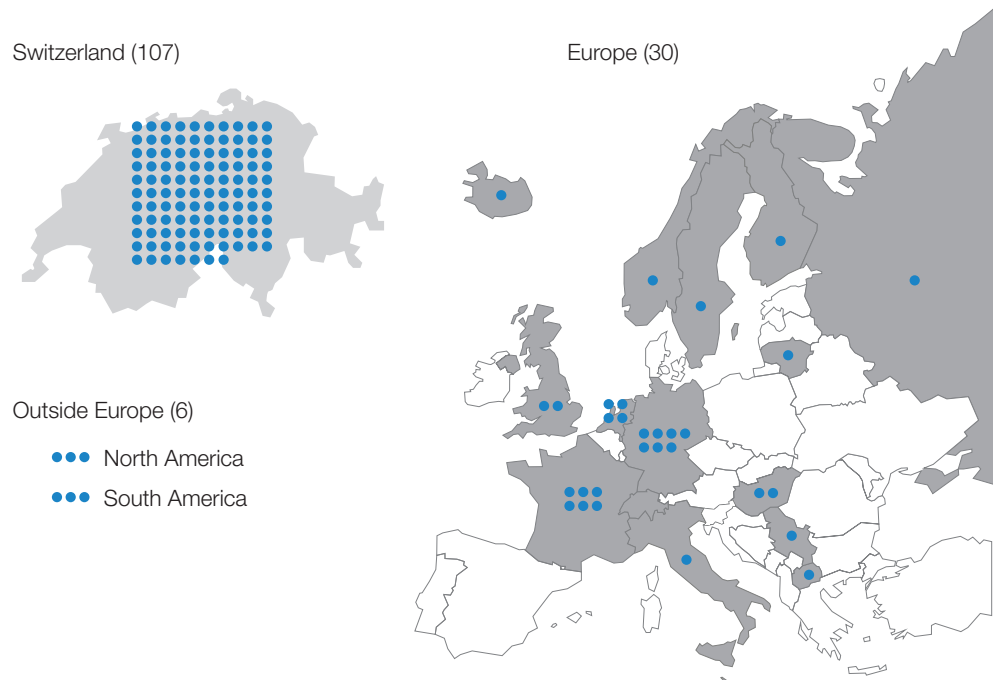


\* from 2018 not only the collaborators, but also the associated researchers were asked to hand in their presentations. The associated researchers contributed with 12 presentations to the total of 136 presentations in 2021.

There were 136 presentations of FORS staff and associated researchers at conferences and scholarly meetings in 2021, compared to 60 in 2020. While many events were cancelled in 2020, it appears that 2021 saw the effects of a shift towards more online formats.

Also see the complete list of 2021 publications and presentations by FORS staff on [this interactive webpage](#) (click on the year "2021" for full information).

## Number of national and international collaborative research projects



Only includes projects aiming for publications 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.

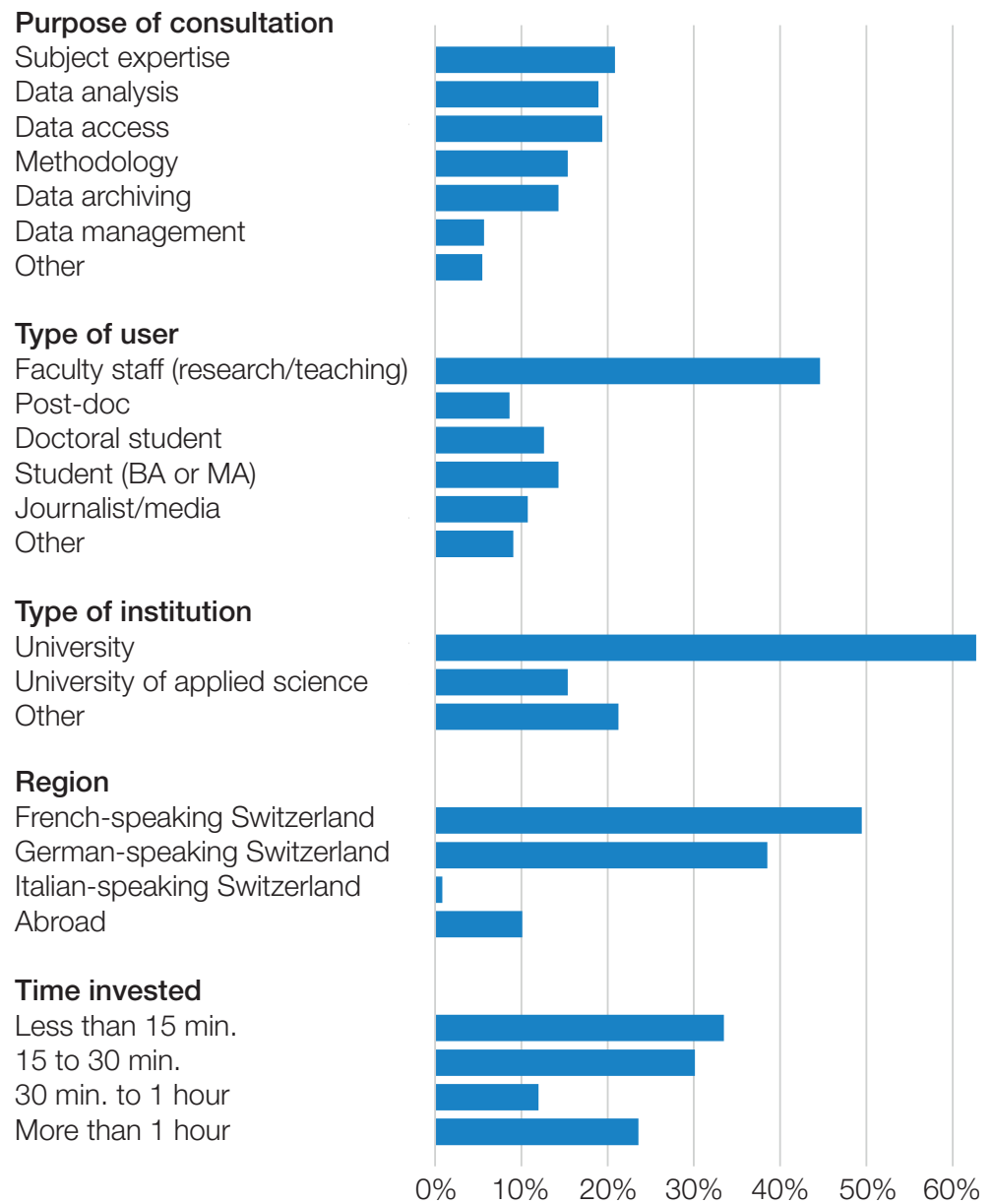
In 2021, 30 FORS staff members were involved in 122 collaborative projects with outside organisations. Thus, around 75% of eligible FORS staff were involved in research activities. We can note a slight positive increase compared to last year (117 collaborative projects), notably due to the scientific network of our newly recruited staff.

7 out of 10 (70%) of these collaborative projects were with individuals from the French-speaking part of Switzerland, 17% with colleagues from the German-speaking part of Switzerland and 25% with foreign institutions (some projects involved several institutions from different regions; thus the total exceeds 100%).

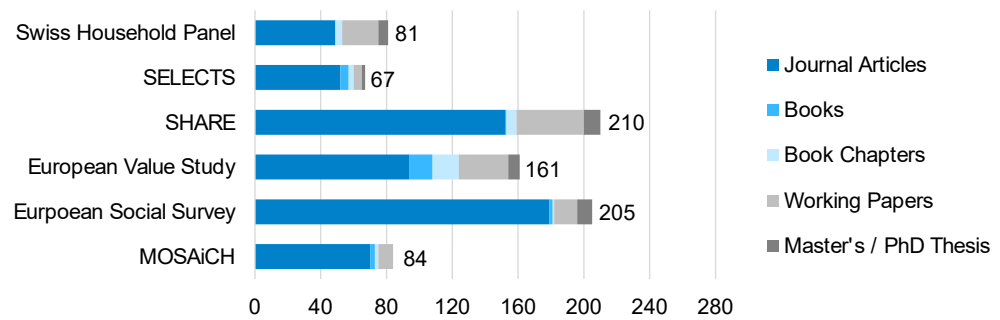
This concentration in the French-speaking part of the country is due in

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)



## Number of 2021 publications based on FORS-produced data



In 2021, there were more than 742 publications worldwide that used the Swiss data from surveys produced by FORS, including 205 for the ESS, 161 for the European Values Study, and 144 for SHARE. Most of these publications (73%) were peer-reviewed articles in academic journals. Eight 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 is an important task of FORS.

In total, 9 FORS staff members taught in 2021. They gave 339 teaching hours in 11 different courses at all academic levels (bachelor, master, and PhD), as well as in the context of continuing education (see list in Appendix). The topics covered concerned predominantly data analysis and data management, but also survey methodology. The biggest part (72%) of the teaching hours were provided in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, with the exception of two courses given at the University of Berne and another at the Swiss summer school 2021, 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.

## 9. FORS Governance

Between 2018 and 2020, the SNSF and the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) co-financed most of FORS' activities. Since the beginning of 2021, the Swiss National Science Foundation has taken over the entire funding of FORS' main activities, including data archiving services. This has had some governance implications. The funding of FORS is governed by a service level agreement for a period of four years (2021-2024), with considerable leeway on how to manage the funds most efficiently. A permanent international panel is responsible for evaluating FORS, and a site visit takes place every two years. The SNSF is no longer represented as a guest on the FORS Foundation Board, nor is SERI. FORS and its humanities partner organisation DaSCH have committed to closely coordinate their activities at the strategic, management and technical levels. And FORS is to systematically collect user feedback.

### Foundation Board

[The Foundation Board](#) is the governing body of FORS. It is chaired by a representative of the host university. Professor Estelle Doudet, who joined the Foundation Board in the summer of 2021, has taken over the presidency from Professor François Bussy, who had chaired the Foundation Council since 2015. The Foundation Board consists of eight members representing the main stakeholders (swissuniversities, SFSO and Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences). In addition to the new president, three new members were appointed to the Foundation Board in 2021. Professor Rolf Becker replaced Professor Katja Michaelowa as representative of swissuniversities. Professor Michaelowa had been a member of the Foundation Board since 2008 and was also Vice-President of the Foundation Board. The Foundation Council elected Professor Daniel Gredig as the new Vice-President. Professor Nicky Le Feuvre replaced Professor Marie Santiago Delfosse as representative of the UNIL. Dr Marco Menna, Director of DaSCH, was elected as a new member in November 2021. This appointment facilitates coordination between DaSCH and FORS at the strategic level. The FORS Director is also a member of the corresponding body of DaSCH.

In 2021, the Foundation Board met twice by video conference. At the March meeting, the Foundation Board approved the annual accounts and the 2020 audit and FORS annual report. In addition, the FORS Foundation Board approved an amendment to the agreement between FORS and the UNIL, which regulates the university's deficit guarantee for FORS differently. At the November meeting, the Foundation Board approved the annual planning and budget for 2022. The Foundation Board also elected the new Scientific Advisory Board, as the four-year mandate of the Scientific Advisory Board

was coming to an end. The Foundation Board also accepted that FORS will become part of the simple association that will be established to run SWISSUbase from 2022 in partnership with the other founding members of the new association, the Universities of Lausanne and Zurich.

## Scientific Advisory Board

[The Scientific Advisory Board](#) was again held as an online meeting in March 2021, chaired by Professor Mick Couper. The FORS Director gave an update on several important developments around FORS. The Scientific Advisory Board then discussed the proposal for a new experimental opt-in panel that FORS is considering setting up with members recruited from other FORS surveys. The SHP team presented the fieldwork results of the new Panel IV, which uses a slightly different data collection mode compared to previous survey rounds. DARISS presented the concept of a new service for replication data for journal publications. More and more journals are requesting the availability of replication data, and since depositing such data with journals may not be the best solution, data archives should play a role and offer such services.

The two Boards also held a joint meeting in March to share and discuss various topics of both boards. In addition to various updates on recent developments, both Boards discussed ongoing developments around SWISSUbase as well as the proposal on how to systematically collect user feedback in the future, a requirement set out in the Service Level Agreement with the SNSF.

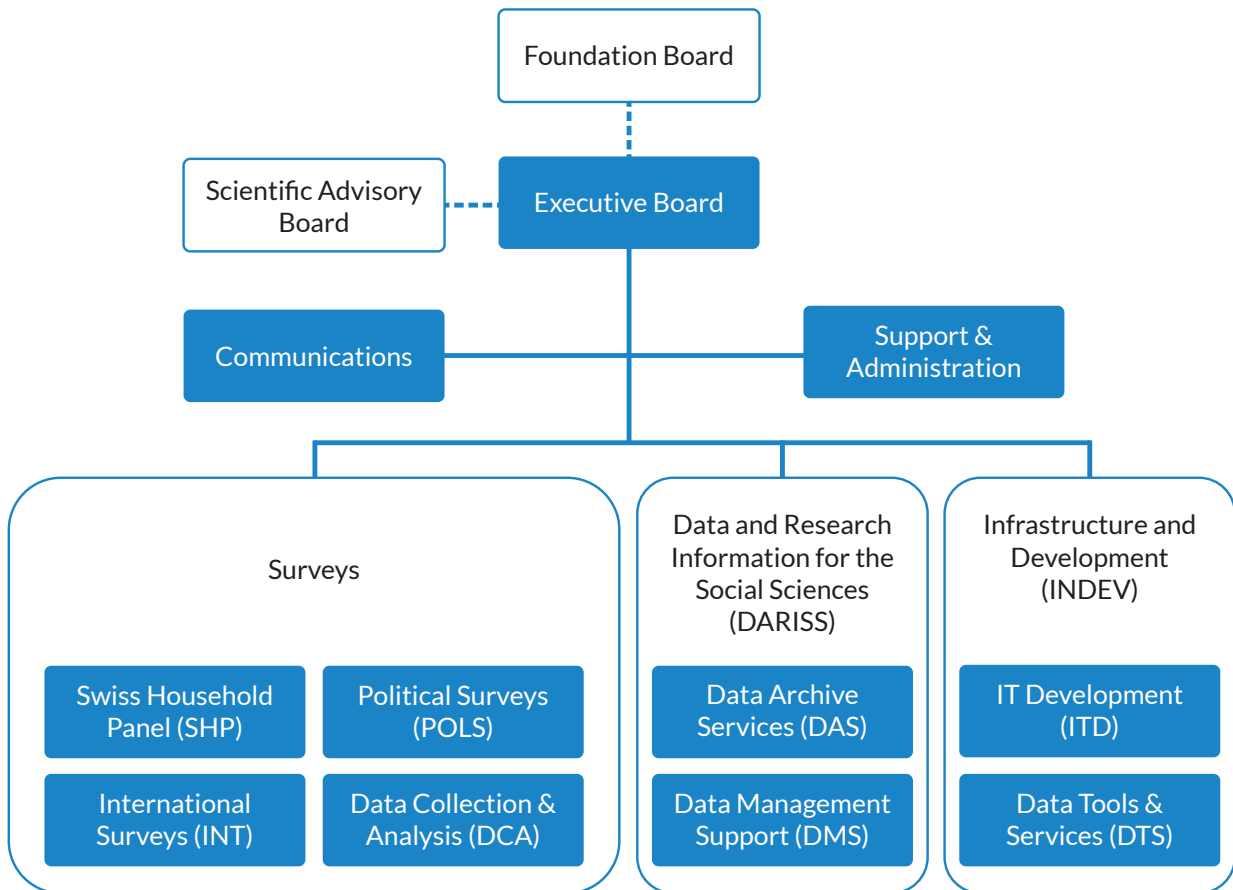
## FORS Management

The FORS Executive Board is chaired by the FORS Director and consists of the heads of the “Surveys”, “Data and Research Information for the Social Sciences (DARISS)” and the new “Infrastructure and Development (INDEV)” units, as well as the head of Finance and Personnel. The Executive Board usually meets twice a month, with the Communications Officer and the Coordinator of the SSP-FORS joint research programme also present. The resolutions are minuted and the minutes are sent to the President of the Foundation Board to keep him informed about current business.

In addition to dealing with current matters, constantly adapting to the new COVID-19 regulation and focusing on important development projects outlined in the 2021 annual plan, a major focus was on implementing the new structure at FORS, which included hiring the new heads of the IT group and the “Data Tools & Services (DTS)” group at FORS and clarifying and dividing tasks between the various units and groups.



# Organisational Chart

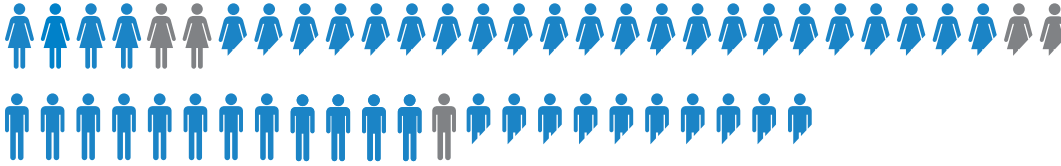


# 10. Staff statistics & finance

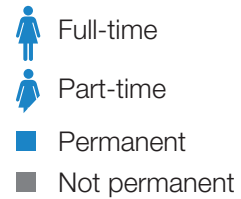
## Staff

### Status of employment

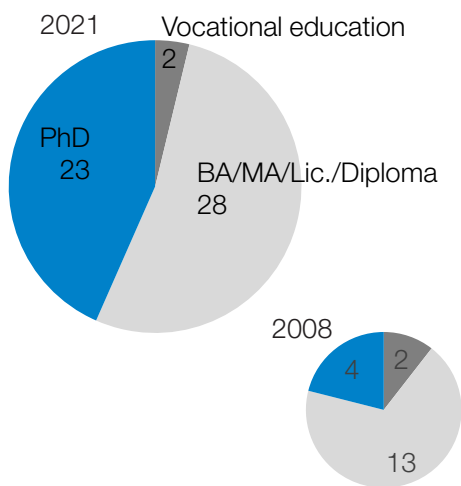
2021 (53 employees, 43.3 full-time equivalents)



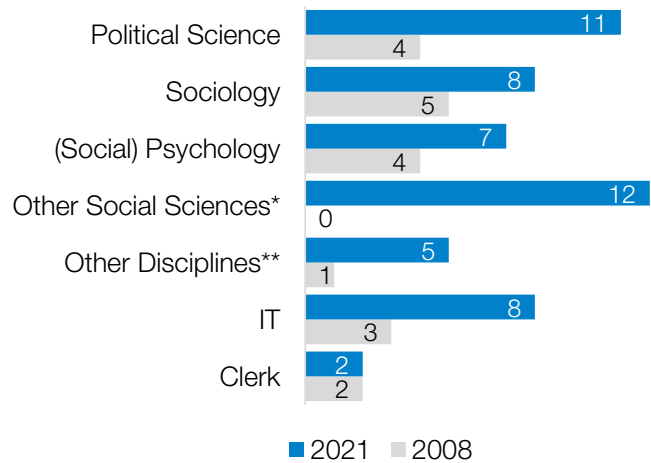
2008 (19 employees, 15.7 full-time equivalents)



### Degree of formation



### Disciplines

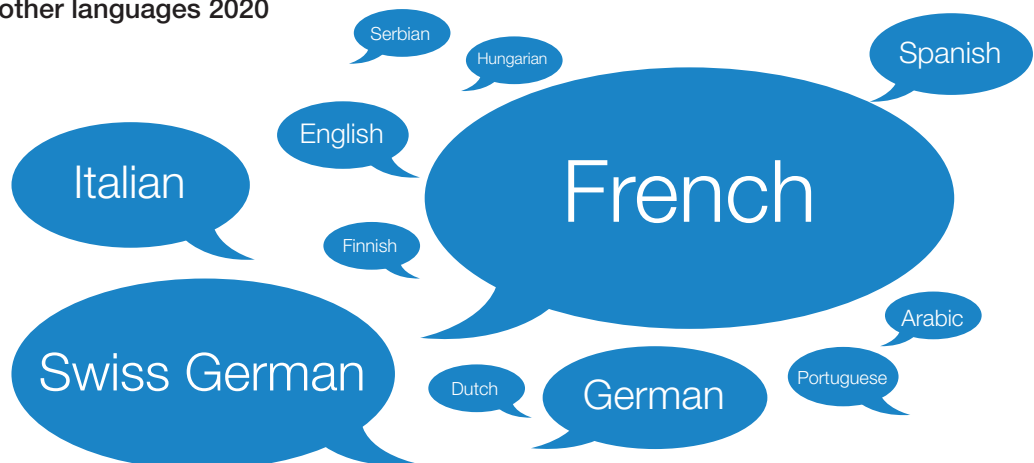


\* Social sciences, ethnology, behavioral science, communication, demography, economics, education, human geography

\*\* History, humanities, linguistics, mathematics, statistics, translation

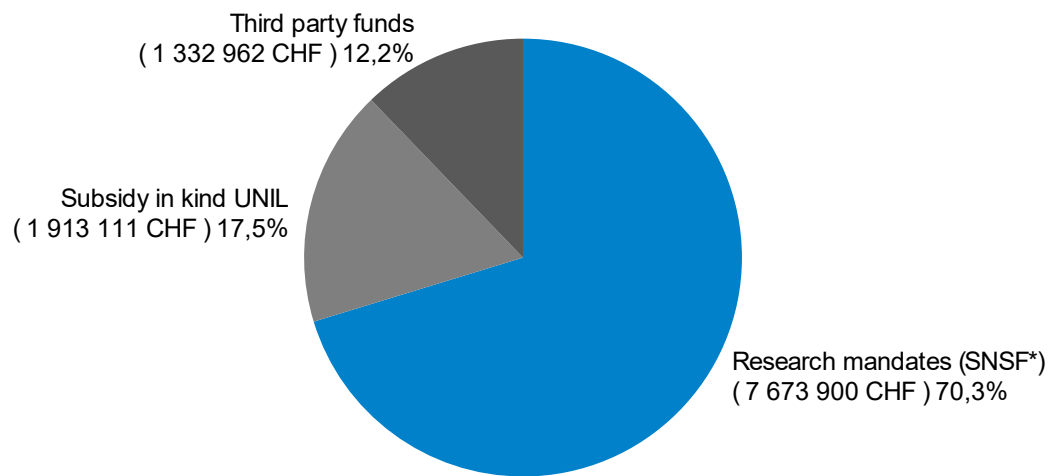
### Nationalities and mother languages 2020

- 41 Swiss
- 4 German
- 4 French
- 1 Italian
- 1 Chilean
- 1 Dutch
- 1 Hungarian
- 1 Moroccan
- 1 Portuguese
- 1 Serb
- 1 Spanish
- 1 US-citizen

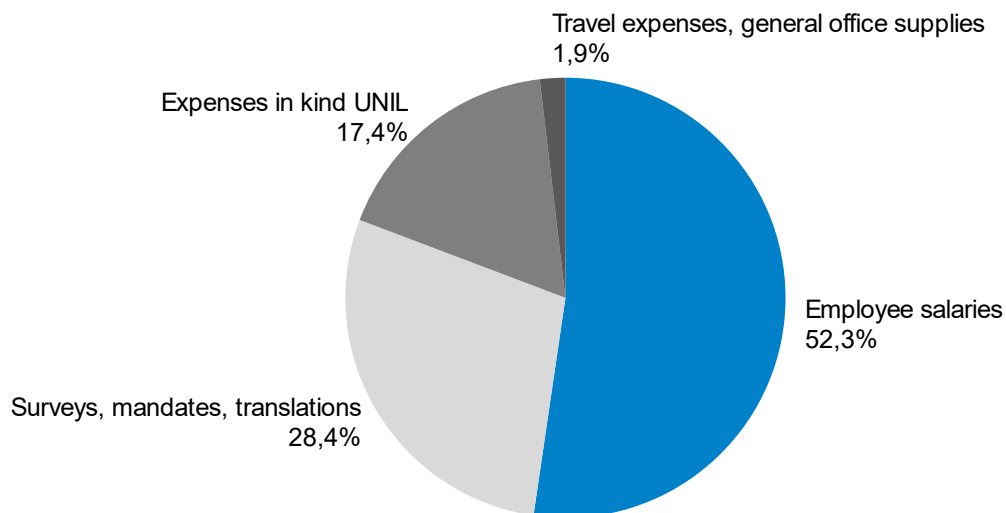


# Finances

## Income



## Expenses



## 11. List of Abbreviations

CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing
CAWI	Computer Assisted Web Interviewing
CCS	Comparative Candidate Survey
CESSDA	Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives
CNEF	Cross-National Equivalent File
CSES	Study of Electoral Systems
DaSCH	Data and Service Center for the Humanities
ERIC	European Research Infrastructure Consortium
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures
ESS	European Social Survey
EVS	European Values Study
FAIR	Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reuse of digital assets.
GESIS	Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften
ISSP	International Social Survey Programme
LiRI	Linguistic Research Infrastructure, University of Zurich
LIVES	Swiss Centre of Expertise in Lifecourse Research LIVES
MEDem	Monitoring Electoral Democracies (European Research Infrastructure)
MOSAiCH	Measurement and Observation of Social Attitudes in Switzerland
NCCR	National Centre of Competence in Research
SELECTS	Swiss Electoral Studies
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
SMT	Survey Management Tool
SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation
SSHOC	Social Science and Humanities Open Cloud
SWISSUbase	National cross-disciplinary data repository
SWITCH	Swiss Foundation managing digital services
TRAPD	Translation, Review, Adjudication, Pre-testing and Documentation procedure
UNIL	University of Lausanne (Host University)

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