

Call for papers

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25 years of longitudinal surveys in Switzerland: Analysing Social Dynamics in Switzerland and beyond

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Longitudinal (panel) studies have unique analytic advantages that make them essential for measuring and analysing processes of mobility and inertia, notwithstanding challenges such as attrition. More precisely, panel data allow to: (a) measure gross change; (b) distinguish between permanent and transitory aspects of a given development; and (c) study both intergenerational and intragenerational patterns of phenomena such as poverty, income dynamics, health conditions and practices or political positioning, and (d) allow for establishing (robust) inference on causal relationships.

Panel studies have thus played a transformative role in sociological research by providing powerful tools for understanding social dynamics over time. Unlike cross-sectional studies, which offer snapshots of a population at one point, panel studies follow the same individuals, households, or groups across multiple time periods. This allows researchers to capture social changes, causal relationships, and the effects of life events in a way that accurately reflects the complexity of human behavior and social processes.

Because panel studies track the same subjects over time, they are better equipped to handle causality, a significant issue in social research. By examining the sequence of events, researchers can more confidently make assertions about cause-and-effect relationships. This has fueled advances in life course theory, where sociologists explore how key life stages and transitions (e.g., education, marriage, career) impact long-term outcomes.

In the context of today's rapidly changing social landscape, characterized by shifting family

structures, economic instability, and the impact of technology, panel studies are increasingly relevant. They offer a unique window into how new social phenomena affect individual life trajectories and social dynamics over time.

The methodological innovations associated with panel studies, such as handling time-varying covariates or applying advanced statistical techniques like fixed-effects models, have pushed forward debate and improved the rigor of sociological research. This methodological sophistication enhances the field's ability to capture complex, multifaceted relationships, supporting more nuanced sociological theories.

In short, panel studies provide an invaluable resource for sociology, helping researchers build and refine theories about social change, inequality, and individual trajectories over time.

The Swiss Household Panel (SHP) was the first large-scale longitudinal study in Switzerland in 1999, shortly after followed by Transitions in Education and Employment (TREE) in 2000.

To celebrate 25 years of longitudinal surveys in Switzerland, the teams of TREE and the SHP propose a special issue with contributions that show the kind of insights we can gain from longitudinal data, and the variety of ways these data can be analysed. We will consider contributions that focus on dynamics, transitions, trajectories, trends, and life events. We invite contributions based on the TREE and the SHP, or on other longitudinal surveys, such as the "Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe" (SHARE) or the "Swiss Survey of Children and Youth" (COCON). Contributions based on longitudinal data from other countries and comparative analyses are also welcome.

We will consider substantive contributions of all conceptual approaches, and from all areas of the social sciences, addressing topics such as education, employment, income, health, social networks, integration, political behaviour, or attitudes and values.

*Please submit your proposal for a contribution to Sandra Hupka-Brunner (sandra.hupka@unibe.ch) and Robin Tillmann (robin.tillmann@fors.unil.ch) by **20 May 2025**.*

Your submission for the special issue should include the following:

- *name, email address, and affiliations of all the authors*
- *title of the paper,*
- *abstract of around 500 words, structured (topic, aim, methods, results, discussion, conclusion).*

*The guest editors will decide on the acceptance or rejection of the abstract until **20 June 2025**.*

*Selected authors will be invited to submit their manuscript (max. 8,000 words, 50,000 characters including tables, figures and references) by **15 November 2025**. The manuscripts will go through the usual peer-review process of the Swiss Journal of Sociology. Accepted languages are English, German or French. More information about the Swiss Journal of Sociology and the submission process are available on [Information for authors and review process | Swiss Journal of Sociology](#).*

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