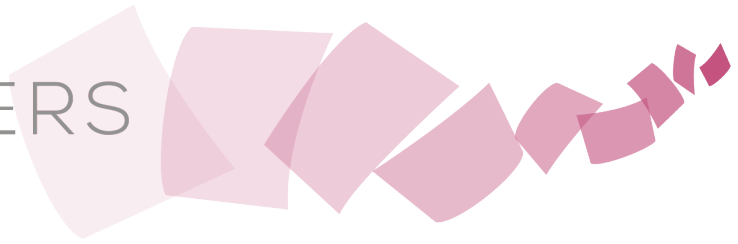


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Family Diversity: Updating a Household Typology in the Swiss Household Panel

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SUMMARY

This paper presents a new household typology in the Swiss Household Panel. The update of the household typology is motivated by the necessity to have a more detailed, more specific information about different types of couples with children, as the criteria used in the existing household typologies (e.g., age or number of children; age of adults) are insufficient to describe the family diversity and the plurality of its forms in terms of household structure and composition. To do so, the new variable distinguishes among the couple-with-children household types those with common children from those with children from a previous relationship, and those with children from a previous and the current relationship. The multiple steps to construct the new variable are described in the methodology section. The descriptive statistics section presents contextual and socio-demographic characteristics of the six couples-with-children household types, among which four are unique to this new household typology (step- and blended family households). The analyses dedicated to the newly created household types show a high variety of situations in a limited number of cases. The updated household typology increases the visibility of alternative forms of family and reduces their misclassification. In addition, its construction steps give opportunity to identify, describe and compare different types of family-households as well as various types of parents and children in the household. Thus, the new household typology allows to assess differences and communalities between a variety of configurations, while taking family diversity and complexity in Switzerland into better consideration.

Keywords: family-households, household structure and composition, family configurations, household configurations, couple-with-children household types, reconstituted families, family complexity, step-by-step construction of variable

1. INTRODUCTION

Family is the first place of socialization; a place where social rules, norms and expectations about social roles and social participation – in and outside the family sphere – are transmitted and incorporated by family members from different positions in terms of age (young-old), generation (parent-child), gender (woman-man), and relation (partner, co-parent, sibling; step-, half-, in law-). Beside the transmission of behaviours and attitudes (Perelli-Harris et al., 2017; Vallon, 2006), the family has a function of 'life-linking' (Levy & Bühlmann, 2016). Through its relating function, family is a place where to find and/or provide affection, support and comfort (Kellerhals & Widmer, 2012) but where stress, tensions and conflicts arise too. The various relationships and roles in the structure result, indeed, in different needs, resources, and interests among the family members (Seltzer, 2019), as well as in relation to the family as a group (McKie & Callan, 2012).

Pressions from inside and outside the family environment lead to the reconfiguration of the family structure. As noted by Segalen and Martial (2013), « the family life is a temporal process marked by fusions and fissions » (p. 45). While some enter as a new member, other may leave; while some may lose access to (a part of) the group, others may develop – even reinforce – their links to the remaining members. Thus, the individuals' network configuration evolves constantly as family and household members come and go in the individuals' life (Seltzer, 2019). These movements are amplified by events such as separation or repartnering.

Different family configurations correspond to different household structures with a variety of relationship configurations among the household members. Such relationships exist between household members who share familial links but also extend to household members who share no such links with their co-residents or to family members living in another household. The complexity of the relationship configurations increases when a new member joins the group. Next to the relationships developed earlier in the family life course (e.g., parent-child or co-parent dyads), new relationships are formed when, for example, repartnering occurs: the child becomes a (quasi)¹ step-child, and a (quasi) step-sibling if two sets of children (Gonzales, 2009) are brought together, the parent's new partner a (quasi) stepparent. The new relationships may even spread across households, when developed between the new partner and the former one in the case of a shared custody or similar parenting arrangement. Thus, through these diverse relationships, the individuals experience different « roles, positions, and participations » within their family (Levy, 2013; Levy & Bühlmann, 2016); a family which can be restricted to their household or go beyond it.

A detailed variable that focuses on who the individuals live with, on what types of ties – parental, conjugal, filial – they share with the other household members, and on what kind of household structure – simple or complex – they enter or leave, offers a glimpse of the

¹ As explained by Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards (2011), fictive or quasi relations represent individuals with whom the connection is seen as unimportant. Similarly, Allan (2007a) notes that stepparents and stepchildren may be members of the same household without regarding the other part as a family member.

context which they live in. In a word, such a variable offers access to family dynamics and processes in longitudinal datasets.

The aim of this paper is to present a new typology of households in the Swiss Household Panel (SHP Group [SHP], 2021). After a terminology section which clarifies the use of various terms, the next section presents a brief overview of the diversity of family forms in Western countries, followed by some challenges faced by various family configurations. It ends with a description of the existing household typologies in the SHP and how the updated version will differ from them. The methodology section describes the multiple-step construction for the new household typology. The paper then continues with descriptive statistics, presenting annual as well as aggregated frequencies of various couple-with-children household types; a focus on the newly constructed household types follows on. The conclusion discusses the limitations and contributions of the updated household typology.

1.1 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Terminology

The definition of what and who is a family is a complex question. People may refer to biological or to legal ties, some to a residential connection, and others to relational and emotional ties. In the case of the so-called traditional family, the definition includes all aspects, but in the case of other types of families, the definition seems more varied. In their study about family boundaries in step-families², Castrén and Widmer (2015) have shown that the less conventional is the family configuration the more inclusive is the definition of family. More specifically, their results highlight that the definition of 'who is part of the family, who is not' can vary between the members of a same family, especially between the parents and children. As the latter are connected to family members outside their households, their definition of family goes therefore beyond a residential definition.

The disconnection between family and the household (Cherlin, 2010) adds complexity to the matter. A household represents an individual or group of individuals who live together in the same dwelling (Burch, 1979). This minimal definition is one among other as the definition may change over time and across countries; it can even vary within a same country depending on which criterion is used for defining the household unit (Allan, 2007b; Ribbens McCarthy & Edwards, 2011). Besides, even if the terms household and family are used interchangeably and « may be hard to differentiate in the literature » (Casimir & Tobi, 2011, p. 499), they are distinct entities (Allan, 2007b; McKie & Callan, 2012). The distinction between family and household is two-fold. First, the family goes beyond the household, as family members may live apart. Second, living together does not mean being a family. Albeit functioning like a family for the duration of the cohabitation, household members may not be – or consider themselves – part of the same family (Allan 2007a; Casimir & Tobi, 2011). In this paper, the

² Step-families in their research refer to « family in situations following separation and re-partnering » (p. 36), and include both families with children from previous unions (step-families) and families with children from a previous and the current relationship (blended families). In the literature, « other terms for step-family include blended family or reconstituted family » (Ribbens McCarthy & Edwards, 2011, p.73). In this paper, I prefer to keep the term step-families for the situation where the children are 'only' from a previous relationship (of one or two partners). To designate both types of families (step-families and blended families), I use the term 'reconstituted' families.

terms family/families refer to social groups of people who are related to each other, whether living together or not; while the terms household/households are restricted to people living together whether related or not (co-residence criterion). The terms family-households will be used mainly for households representing couples with children but will, at some occasions, include solo parent configurations (e.g., when comparison is involved).

Similar to the terms 'family and household', the terms structure and composition are often used in the literature as synonyms even if they are different concepts (Allan, 2007b; Brown et al., 2015; McKie & Callan, 2012). In this paper, the term structure refers to the types of relationships between the family or household members. In couple-with-children households, it concerns the parent-child relationships (biological/adoptive, step) and the sibling relationships (unique or full; biological/adoptive, half-, step).

The term composition refers to socio-demographic characteristics of the parents/partners (e.g., marital status, gender, ...) and of the children (e.g., age) applied to the household. In other terms, the composition refers to characteristic which cannot be inferred from the household structure. Demographic dimensions like race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, or migration status increase the diversity of composition (Van Eeden-Moorefield & Shih, 2015).

Family diversity: old and new family configurations

Family is a universal and invariant phenomenon, but its forms and its definition differ across time, between societies, and individuals (Godelier, 2010; Lévi-Strauss, 1964; Levy, 2001; McKie & Callan, 2012; Vallon, 2006). For instance, the so-called traditional family, a nuclear family composed by two heterosexual married parents and their common child(ren), emerged in industrialized societies from the late 18th century. This family type reached a peak in Europe and North America after the Second World War but has declined since then; more statistically than symbolically though as « marriage maintains a dominant albeit weakening position as the ideal union type in most societies » (Sassler & Lichter, 2020, p. 41). By contrast, families composed of only one parent and children, or of partners with children from a previous relationship have always been existing forms of families (Coleman et al., 2015; Légaré & Desjardins, 1991).

Whether these family forms are relatively recent or not, they all encountered some changes during the second part of the twentieth century; a period when life courses in industrialised Western countries have developed towards more diverse patterns after a time of standardisation and institutionalisation (Kohli, 1986, 2007). Despite a considerable variation between countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016, 2019, 2020) when it comes to the rate, the amplitude, and the pattern of change, a larger diversity can be observed within as well as between the individual life courses. In the family institution, the changes concern the frequency of marriage (fewer numbers), its timing (later in the life course, in different family-life phases), its ending (through divorce instead of widowhood), and its type (same-sex marriage), as well as a weaker association of marriage with childbearing and childrearing.

The changes also concern the sequence of family transitions and the subsequent family statuses and phases. For instance, cohabitation – understood as the co-residence of an unmarried couple – can occur before the couple marries or after its marriage has ended. Similarly, the birth of children can occur within or outside of marriage. When it comes to the duration of the non-marital status of partners, cohabitation can be a temporary phase where individuals quickly transition from one status (cohabiters) to another status (married partners

or singles), or a more permanent situation when it is chosen as an alternative family form. Old family forms also experienced changes in terms of duration and conditions. Lone parenthood lasts shorter than three decades earlier (Bernardi & Mortelmans, 2018), and when repartnering occurs, the family structure tends to be more complex and the organisation more complicated as the children usually belong to two households (Pasley & Petren, 2015).

These changes have resulted in an increased variety of family configurations across the individual life course. Next to old family forms, new types of families have progressively emerged: families composed of unmarried parents and their children (common or not), and more recently same-sex parent families and their children (common or not), resulting in more diversity in household composition.

The consequences of family diversity: the context matters

Different family configurations induce different risks and challenges in given historical and geographical contexts. Different family configurations imply different needs as well (Gonzales, 2009; Kumar, 2017; Rossier et al., 2018); one model (i.e., the so-called traditional family with a gendered division of labour) cannot fit all. As explained by Rossier and colleagues (2018), the individuals' well-being is dependent on the institutional context. Consequently, an unsuited frame, whether a legal, an institutional or a normative frame, exposes them to « emotional, moral and practical problems » (Bureau & Rist, 2020, p. 67).

Social norms may sanction those deviating from the expected model. For example, the two-parent norm (Bureau & Rist, 2020) or the biological-family norm negatively affect people who live in different configurations. These problems include a lack of role clarity or negative connotations about the role (Kumar, 2017), pejorative view (Bureau & Rist, 2020), even stigmatization (Phillips, 2012; Nichele, 2017), feelings of insecurity, tension (Bureau & Rist, 2020), feeling oneself isolated or experiencing a lack of support (Riness & Sailor, 2015). More specifically, Pezzin et al. (2013) have found a lower access and a lower quality of social support among old adults with only stepchildren (without specifying whether they were living with them or not), resulting in higher risks of disability, of institutionalization, and a reduced longevity than those with only biological children. In addition, weaker relationships were found among step-grandparents and their stepchildren compared to biologically related configurations (Steinbach & Silverstein, 2020). Finally, the social capital developed through networks of informal and formal relationships was found to be lower for mothers in stepfamilies compared to married mothers in nuclear families, but greater compared to mothers in lone parent families (Ravanera & Rajulton, 2010).

Likewise, the institutional arrangements (Hübgen, 2018) may influence the challenging aspects, notably the economic resources, for people living in non-normative configurations. As investigated by Hübgen about lone mothers (2018), both the welfare state and the labour market can reduce or increase their risks of poverty. Behind the question of a potential « access to labor income and/or social transfers » (p. 168) lies the question of social inequalities, and more generally the one of inclusion or exclusion.

The question of inclusion or exclusion is also part of the challenges faced by non-traditional families, yet at a different scale. Building cohesion and a sense of family 'we-ness' (Castrén & Widmer, 2015), creating a shared household of unrelated family members, dealing with family boundaries and complex relationships, establishing rules, and defining expectations and roles are examples of the challenges faced by step- and blended families (Castrén & Widmer, 2015; Kumar, 2017). Furthermore, the people in post-separation configurations may experience

more movements within and across households, e.g., by moving from one residence to another or from one family structure to another (Ginther & Pollak, 2004). Children living in separate parental households may need to adjust to different rules, standards, and ways of behaving, while the parents may need time to adjust to periods with and without the children (Gonzales, 2009). Altogether, the people living in non-conventional families may face a higher demand for adjustment.

Nonetheless, beyond vulnerabilities different family configurations contribute to social change. An emblematic example for such social contribution is related to same-sex couples. By questioning the model and the definition of a family composed by two and different-sex parents and their common biological children they have opened the way to the social and legal recognition of same-sex unions. New family behaviours open new perspectives and bring new rights (and obligations); new legal definitions and recognitions allow new practices, which in turn contribute to the formation of new types of families. The recognition of various family forms evolves in a bidirectional movement across multiple levels (micro, meso, macro) and actors (individuals, institutions, society), among which statistical institutions (e.g., the Swiss Federal Statistical Office) have a key role to play.

The construction of reality, the reduction of complexity

To understand the relation between the individual history and the societal history (micro-macro levels) and between the individuals' past, present and future biographical history (micro level), following individuals over time is essential. The longitudinal design of panel surveys allows to identify continuity and change (Andress, 2007; Singer & Willet, 2003), stability and movements both at a societal and an individual level. Surveying (as well as interviewing) individuals informs about what they experience, what the dynamics at stake are. Nonetheless, the participants' responses – the data – are not given to the scientists but constructed by them (Becker, 1940; Henneguelle & Jatteau, 2021; Paugam, 2008, 2010 among others).

The construction of reality implies the reduction of social complexity. Indeed, social reality is too complex for scientists to show, describe, and analyse every aspect of it. The reduction of « the diversities of phenomena to a coherent general level » (McKinney, 1950, p. 236) is realised through the creation of typologies. In the case of household panel surveys, the diversity in the types of households who are surveyed is simplified and reduced to a small number of household types. In consequence, a household typology offers only a reduced portion of the complex reality of families; an issue exacerbated nowadays by the « growing disconnect between families and households » (Smock & Schwartz, 2020, p. 9 citing Cherlin, 2010).

In Switzerland, the Swiss Household Panel (SHP Group [SHP], 2021) distributes to researchers three constructed household typologies (see Table 1), sourced from various surveys (Voorpostel et al, 2018).

Table 1. Existing household typologies in the Swiss Household Panel

| European community household panel (PACO) | Fertility and family survey (FFS) | Swiss census |
|---|---|---|
| One person aged 65 years or more | Not-married couple with children | One-person private households |
| One person aged 30-64 years | Married couple with children | Married couple without children |
| One person aged less than 30 years | Ex-married couple with children | Consensual couple without children |
| Lone parent with one or more children aged 16 or younger | Not-married couple, no children | Married couple without children and another person |
| Lone parent with at least one child older than 16 years | Married couple, no children | Consensual couple without children and another person |
| Couple without children with at least one aged 65 or over | Ex-married couple, no children | Married couple with children |
| Couple without children with both under 65 | Never-married lone parent with children | Consensual couple with children |
| Couple with one child | Married parent with children | Married couple with children and another person |
| Couple with two children | Ex-married parent with children | Consensual couple with children and another person |
| Couple with three children or more | Never-married person alone | One parent with children |
| Couple with at least one child over 16 | Married person alone | One parent with children and another person |
| Other households with all members related | Ex-married person alone | Other types of households with only related family |
| Other households with not all members related | Other situation | Other types of households with and without related family Other types of households without related family |

Source: Voorpostel et al, 2018

The first household typology comes from the European Community Household Panel (PACO). This now defunct panel survey (1994-2001) covered a « wide range of topics on living conditions [such as] the housing situation, social relations, or health » (Eurostat, 2003). Its « sociological typology » of the household types distinguishes the single adults or couples without children on the basis of their age, and the parents on the number and age of the children. The second household typology in the SHP is sourced from the Fertility and Family Surveys (FFS). This programme was conducted in the 1990s in 23 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE, 2000) and aimed at « allowing international comparisons about partnership and reproductive behaviours ». This household typology mainly differentiates households on the adults' civil status and the presence of children. The third household typology originates from the Census conducted by the Swiss

Federal Statistical Office (FSO). The Swiss statistical system allows « to observe on a continuous basis the structures and the development of the population and households [...] » (FSO, Census). Households are categorised on the type of relationships, the presence of children, and another person not related to the household members. This last household typology also offers a more detailed categories for the other types of households, considering whether household members are all, partially, or not related.

Indications of the age or the number of children in the household, or the number of parents, their civil status and the type of conjugal relationships are, however, insufficient to clearly identify the diversity in the couple-with-children household configurations. Households of reconstituted families – whose members have experienced (at least some of them) a conjugal or parental separation – are classified in the same category as households without such family experience. This is problematic because these different types of couple-with-children households, representing different types of families (nuclear, step, blended) not only differ in their structure (see Figure 1 for a schematic representation) but in their family history too. In short, they live in different family contexts, face different challenges and benefit from different resources.

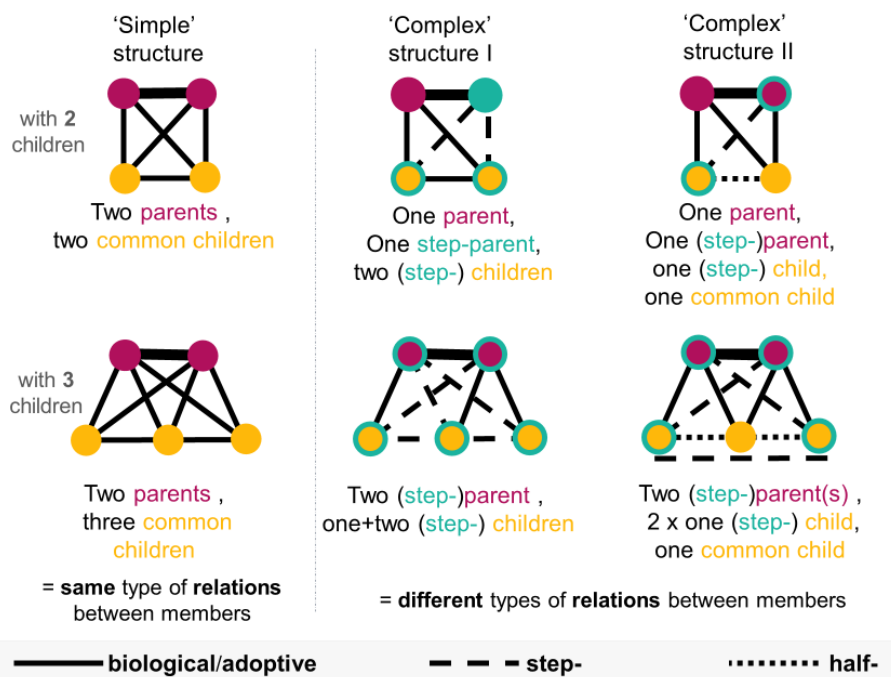


Figure 1. Schematic examples of simple and complex couple-with-children household structures

The lack of differentiation between couples with children with distinct life-event experiences (i.e., normative versus alternative family forms) potentially leads to misclassification (Shui, 2015), miscount, and the invisibilisation of alternative practices. Consequently, this induces an inaccurate representation of family reality.

Family complexity in the SHP: the construction of a new household typology

To overcome these limitations, I propose to create a new household typology for the Swiss Household Panel. Beyond a construction based on the relations between the household members like in the existing typologies, the updated household typology will differentiate between couples with a) common children (nuclear family), b) children from a

previous relationship (stepfamily), and c) children from both the current and a previous relationship (blended family). The updated version will include a distinction by civil status (married and unmarried) as well. The combination of distinct couple-with-children household structures and distinct civil statuses allows to represent both modern forms of family (i.e., unmarried couples with common children) and oldest one (e.g., married couples with children from a previous relationship). By doing so, this work aims at improving the visibility of family diversity and the plurality of its forms in terms of household structure and composition.

I argue that making the diversity in the family forms visible has three advantages. First, a clear distinction between households of nuclear, step- and blended families allows to distinguish between simple and complex household structures as illustrated in Figure 1. Furthermore, the minimal complementary construction (see extra steps in methodology section) gives access to the individual's relational position and role in the structure. For the parents, it indicates if the respondent is a parent, a stepparent or both; for the children, it indicates whether they have full, half or stepsiblings, or no direct sibling at all. Consequently, the updated household typology facilitates the identification of multiple duos (Favez, 2018), triangular relations and various parent or sibling formations (Kumar, 2017). It also allows to explore the families at different biographical moments.

Second, the focus on more complex and varied family-household configurations gives opportunities to assess and highlight differences and communalities between them. In that sense, I follow Quéniart and Hurtubise's (1998) recommendation to capture the common dimensions beyond the diversity of the family forms. As suggested by Bureau and Rist (2020), while having unique and specific experiences, families who differ in their structure (e.g., one, two or multiple parents with biological or stepchildren) could nonetheless share similar experiences on family matters. Ford-Gilboe (2000) has reached the same conclusion about the nature and pattern of strengths found in single-parent families compared to two-parent families. And several authors have highlighted that most children and adolescents raised in non-traditional families do not differ from those raised by their two married heterosexual parents; they experience no serious problems or negative outcomes (Parke, 2006 cited by Phillips, 2012). In one word, they are just fine (Golombok interviewed by Nichele, 2017). In fact, these authors have highlighted that children's outcomes (e.g. health, well-being, education attainment) depend more on the family processes, namely the relationship quality (Turunen, 2013), the management of co-parenthood (Favez, 2018), the family climate (Phillips, 2012) rather than on the family structure or household composition per se. Other research found that negative outcomes for people in non-traditional configurations stem from selection effects (Hannan, 2018). These findings (i.e., differences as well as communalities) might be invisible when different types of families are merged into a unique household category. Thus, by being closer to the individual's relationships within households and to changes in the household structure and composition, the new household typology allows to better understand family dynamics, and to disentangle what comes from the structure and composition (the household configuration) and what comes from other characteristics.

Third, the updated household typology contributes to national representative statistics with more detailed, more specific information about couple-with-children households, leading to more information about different types of families. Riness and Sailor (2015) suggest that showing results which challenge myths and stereotypes about non-normative configurations (e.g., on stepmother, single-parent families, cohabiting couples) could help providing a « positive shifts in society's perceptions » (p. 177) and reducing stigmatization; an idea shared by Golombok (interviewed by Nichele, 2017). Overall, the updated household typology

expands the normative frame and goes beyond a limited representation of contemporary families.

2. METHODOLOGY

This section presents the construction of the updated household typology in the Swiss Household Panel (SHP Group, 2021). The first part describes the steps needed to construct the new variable. The second part contains a few complementary steps executed specifically on the newly constructed types (step-and-blended-family households). These extra steps allow to identify the role and position of each – adult or child – household member. The third part discusses some methodological limitations.

The variable was constructed using the software R (R Core Team, 2018) and the interface R Studio (RStudio Team, 2019); later converted into an SPSS reduced version syntax (IBM Corp., 2020). The syntaxes and related documentation (~~construction-steps-only~~) are available as parts of the SHP additional documentation (Morel, 2023).

2.1 CONSTRUCTION STEPS

Multiple steps were required to construct the new household typology, including the construction of intermediary provisional variables at both the individual and the household levels.

The first step consisted in identifying for each wave whether the household members in participating households live with their parents, their partner, and with children, creating three intermediary variables. When the household member had a partner, the partner's data were added to the former's data, to be able to identify household members living with parents-in-law. If the partners have children in the household, each child's identification number was compared between the partners to determine whether the child was from the current relationship or a previous one³. The responses about all children in the household were aggregated into one variable, and further recoded to merge similar situations (e.g., the household member lives with their own children or their partner's children).

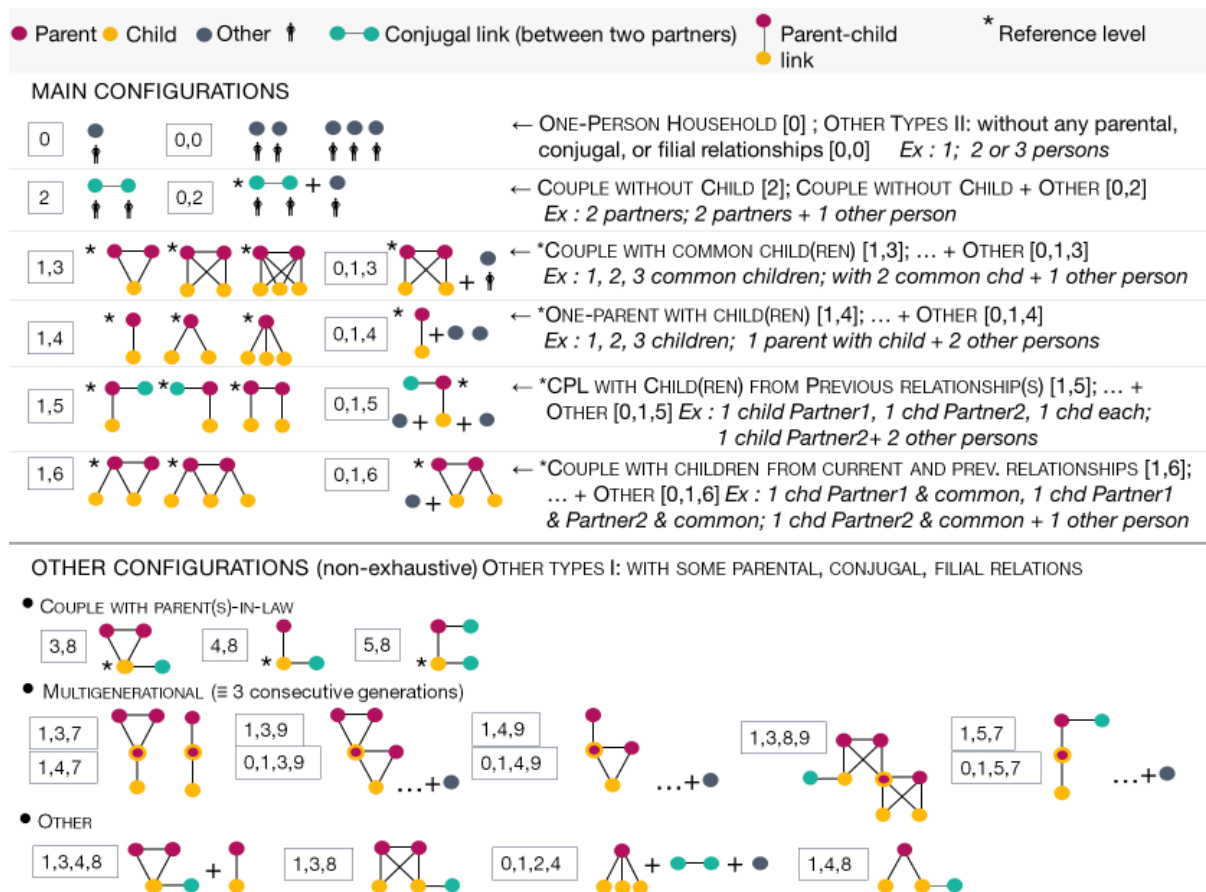
In a second step, the three individual answers from the variables 'Lives with parents(-in-law)', 'Lives with a partner', 'Lives with children' were combined to form a provisional variable which summarises who the respondent lives with (see Table 2).

³ The term 'previous' could be erroneous for cases where a parent has an extra-conjugal relationship in which the second partner is the child's parent. Despite a wrong label (i.e., previous instead of parallel relationship) for those few cases, the household type remains correct because not all children are common to the partners.

Table 2. Combination of answers 'Lives with...' (step 2, individual level)

| Parent | | Partner | | Children | | | → Provisional variable: Lives with '(LIVW)' | | | |
|--------|-----|---------|-----|----------|-------|----------------------|---|-----------|---|-------------|
| No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Comm. | Own and/or Partner's | Own and/or Partner's and Common | 3in1 code | Description | Indiv. code |
| 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | | | 0.0.0 | No parent, partner, child | 0 |
| | 1 | 0 | | 0 | | | | 1.0.0 | With Own Parent(s) | 1 |
| 0 | | | 1 | 0 | | | | 0.1.0 | With Partner | 2 |
| 0 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 0.1.1 | With Partner + common Child(ren) | 3 |
| 0 | | 0 | | | | 2 | | 0.0.2 | With own Child(ren) | 4 |
| 0 | | | 1 | | | 2 | | 0.1.2 | With Partner + own &/ partner's Child(ren) | 5 |
| 0 | | | 1 | | | | 3 | 0.1.3 | With Partner + own &/ partner's child + common Child(ren) | 6 |
| | 1 | 0 | | | | 2 | | 1.0.2 | With Own Parent(s)+own Child(ren) | 7 |
| | 1 | | 1 | 0 | | | | 1.1.0 | With Own/Partner's Parents +Partner | 8 |
| | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1.1.1 | With Own/Partner's Parents + Partner + common Child(ren) | 9 |
| | 1 | | 1 | | | 2 | | 1.1.2 | With Own/Partner's Parents + Partner + Child(ren) from previous relationship(s) | 10 |
| | 1 | | 1 | | | | 3 | 1.1.3 | With Own/Partner's Par. + Partner + Children from previous & current rel. | 11 |

The third step aggregates the data from the individual level to the household level. The answers of all household members were aggregated as a list of relationships (see column individual code in Table 2), in numerical order (e.g., '0,1,3' or '1,3,4,8'). Configurations of relationships representing a one-person household, a couple without children, different types of couples with children, or a solo-parent household are considered as the main configurations (also if other unrelated persons are in the household). In short, they are expected types of households; all other configurations are considered as less expected. For these latter cases, a manual control verifies the relationships between the household members and clarifies whether the list is correct or results from a coding error (e.g., a partner identification number set on the child instead of on the partner). Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the listed configurations, a glance at the household structures; Table 3 provides the provisional household codes with examples of the listed configurations.



Note: To ensure a visual legibility, the links between children (horizontal line) are not shown, nor the links between step-relationships.

Figure 2. Household members 'Lives with' lists: expected and unexpected configurations

For instance, the expected configurations '1,4 Lives with parent(s), lives with children' represent a one-parent household; '2 Lives with partner' a couple without children household. Less expected configurations represent cases not strictly related to couples or singles, such as '3,8 Lives with a partner and common child, lives with a partner and parents', or '1,4,7 Lives with a parent, lives with a child, lives with a parent and a child'.

The creation of a household typology poses the question of labelling. Should the configuration '4,8' be labelled as a one-parent household or a couple-without-children-plus-another-person household? Depending on the age of the child, should '1,3' be labelled as a couple-with-child or an adult-with-elderly-parents household? Because this updated household typology ignores the household members' age, it was chosen to keep for the main configurations the parents or the partners as the reference level (*). In all cases, the listed configurations were classified into a reduced number of categories of provisional household types (codes shown in Table 3).

Table 3. Aggregated codes: provisional household types (step 3, from individual to household level)

| INDIVIDUAL LEVEL | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <i>'Lives with' variable: Individual code</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>'Lives with' variable: Individual code</i> | <i>Description</i> |
| 0 | No parent, partner, child | 6 | With Partner + own &/partner's child +common Child(ren) |
| 1 | With Own Parent(s) | 7 | With Own Parent(s)+own Child(ren) |
| 2 | With Partner | 8 | With Own/Partner's Parents +Partner |
| 3 | With Partner+common Child(ren) | 9 | With Own/Partner's Parents + Partner + common Child(ren) |
| 4 | With own Child(ren) | 10 | With Own/Partner's Parents + Partner + Child(ren) from previous relationship(s) |
| 5 | With Partner + own &/ partner's Child(ren) | 11 | With Own/Partner's Parents + Partner + Child(ren) from previous and current relationship |
| HOUSEHOLD LEVEL | | | |
| <i>Codes [list of aggregated indiv. codes]</i> | <i>Provisional Household types</i> | <i>Codes [list of aggregated indiv. codes]</i> | <i>Provisional Household types</i> |
| hh0 [0 ^a] | One-person household | hhc15 [1,5 +0,1,5] | Couple with child(ren) from (a) previous relationship(s) + Couple with child(ren) from (a) previous relationship(s) and other persons) |
| hhc14 [1,4 + 0,1,4] | One Parent with child(ren) + One Parent with child(ren) and other persons | hhc16 [1,6 + 0,1,6] | Couple with children from previous & current relationships +Couple with children from previous & current relationships and other persons) |
| hhc2 [2 + 0,2] | Couple without child + Couple without child and other persons | hhcothl [5,8 + 1,3,8,9 + 0,1,2,4 + ...] | Other types I: with some parental, conjugal, filial relationships |
| hhc13 [1,3 + 0,1,3] | Couple with common child(ren) + Couple with common child(ren)and other persons | hhc00 [0,0 ^a] | Other types II: without any parental, conjugal, or filial relationships |

Notes: The top area indicates, at the individual level, who the respondent lives with (see step 2, variable 'LIVW'). The bottom area corresponds to the aggregated individual answers (codes) of all the household members. This means that once the individual answers to the variable 'LIVW' are aggregated into one answer, it becomes an answer at the household level (variable: 'LIVWlist'). The codes correspond to the provisional household types. a) The code '0' was separated between households with only one person [0] and households with two or more individuals [0,0].

The fourth step consisted in identifying married couples in the household. When both partners declared 'married' or 'registered partnership' as their civil status, they were considered as married to each other; with other civil statuses they were considered as unmarried. Besides, no distinction was made regarding who the married couple in the household was (e.g., parents or children). Casimir and Tobi (2011) would argue that attributing « household member characteristics to households » is an erroneous procedure and that researchers should prevent from selecting or describing « a whole household based on the [characteristic] of an individual » (p. 503). I agree with them, especially on sensitive characteristics such as ethnicity. However, the marital status was still used as a differentiation criterion between households for three reasons. First, it informs about the level of institutionalisation of the conjugal relationship. Second, the issue raised here is resolved by the consideration of both – not one of them only – partners' marital status. In addition, households which contain multiple couples with children (multi-family or multi-generation households) were classified separately. Third, information is accessible in the SHP data at individual and household levels, thus allowing to follow Casimir and Tobi's (2011) suggestion to make a clear « distinction between the household as a collective and the individual household members » (p. 503).

The definitive variable was created in the fifth step by applying the distinction between married and unmarried couples to the provisional couple-with-children household types. Eventually, the updated household typology includes twelve different categories, among which four are unique to this household typology (highlighted in Table 4). These unique household types represent step-family and blended-family configurations. However, to keep the label terminology consistent with the other categories as well as with the existing household typologies, the labels 'Couple with children from a previous relationship' and 'Couple with children from the current and previous relationships' were preferred. Additionally, these labels prevent from giving the impression that only couples with children are considered as families.

Table 4. Updated household typology in the SHP (final codes)

| Code | Description – Full labels | Abbreviations |
|------|---|---------------|
| 1 | One-person household | SOLO |
| 2 | One parent with child(ren) (+other) | SOLO PARENT |
| 3 | Married couple without child (+other) | MAR.CPL |
| 4 | Unmarried couple without child (+other) | UNMAR.CPL |
| 5 | Married couple with common child(ren) (+other) | MAR.CPL.C |
| 6 | Unmarried couple with common child(ren) (+other) | UNMAR.CPL.C |
| 7 | Married couple with child(ren) from previous relationship(s) (+other) | MAR.CPL.PR |
| 8 | Unmarried couple with child(ren) from previous relationship(s) (+other) | UNMAR.CPL.PR |
| 9 | Married couple with children from previous & current rel. (+other) | MAR.CPL.PRC |
| 10 | Unmarried couple with children from prev. & current rel. (+other) | UNMAR.CPL.PRC |
| 11 | Other types I: with some parental, conjugal, filial relationships | OTHER I |
| 12 | Other types II: without any parental, conjugal, or filial relationships | OTHER II |

2.2 EXTRA STEPS – SPECIFICALLY ON NEW HOUSEHOLD TYPES

Additional steps at the individual and household levels were carried out on a selection of household types to specify:

- the parental configurations in terms of relation (parent, stepparent, both), gender (male, female), and role (e.g., mother, stepfather);
- the children configuration (one or two sets of children from a previous relationship)
- the sibling configuration (unique child or full, half, stepsibling);
- the age of the youngest child in the household (minor/adult; <25 years old or 25+).

More generally, these complementary steps allow to reveal the diversity and complexity of household structure and composition in various household types, notably on the reconstituted family configurations (see the dedicated part in the Descriptive statistics section on page 25).

In addition, the distinction at the individual level of different types of household members in terms of relation, gender, role, and age allows to compare: 1) a same type of individual in a same type of household structure (of different composition); 2) a same type of individual in different household structures; 3) a different type of individual in a same household structure; 4) a different type of individuals in different household structures. A few examples are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Examples of inter-individual comparisons by household structure and type of household members

| Examples of inter-individual comparisons | | |
|--|--|--|
| Type of individual (household member) | Household (HH) structure | |
| | Same | Different |
| Same | <p>Common child (C) in an unmarried couple with common children HH [6*] vs Common child (C) in a married couple with common children HH [5*]</p> <p>Man (male) in a same-sex couple HH [3;4] vs Man (male) in a different-sex couple HH [3;4]</p> <p><small>*In household types '5' and '6' the household structure is identical but the composition differs</small></p> | <p>Mother in a lone-parent HH [2] vs Mother in a couple with children from a previous relationship HH [7;8]</p> |
| Different | <p>Common child (C) in a couple with children PRC HH [9;10] vs Child from a previous relationship (PR) in a couple with children PRC HH [9;10]</p> | <p>Child.C in a couple with common children HH [5;6] vs Child.PR in a couple with children from a previous relationship HH [7;8]</p> |

2.3 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

This new household typology suffers, nonetheless, from technical limitations. First, the construction relies on the identification numbers. An error in the number leads to wrong links between the household members and consequently to a wrong household type. In addition, the diversity in the relationships between the household members can lead to unexpected configurations. Second, children of same-sex parents cannot, due to technical constraints, be labelled as common to the partners. As there is only one identification number for mother and one for father, in same-sex couples only one parent can be recognised through the identification number. As a result, the child may be labelled as 'from a previous relationship' even if both parents are present in the household. Last, one category can have several meanings because the construction merges types that share some characteristics but experience different realities (e.g. 'Single parent + another person' versus 'Single parent', or Three generations versus Three distinctive units). Similarly, this household typology ignores the child's age, leading to different meanings if the child is five years old (minor) or fifty years old (adult).

In short, these methodological limitations could lead to misclassification and miscount issues, and more generally to data invisibilisation, if no intervention by the data user is made.

The good news is that all three limitations can be overcome⁴ with a complementary and thorough investigation through the data. The first limitation concerns plausibility and is dealt with a manual control and classification. The examination of plausibility and the manual categorisation is included in the syntax as part of step 3. The R script (Morel, 2023) produces an excel file to facilitate the examination of plausibility and to help the data user to decide which category suits the problematic case. In addition, a post-production control syntax is given to identify problematic cases that would not be detected earlier. The second limitation resembles the first (error in identification number) but concerns only same-sex couples with children. This problem can be overcome by comparing the child's birth year with the year when the relationship between the two partners started or any other relevant variable regarding the conjugal relationship. Here too, an R script is provided to identify the potentially problematic cases. The last limitation, sensitive to the research question, can be avoided by checking the household member list of relationships configuration (see step 3) or the age of the children in the household, and decide whether the case should be coded into another category or not.

3. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

This section presents descriptive statistics of the updated typology. After a general view of all household types, followed by a focus on couples with children, it continues with contextual and socio-demographic statistics on these latter. Eventually, it describes some features of the four newly created household types.

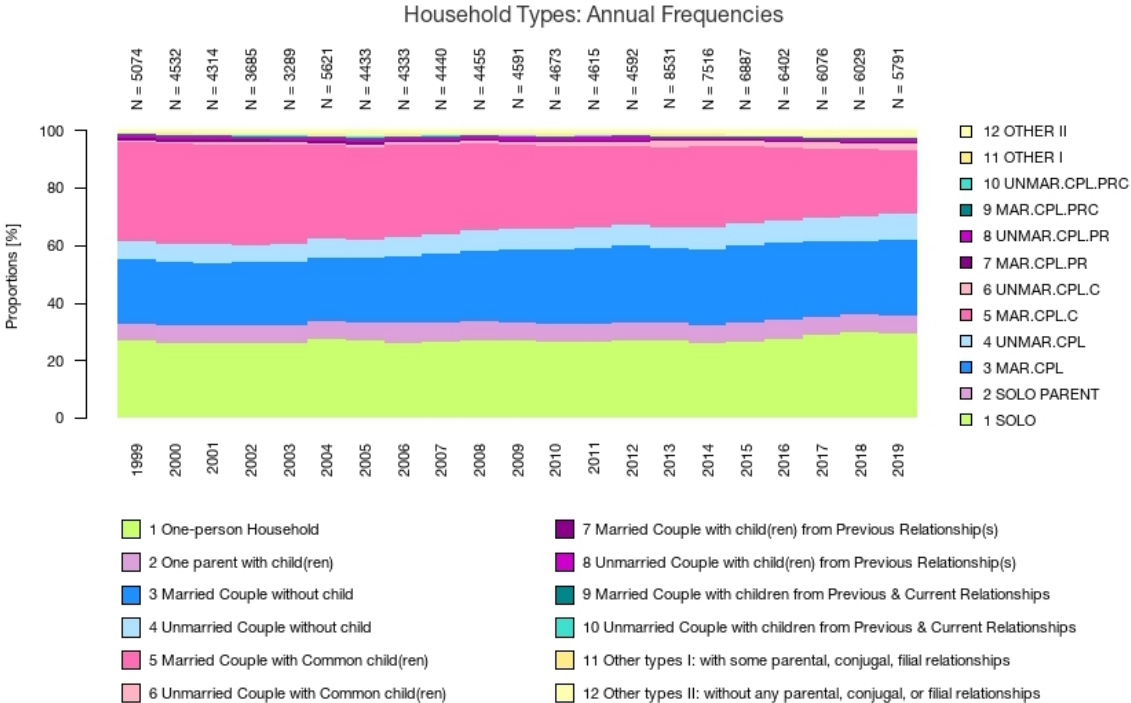
The values are displayed annually when the temporal aspect is part of the analysis and are aggregated from all waves otherwise. Aggregated values represent observations cumulated

⁴ At least partially, because some errors cannot be corrected: either they remain undetected (e.g. the code is correct but erroneously attributed), or information is missing to enable a correction.

from all waves and all households. This means that a same household can have several observations, either in one category or in multiple categories. These cross-sectional and aggregated approaches offer a view at a general, societal level (macro). They allow to answer questions such as: what are the relative frequencies of the different household types? Do they vary across time? Do they differ by socio-demographic characteristics? However, the general view offered by these cross-sectional and aggregated approaches (macro level) does not allow to answer questions about changes and stability within a same household (micro level). To answer such questions a longitudinal approach which follows the same households over time is more appropriate.

3.1 DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD TYPES OVER TIME

The proportions across twenty-one SHP waves of the twelve categories as well as the observed households' total numbers are shown in Figure 3.



Source: Swiss Household Panel 1999-2019 (SHP Group, 2021), author's computations

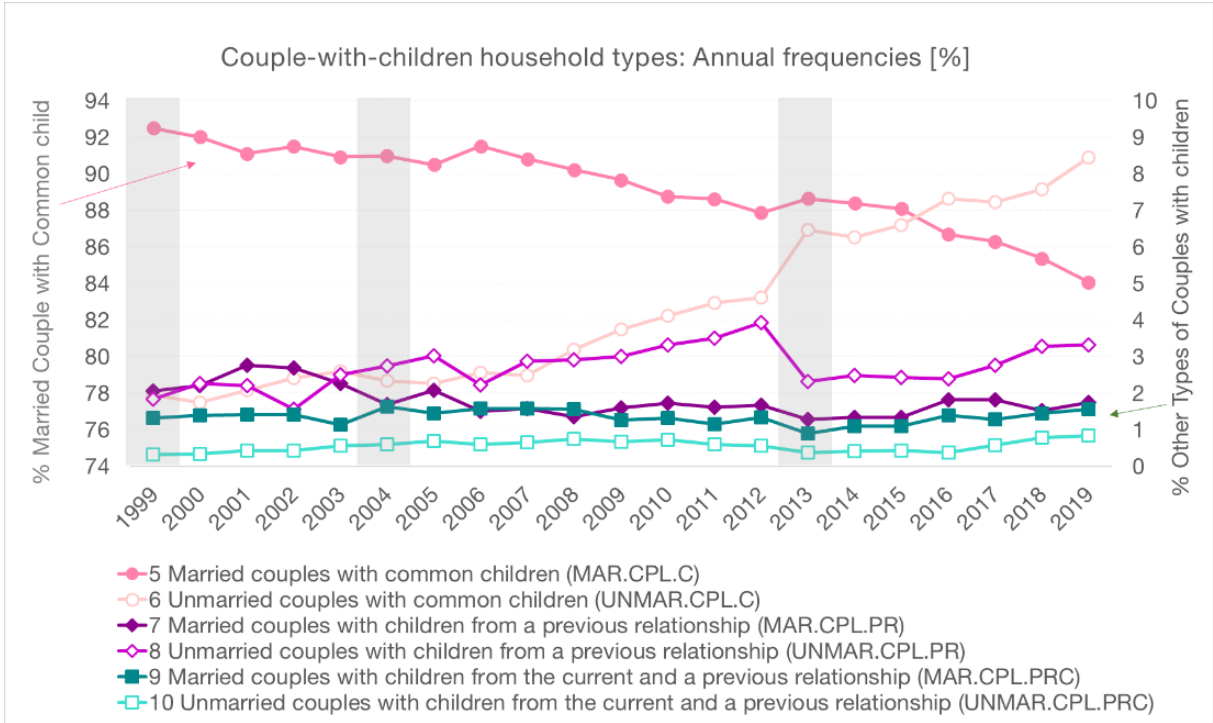
Figure 3. Household types: annual frequencies [%] across 21 waves

Three household types are dominant: the '1 One-person household' (in green, ~27 percent), '3 Married couple without children' (in blue, ~25 percent), and '5 Married couple with common children' (in dark pink, ~30 percent). The four newly created household types, namely reconstituted family configurations (codes 7 to 10), are difficult to see at first glance as they represent less than 2.5 percent of all households in the SHP.

A focus on couples with children is shown in Figure 4. Over time, the dominant type '5' has become somewhat less prevalent (from 92.5 to 84.1) in favour of the other types of couples with children but especially of '6 Unmarried couple with common children', which increased from 2 percent in 1999 to 8.4 in 2019. The trend for 'couples with children from a previous relationship' has followed a similar but smoother pattern, with much lower prevalence though. For married couples (7), the proportion has decreased from 2.1 to 1.7 percent; for unmarried

couples (8), it has increased from 1.8 to 3.3 percent. Another reason for the decrease among married couples with children could be the children's departure from the parental home, leading the household to transition from a couple-with-children to a couple-without-children type. Among the least frequent types, the 'couples with children from current and previous relationships', the proportion has increased from 1.3 to 1.6 percent for married couples (9) and from 0.3 to 0.8 percent for unmarried couples (10).

Overall, despite marginally increasing proportions of reconstituted family households in two decades, cross-sectional annual frequencies indicate that they have remained rare practices; at least at a general level.



Notes: The total population (100%) is limited to six household types described on two scales. On the left, the percentage scale concerns only the dominant type '5 Married couple with common children'; on the right, the scale concerns the other types of couples with children. Grey bars represent the introduction of survey samples (1999, 2004, 2013).

Source: Swiss Household Panel 1999-2019 (SHP Group, 2021), author's computations.

Figure 4. Couple-with-children household types: annual frequencies [%] over 21 years

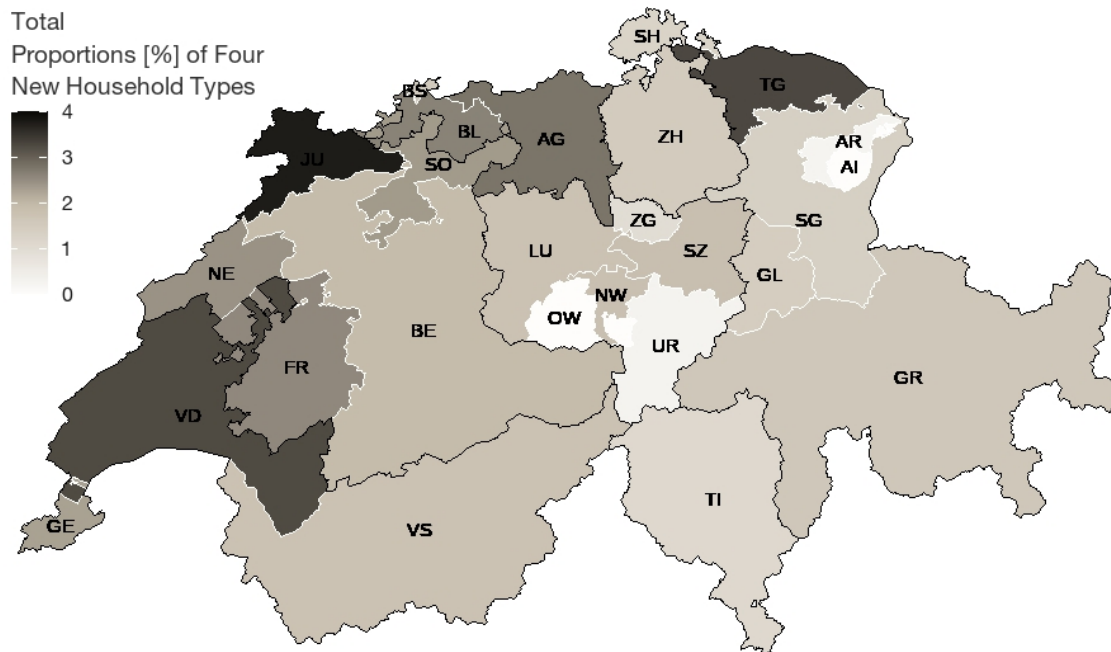
3.2 CONTEXTUAL AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF COUPLES WITH CHILDREN

This subsection contains the analysis of the geographical context followed by socio-demographic characteristics of the six selected household types. Chronological timing is absent from the analyses, the annual values have been aggregated.

Geographical context

The geographical context seems relevant on three aspects. First, the prevalence of reconstituted families differs by regions as shown in Figure 5. On average, the four new types of households represent only 2.1 percent of all observations in the SHP but are displayed more frequently in the western and northern parts of Switzerland (cf. Cantons Jura,

Thurgovia, and Vaud) than in the central part (cf. Cantons Appenzell Inner-Rhodes, Obwald, Uri and Appenzell Outer-Rhodes).



Notes: The four new household types correspond to reconstituted families, namely the married and unmarried couple with children from a previous relationship (stepfamilies: household types coded 7 and 8), and the married and unmarried couple with children from a previous and the current relationship (blended families: codes 9 and 10). The total proportions are the twenty-one annual frequencies summed for these four types and calculated in relation to the totality of the household types (aggregated values). Figure realised with R package 'ggswissmaps' (Petrillon Buri & Stephani, 2016).

Source: Swiss Household Panel 1999-2019 (SHP Group, 2021), author's computations.

Figure 5. Proportions of reconstituted families (the new household types) by Swiss regions

Second, when couples with common children are also considered, Switzerland seems divided in two parts with Ticino, Central and East Switzerland showing higher proportions of married couples with common children (i.e., the so-called traditional family), and the regions of Lake Geneva, Middleland and North-West Switzerland higher proportions of alternative forms of families (see Table 6). Third, despite limited differences between urban and rural communes, there seems to be a trend towards lower proportions of type '6 unmarried couple with common children' in rural communes compared to urban communes.

Table 6. Couples-with-children household types by geographical context

| CONTEXT | Household types | | | | | | TOTAL | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------|--|-----------|---|-----------|-------|-------|
| | Couples with common children | | Couples with children from a previous relationship | | Couples with children from current and previous relation. | | | |
| | Married | Unmarried | Married | Unmarried | Married | Unmarried | | |
| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | |
| <i>Number of Total Observations</i> | N | 31990 | 1600 | 628 | 959 | 477 | 195 | 35849 |
| | % | 89.2 | 4.5 | 1.8 | 2.7 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 100% |
| SWISS REGIONS^b | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Lake Geneva (VD, VS, GE)</i> | % | 86.6 | 5.3 | 2.5 | 3.2 | 1.7 | 0.7 | 6614 |
| <i>Middleland (BE, FR, SO, NE, JU)</i> | % | 88.8 | 4.3 | 1.9 | 3.2 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 8761 |
| <i>North-west (BS, BL, AG)</i> | % | 88.5 | 3.7 | 1.6 | 3.1 | 2.6 | 0.4 | 4990 |
| <i>Zurich (ZH)</i> | % | 88.9 | 6 | 2 | 2.2 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 5521 |
| <i>East (GL, SH, AR, AI, SG, GR, TG)</i> | % | 92.2 | 2.9 | 1.3 | 2.1 | 1 | 0.6 | 4753 |
| <i>Central (LU, UR, SZ, OW, NW, ZG)</i> | % | 91.4 | 4.2 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 0.6 | 1 | 3608 |
| <i>Ticino (TI)</i> | % | 92.9 | 3.9 | 0.6 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 0.4 | 1601 |
| NA | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| COMMUNES^{ac} | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Urban</i> | % | 89 | 4.7 | 1.7 | 2.8 | 1.3 | 0.6 | 26377 |
| <i>Rural</i> | % | 89.8 | 3.7 | 2 | 2.8 | 1.2 | 0.4 | 6889 |
| <i>Other</i> | % | 90.1 | 4.3 | 2 | 1.4 | 1.8 | 0.4 | 2489 |
| NA | N | 91 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 94 |

Notes: The numbers correspond to the aggregated values from the twenty-one waves. A same household can thus be counted several times, either in the same category or a different one. a) Communes were recoded as followed: Urban communes includes Centres, Suburban communes, Peripheral urban communes and Industrial and tertiary sector communes; Rural communes includes Rural commuter communes, Mixed agricultural communes and Peripheral agricultural communes; Other types includes Wealthy and Tourist communes, b) $\chi^2(30) = 343.10, p < .001$; c) $\chi^2(10) = 39.93, p < .001$.

Source: Swiss Household Panel 1999-2019 (SHP Group, 2021), author's computations.

Socio-demographic characteristics

Chi-square tests show that adults in the six couple-with-children household types differ in terms of birth cohort, education level and nationality (see Table 7). Although chi-square tests do not allow to determine which categories differ from each other significantly, some indicative

patterns can be observed. For instance, the proportions of adults living in the '5 Married couple with common children' household type represent 92.8 percent of adults born before 1960 but 77.1 percent of those born in the 1980s. The trend is reverse for the unmarried ones with only 1.5 percent of adults born before 1960 but 16 percent of those born in the 1980s or later. The birth cohorts are also relevant for reconstituted family configurations: people born before 1970 are proportionally more frequent in stepfamily configurations but less frequent in blended family configurations; the trend is reverse for people born after 1970.

Table 7. Couple-with-children household types: parents' socio-demographic characteristics

| INDIVIDUAL SOCIO- DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS | | HOUSEHOLD TYPES | | | | | | TOTAL |
|---|---|---------------------------------|---------|---|---------|--|---------|-------|
| | | Couples with common children | | Couples with children from a previous relationship | | Couples with children from current and previous relation. | | |
| | | Married | Unmarr. | Married | Unmarr. | Married | Unmarr. | |
| | | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Number of Total | N | 63980 | 3200 | 1256 | 1918 | 954 | 390 | 71698 |
| Observations ^a | % | 89.2 | 4.5 | 1.8 | 2.7 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 100% |
| BIRTH COHORTS^b | | | | | | | | |
| <1960 | % | 92.8 | 1.5 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 0.8 | 0.3 | 23057 |
| 1960-1969 | % | 90.1 | 3 | 1.7 | 3.1 | 1.5 | 0.6 | 28998 |
| 1970-1979 | % | 85.6 | 8.5 | 1.1 | 2.4 | 1.6 | 0.8 | 15256 |
| >=1980 | % | 77.1 | 16 | 0.9 | 3 | 1.9 | 1 | 4362 |
| NA | N | 15 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 25 |
| EDUCATION LEVEL^c | | | | | | | | |
| • Fathers and Stepfathers | | | | | | | | |
| Compulsory school (basic) | % | 88.4 | 5.6 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 2.1 | 0.3 | 2715 |
| Secondary sup. (intermediary) | % | 88.9 | 4.0 | 1.9 | 3.0 | 1.3 | 0.9 | 14915 |
| Tertiary (advanced) | % | 89.8 | 4.4 | 1.6 | 2.6 | 1.3 | 0.3 | 16776 |
| NA | N | 1271 | 108 | 15 | 32 | 4 | 2 | 1432 |
| • Mothers and Stepmothers | | | | | | | | |
| Compulsory school (basic) | % | 88.2 | 4.1 | 2.0 | 2.9 | 1.8 | 1.0 | 5871 |
| Secondary sup. (intermediary) | % | 90.7 | 3.4 | 1.5 | 2.6 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 19361 |
| Tertiary (advanced) | % | 86.6 | 6.5 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 1.3 | 0.3 | 9232 |
| NA | N | 1255 | 109 | 9 | 16 | 5 | 2 | 1396 |
| NATIONALITY^d | | | | | | | | |
| Swiss | % | 89.6 | 4.2 | 1.6 | 2.9 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 53315 |
| Non-Swiss | % | 88.0 | 6.0 | 2.2 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 0.6 | 9406 |

HOUSEHOLD TYPES

| INDIVIDUAL SOCIO- DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS | | Couples with common children | | Couples with children from a previous relationship | | Couples with children from current and previous relation. | | TOTAL |
|---|---|---------------------------------|---------|---|---------|--|---------|-------|
| | | Married | Unmarr. | Married | Unmarr. | Married | Unmarr. | |
| | | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Number of Total Observations ^a | N | 63980 | 3200 | 1256 | 1918 | 954 | 390 | 71698 |
| | % | 89.2 | 4.5 | 1.8 | 2.7 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 100% |
| Swiss+Other | % | 88.9 | 4.1 | 1.9 | 2.4 | 2.3 | 0.4 | 8939 |
| NA | N | 16 | 10 | 2 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 38 |

Notes: a) The numbers of total observations correspond to the individual aggregated values from the twenty-one waves of both parents in the households, hence the doubled values. In addition, a same individual can be counted several times, either in the same category or a different one; b) $\chi^2(15) = 2898.95$, $p < .001$; c) $\chi^2(10) = 108.16$, $p < .001$ (fathers); $\chi^2(10) = 215.52$, $p < .001$ (mothers); d) $\chi^2(10) = 198.56$, $p < .001$.

Source: Swiss Household Panel 1999-2019 (SHP Group, 2021), author's computations

Regarding the education level, a higher proportion of adults with a basic education level compared to those with tertiary education can be observed in the blended configurations. A similar trend is observed in the case of '6 Unmarried couple with common children' but only for fathers and stepfathers (5.6 vs 4.4 percent); for mothers and stepmothers, this household type is more related to a high level of education (4.1 vs 6.5 percent). Globally speaking, a basic to intermediary education level seems to be informative of their household types for fathers and stepfathers, while for mothers and stepmothers, intermediary to advanced education seem more relevant.

Finally, non-Swiss parents tend to be more numerous in type '6' than the Swiss or binational respondents (6 percent vs 4.2, resp. 4.1; individual level) but less numerous in type '8' than their Swiss or binational counterparts (1.8 percent vs 2.9 resp. 2.4). Furthermore, a higher proportion of married versus unmarried in the step-family configurations is observed for the non-Swiss respondents (2.2 and 1.8 percent), but the reverse for the Swiss (1.6 and 2.9 percent) and binational respondents (1.9 and 2.4 percent).

The age of the oldest and youngest children in the household is also distributed differently across the various couple-with-children household types. The left graph shows that couples without common children [7;8] have proportionally older children in the household, while the type '6' have dominantly younger children. The graph on the right shows an even stronger relationship between the type of household and the age of the youngest child in the household. Couples in blended configurations [9;10] have mainly minor children (i.e., aged 17 or younger) in the household while couples in step configurations [9;10] have proportionally more adult than minor children in the household. For blended configurations, a comparison between the two graphs reveals a distinct age gap between the oldest child and the youngest child in the household.

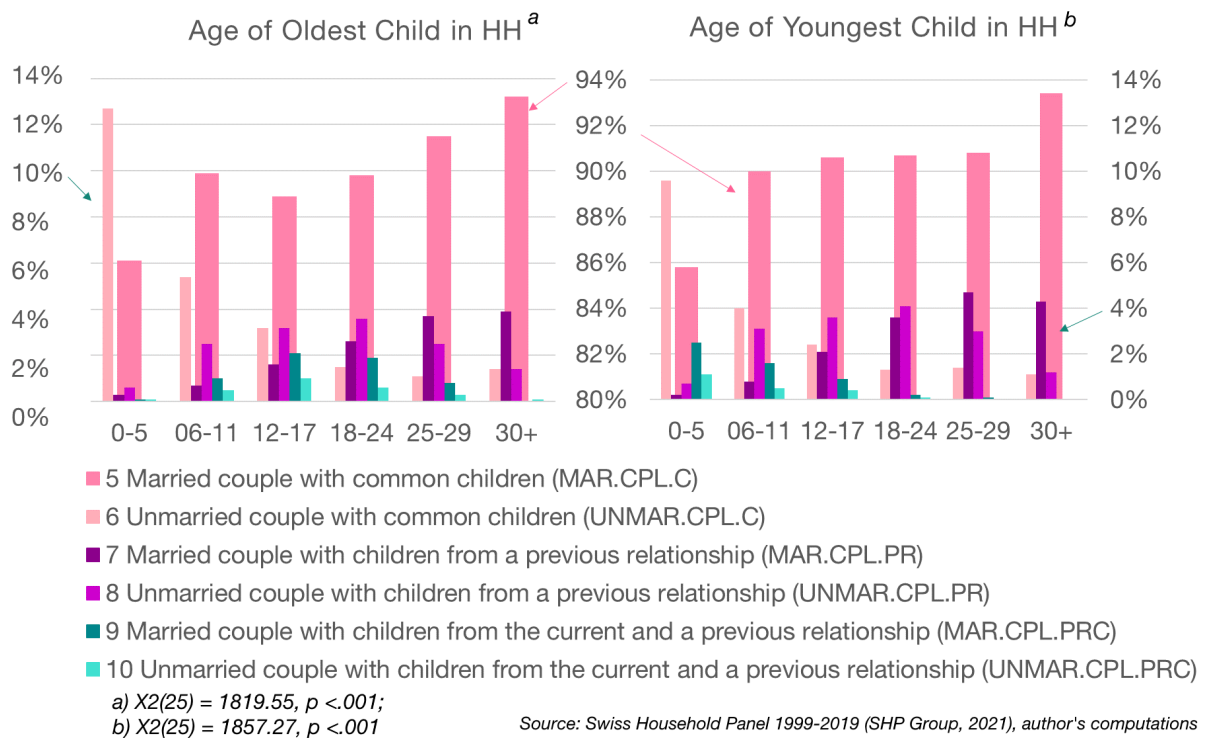


Figure 6. Couple-with-children households: age of children

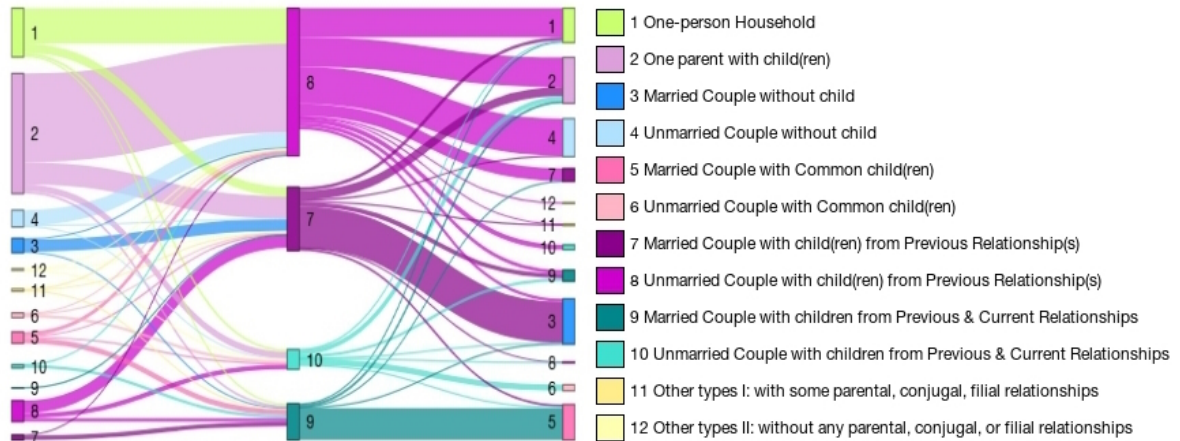
3.3 FOCUS ON THE NEW HOUSEHOLD TYPES

This last subsection focuses exclusively on the new household types. As mentioned, the step- and blended families are rare configurations, representing on average only 2.1 percent of all household types. In absolute values, the annual frequencies across twenty-one waves indicate a maximum of respectively 45, 63, 33 and 13 households. However, 526 households fall into at least one of these types of configurations at some point over time. This result reveals the high variability that occurs at the individual (here households) level and calls to investigate these households more specifically.

Below, I first consider the new household types with a dynamic approach and focus on the transitions to and from these configurations; I then present one specific relational configuration constructed via the additional steps (see the methodology section 0). Both highlight the variety and complexity found in a limited number of family-household configurations. Contrary to the precedent subsection, the values here are not aggregated from all the waves but correspond to situations which occur at least once during the participation in the survey. However, a same household or individual can still be counted several times when a transition is experienced.

Entry to and exit from the new household types

A distinct state sequence analysis (Gabadinho et al., 2011) indicates that 63 households (out of 526 in total) experience no change in their types during their participation in the survey, 164 experience one transition and 299 two or more transitions. Additionally, this type of analysis allows to identify the routes to and from these new household types, as shown in Figure 7 (partially produced with R package 'networkD3' by Allaire et al., 2017).



Source: Swiss Household Panel 1999-2019 (SHP Group, 2021), author's computations

Figure 7. Patterns of entry to and exit from the new household types [7-10]

Individuals in '8 Unmarried couple with children PR' household type mostly arrive from and leave to three household types: the '2 One parent', the '1 One person', and the '4 Unmarried couple without child'. The first two routes correspond to a repartnering (entry) or to a separation (exit), the third to the arrival or departure of a child from a previous relationship in the household. Transitions between the two marital status (8-7) are frequent too.

For individuals in '7 Married couple with children PR' household types, patterns are similar as they also come from and go to '2 One-parent' household type or '3 Married couple', but they tend to increase the number of children instead of decreasing it (7-9).

Entering the '9 Married couple with children PRC' household type comprises the welcoming of a new household member too, whether a new-born (2-9) or a child from a previous union (5-9) or both (1-9). Exiting this household types is more straightforward and concerns mainly the departure of the (step-)child (9-5). Other types of exit routes, proportionally rarer, include the separation with the partner (9-2) and the children (9-1), or the departure of the common child (9-7) or both children (9-3).

The entry routes to the '10 Unmarried couple with children PRC' household type are similar to their married counterpart with the welcoming of new household members (8-10, 6-10, 2-10). The exit routes, however, differ as there is no straightforward path. While individuals similarly see the (step)child leave home (10-6), they can also marry (10-9) or separate from their partner (10-2).

The comparison between household types with similar civil statuses but different children configuration (7 versus 9, 8 versus 10) indicates both similar and divergent patterns. The similarities concern the entry and the exit patterns, whereas the differences relate more to the frequency of the patterns and of the household types in general (CPL.PRC 9;10 are much less frequent than CPL.PR 7;8). Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of the work to determine if, when there is no dominant route, this is it due to low frequencies or to a household type specificity.

Variety and complexity of relational configurations

Table 8 shows the distribution of a parental configuration based on the role of parents. Three main observations can be made. First, 94 percent of the cases concerns reconstituted families with one set of children while configurations with children of both partners' previous relationships remain exceptions. Second, stepfamilies whose 'main' parent is a father represent minority practices, with two out of eleven observations with one set of children. Third, same-sex configurations are almost absent from the picture (less than one percent), with only four observations for female couples and one for male couples. Eventually, from the 526 unique households, 411 experience no change during their participation, 97 experience one transition, 16 two transitions, and 2 households experience three and four transitions respectively. These transitions are mainly a change in the civil status (marriage) or parental status (birth of a common child, or departure of the stepchild).

Table 8. Parent-stepparent configurations in new household types

| New household types | One set of children PR ^{ab} | | | | | | Two sets of children PR | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-----|--|
| | Mother-stepparent | | | Father-stepparent | | | (Step)parent - (step)parent | | | | | |
| COUPLE WITH CHILDREN PR ^b | Mother-Stepfather | Mother-Stepmother | SUB TTL | Father-Stepmother | Father-Stepfather | SUB TTL | (Step)Mo/Fa-(Step)Fa/Mo | (Step)Mother-(Step)Mother | (Step)Father-(Step)Father | SUB TTL | TTL | |
| Married 7 | 122 | 1 | 123 | 40 | 1 | 41 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 176 | |
| Unmarried 8 | 264 | 2 | 266 | 45 | 0 | 45 | 19 | 1 | 0 | 20 | 331 | |
| SUBTOTAL | 386 | 3 | 389 | 85 | 1 | 86 | 31 | 1 | 0 | 32 | 507 | |

| COUPLE WITH CHILDREN PRC ^b | Mother-(step)parent | | | Father-(step)parent | | | (Step)parent - (step)parent | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------|---------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-----|--|
| | Mother-(Step)Father | Mother-(Step)Mother | SUB TTL | Father-(Step)Mother | Father-(Step)Father | SUB TTL | (Step)Mo/Fa-(Step)Fa/Mo | (Step)Mother-(Step)Mother | (Step)Father-(Step)Father | SUB TTL | TTL | |
| Married 9 | 74 | 0 | 74 | 20 | 0 | 20 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 99 | |
| Unmarried 10 | 44 | 0 | 44 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 56 | |
| SUBTOTAL | 118 | 0 | 118 | 30 | 0 | 30 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 155 | |
| TOTAL | 504 | 3 | 507 | 115 | 1 | 116 | 38 | 1 | 0 | 39 | 662 | |

Notes: Values correspond to situations observed at least once during the participation in the survey; a person can be counted twice or more if she experiences a transition. a) One set of children = only one partner has children in the household; two sets of children = both partners have their own children in the household; b) Children PR = Children from a previous relationship, Children PRC = Children from the current and previous relationships.

Source: Swiss Household Panel 1999-2019 (SHP Group, 2021), author's computations.

Despite being minority configurations in terms of absolute values, the analyses dedicated to the new household types showed that these types were synonyms of a high variety of situations and were ideal for studying diversity in the family sphere; whether at the household level (types of parents, types of children) or at the individual level (types of siblings). Beyond the types of people living in these configurations, these analyses also showed diversity in family dynamics, with some households experiencing multiple transitions during their participation in the survey while some others experiencing none.

4. CONCLUSION

No society is static, and all individuals experience change in their lives. Changes that occurred in the family sphere in industrialised countries since the second half of the 20th century has led to a plurality of family forms and more diverse family-life phases. Diversity and plurality in the family forms are well-established concepts but their practical operationalisation through household typologies was unsatisfactory in the SHP data. While the existing typologies distinguish the couple-with-children household types based on the age or number of children, I argue that these criteria are inadequate for describing different family-household configurations. Because varied family forms have different needs and resources (McKie & Callan, 2012; Rossier et al., 2018; Seltzer, 2019), and face specific challenges (Castrén & Widmer, 2015; Gonzales, 2009; Kumar, 2017), the updated household typology differentiates among couples with children those with common children (C) from those with children from a previous relationship (PR) and from a previous and the current relationship (PRC). This distinction allows to identify simple versus complex family-household structure, the multiple relations between the household members and the individuals' position in that structure (Favez, 2018; Kumar, 2017).

More specifically, the new household typology and its construction steps give the opportunity to identify, describe and compare different types of family-households (nuclear, step- and blended families; solo-parent families), as well as various types of parents and children (biological, step-, both), and of siblings (unique or full; biological, half-, and step-). By adopting a family-based classification (Ginther & Pollak, 2004), a child-centred approach (Brown et al., 2015), similar types of people living in different family-household configurations can be compared. Different configurations within a unique type are also easily identified (e.g., households with two sets of children versus one set of children). Therefore, the new household typology allows to assess differences and communalities between various family-household configurations, while taking family diversity and complexity into better consideration and making rarer family-household types more visible.

Descriptive statistics show, however, that the visibility of the newly created household types remains limited for they constitute on average 2.1 percent⁵ of all households (N=526 unique households). Altogether, when considering only couple-with-children household types, the proportions of the new household types have increased by a third in twenty-one years (from 5.5 percent in 1999 to 7.4 percent in 2019). These results indicate that more and more individuals are experiencing those family-household configurations. In addition, the new household types are more frequent in the French-speaking part of Switzerland excluding Valais and in the North-west cantons (AG, BL, SO). A similar regional divide was also found for the '6 Unmarried couple with common children'. When socio-demographic characteristics are considered, this latter type distinctly differs from the other types. This was less the case for the newly created household types, except when it comes to the age of the household members.

⁵ A comparison with the cumulated frequencies (2011-2013, 2014-2016, 2017-2019) produced by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO 2015, 2018, 2021) indicates, on average, similar proportions of reconstituted families. However, the very low prevalence of such household types prevents from doing extensive statistical analyses or comparisons. Oversampling such households (as well as same-sex couple households) in order to increase their frequencies would be a solution to this limitation.

The couples with children from a previous relationship are older parents and have more often adult children in the household. By contrast, the couples with both types of children have systemically a higher number of minor children in the household and are younger too. The focus on the new household types shows a high variety of situations in a limited number of cases and highlights the specificities of reconstituted families: more complex family-household configurations, with multiple types of relationships and roles within the structure. Transitions to and from these household types were observed for 88 percent of the sample with routes associated to family events such as marriage, childbirth, repartnering or separation, or associated to the (step-)children' movements in and out the household.

Next to the methodological limitations (see the corresponding section), the updated typology suffers from two major theoretical limitations. First, it is still based on the legal and biological parent-child ties. In a sense, one could argue that by considering 'only' the parental, conjugal and filial relationships it continues to promote a normative type of family-household configurations. The new typology thus fails to consider multiparent families or multi-family households, families formed by siblings, and families based on emotional ties only. Second, the updated household typology remains limited to co-residence. This criterion prevents from correctly considering families who are spread between several dwellings (e.g., due to shared custody arrangement), Living-apart-together (LAT) relationships, transnational families, families with a member temporarily or more long-term in an institution. In fact, « household residence may not be a key feature of what defines family form at all » (Ribbens McCarthy & Edwards, 2011, p. 74).

Because family goes beyond the household, to represent the full range of family diversity is impossible; especially through a necessarily reduced number of categories as well as limited relationships (parental, conjugal, filial relations) in a defined space (the household). In that regard, the newly created household typology offers an updated but limited portion of reality. Despite these limitations, the updated household typology is of key importance for the question of family diversity and family complexity in Switzerland in three aspects. By considering different configurations of family relationships in the household, the updated household typology allows to show communalities and differences between different household types, which gives instrumental insights about family processes and dynamics. By showing minority family-household configurations (i.e. stepfamilies, blended families, or same-sex couple families), the updated household typology contributes to more diverse social representations of families, both at a macro and a micro level. Finally, and more generally, the new household typology opens questions about the visibility of minority experiences in surveys, and the consequences (advantages and disadvantages for the data users) of this visibilisation.

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