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# LABB, a future backbone for educational research in Switzerland?



**Jacques Babel, Dr., Head of LABB/Federal Statistical Office**  
Workshop: Safe access to sensitive research data in Switzerland, 25.11.2022



## LABB very shortly

Project started in the context of the introduction of the unique OASI (NAVS13) in statistical sources around 2010

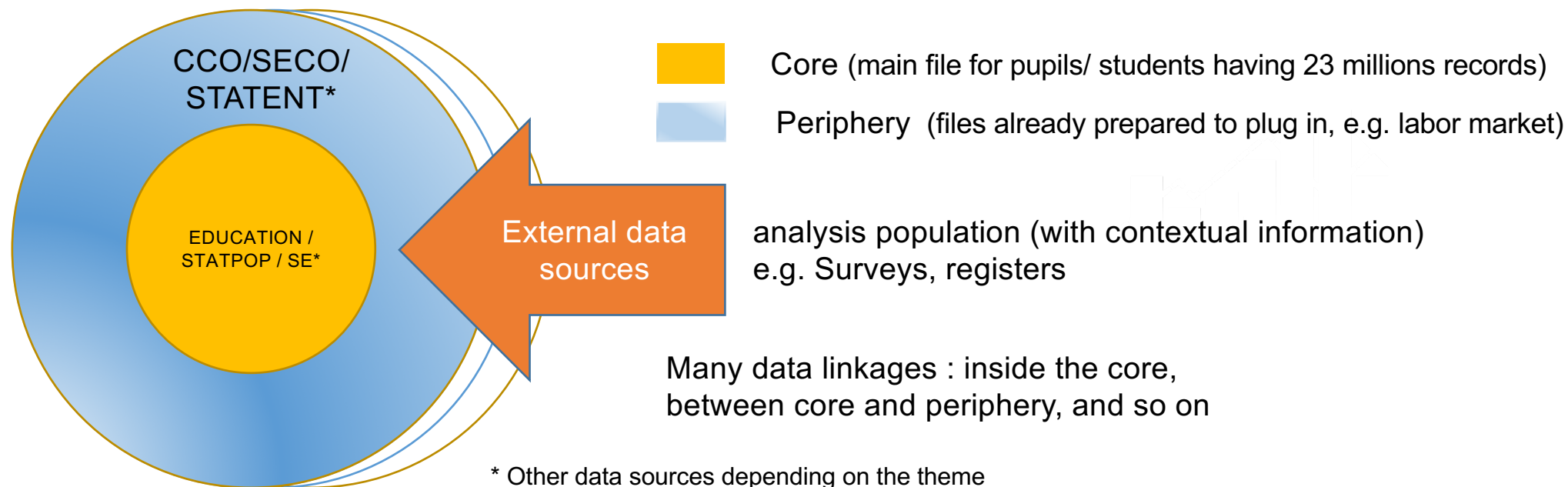
Principles followed from the beginning (2014):

1. **Produce** & **deliver** on the basis of many comprehensive data sources «preprocessed», harmonized & already linked longitudinal files
2. Produce publications describing educational trajectories
3. Constant strive to produce **meaningful** (unbiased...) **information** from sources not designed for that



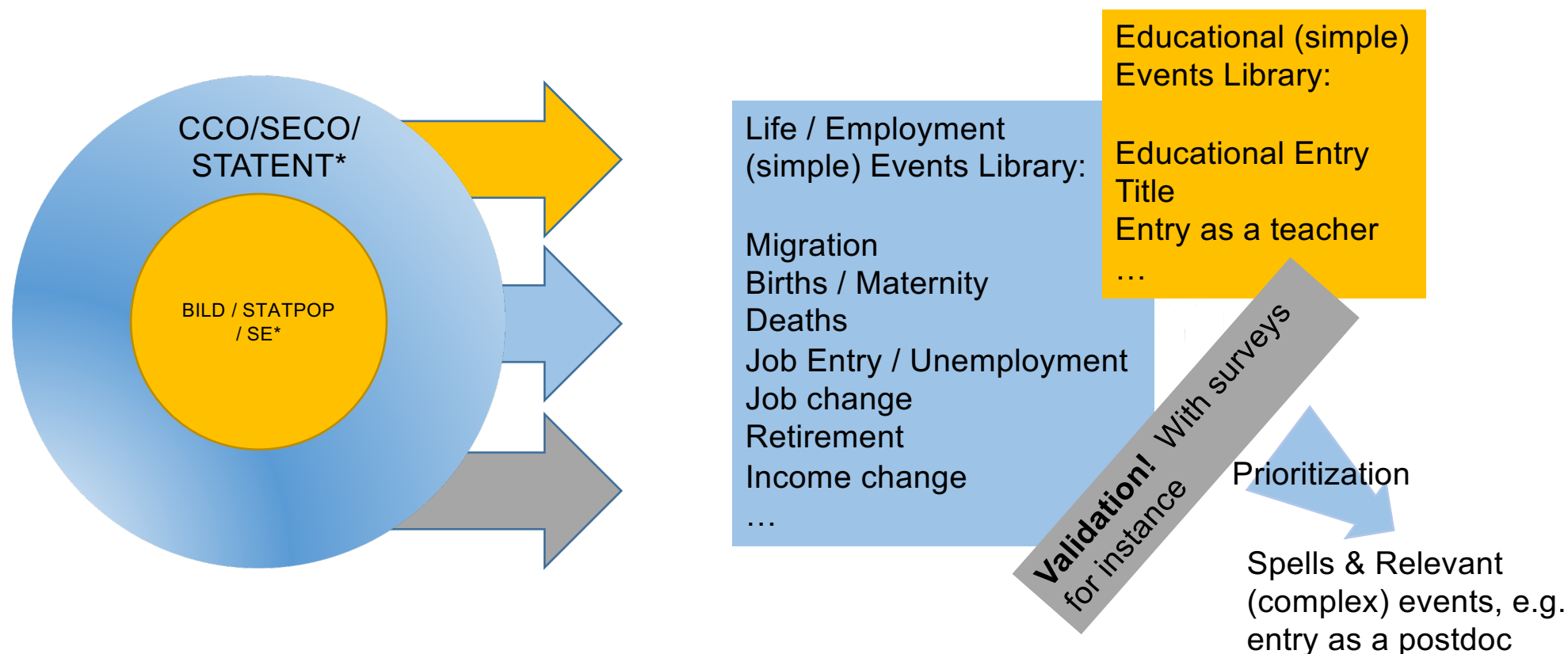
# The LABB system in 2022

Pupils & Students / Teachers (in progress) / Academic Staff (in progress)



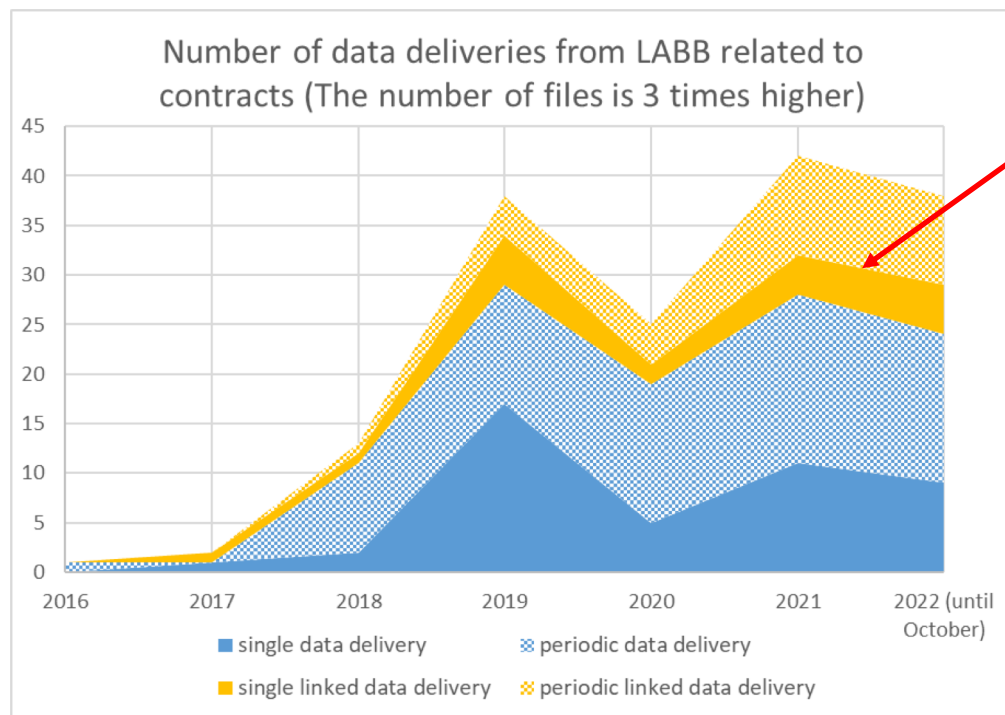


## From linked administrative data to spells & events





## A very high demand of LABB and many interactions



More than 35 data deliveries in 2022

The number of complex data linkages is increasing

Many interactions with research and “before/after sales service” > 1000 mails last year!

Overloaded LABB-team (1 FTE for data deliveries)



## Problems & Difficulties

- A lack of anticipation
- Expectations vs real world
- Specific needs vs stability
- Role of the LABB team in the context of the research



## Problems / Difficulties : “A lack of anticipation”

People do not think about data linkages early enough :

1. No organized centralized storage of identifiers. E.g. ÜGK (combined key SFO + FORS + Uni ZH!), Nahtstellenbarometer, CHECKS, PISA,...

⇒ Very complicated and costly sometimes to find the keys afterwards...

2. The concepts of surveys and LABB are not always aligned.

⇒ Problems for relevant analyses!



## Problems/Difficulties : “Expectations vs real world”

Some researchers often want the maximum of data available but do not want to explain why!

- Very excited by the amount of data.
- Are not aware of data protection and legal issues...

1. Strong mismatch between research project and data request.
2. Collision with data protection





## Problems/Difficulties : “Specific needs vs stability”

Requests are pushing more and more towards very specific needs.

1. Increase the resources needed to meet the demand.
2. In concurrence with the standardization or stability of the infrastructure



## Problems/Difficulties : “Role of the LABB team”

Difficulty for many researchers to identify the real possibilities and limitations of **these very complex data**

LABB indirectly gets involved (sometimes very strongly) in scientific projects at different steps (from the beginning until validation...)

1. Large resources invested, sometimes role of data experts for SNF projects, and so on.
2. Role of LABB and role of research?
3. No SNF funding for LABB...



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# Two recent examples of the potentialities of LABB ... and of the importance also for decision-makers



## The need for teachers in Switzerland

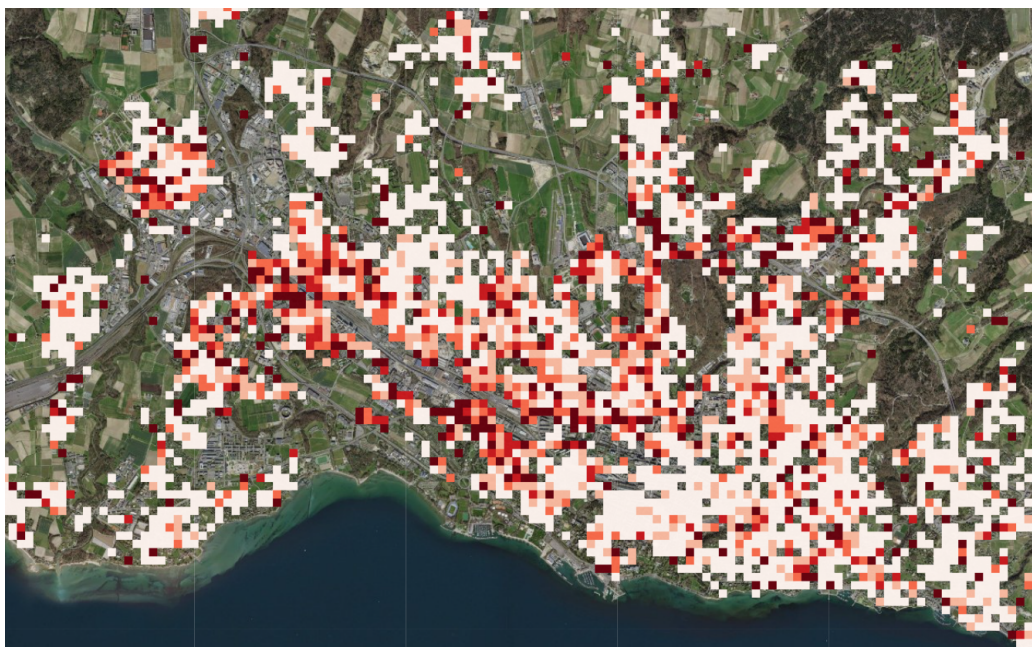
1. Measurement of detailed teacher trajectories via LABB
2. Construction of micro-data databases of trajectories
3. Development of a projection model using directly these micro-data
4. Relevant comparison between need and supply for new teachers

press release  
14.10.2022



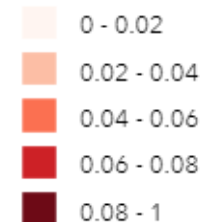


## Work in progress: trajectories & spatial analyses



Repetition rate in primary school  
(3-8) near the city of Lausanne

Value



Results per hectare, based on geo-coordinates  
of pupils' homes



## The situation in brief

1. The implemented LABB strategy has been a success
2. Obstacles and problems that could be avoided are encountered
3. LABB very involved in research projects but without associated funding
4. This success generates high demands that are more and more difficult to meet! (LABB ~ 4.5 FTE)



## Solutions ?

1. LABB is becoming a (high quality) **backbone** for education research in Switzerland and research in some topics should perhaps be built up in future along this kind of backbones
2. It is a huge ongoing infrastructure work. It is very far from being finished and there is **much potential for development**
3. Infrastructure must be **sustainable!**

⇒ Resources and setting must be adapted to such a big challenge



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# Thank you for your attention

## Any questions?

Contact: [eduperspectives@bfs.admin.ch](mailto:eduperspectives@bfs.admin.ch)  
[www.labb.bfs.admin.ch](http://www.labb.bfs.admin.ch)

For the topics  
already covered

