

Vivre en Suisse 1999-2000

Leben in der Schweiz 1999–2000

Une année dans la vie des ménages et familles en Suisse
Ein Jahr im Leben der Schweizer Familien und Haushalte

Erwin Zimmermann & Robin Tillmann (éds./Hrsg.)



POPULATION, FAMILLE ET SOCIÉTÉ
VOL. 3



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Introduction

The *Swiss Household Panel* and the Nature of this Book

Robin TILLMANN and Erwin ZIMMERMANN¹

Overview

The main aim of the *Swiss Household Panel* (SHP)² is to observe social change, in particular, the dynamics of how living conditions change over time for the population of Switzerland. During the period 1998–2003, the SHP was one of the structural projects undertaken by the SPP ZUKUNFT SCHWEIZ / DEMAIN LA SUISSE with the following two main purposes (Budowski et al. 2001; Farago 1996; Höpflinger and Wyss 1997; Joye and Scherpenzeel 1997): 1) to ensure a solid database for social reporting about stability and changes in living arrangements and well-being in Switzerland to complement data collected by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, and 2) to promote the opportunities for quantitative social science research, by making high quality data available to Swiss social scientists and to the international social science research community. The Swiss Household Panel is a joint project run by the SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, the SWISS FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE and the UNIVERSITY OF NEUCHÂTEL.

Since its inception in 1998, the *Living in Switzerland* survey of the Swiss Household Panel (SHP) has built up a unique longitudinal database in Switzerland. The SHP survey is conducted using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). In comparison with panels such as the SOEP in Germany and the BHPS in Britain which concentrate on socio-economic conditions, the SHP covers a broad range of topics and approaches in the social

- 1 The content of this introductory chapter is based on work and writings by all the members of the SHP-team. The authors wish to thank in alphabetical order: Denise Bloch, Monica Budowski, Alexis Gabadinho, Roberto Genesi, Nicolas Portmann, Jean-Hugues Ravel, Annette Scherpenzeel, Boris Wernli.
- 2 The website of the Swiss Household Panel is: www.swisspanel.ch

sciences. The questionnaires (household and individual) are designed to collect both *objective* data (resources, living conditions, life events, social position, participation, etc.) and *subjective* data (attitudes, perceptions, satisfaction with various life domains, etc.). The analysis of the SHP data enables a large variety of research questions to be covered and produces a wealth of results with potentially important policy implications:

- a) *Evolving patterns in changing living conditions, quality of life and life satisfaction*: Who is progressively better or worse off, and why? What are the living conditions necessary for a good quality of life? Which objective and subjective factors most strongly determine life satisfaction?
- b) *Family life and interaction with society at large*: What are the consequences of various forms of cohabitation? In terms of social support and solidarity? Which “services are produced and consumed” within the family unit, obtained from the outside or provided by external units (e. g. care for children and the elderly)?
- c) *Labour market participation, work and life satisfaction*: What are the different forms of labour market participation (full-time vs. part-time employment, precarious and insecure employment, sub-employment vs. over-employment, under- and over-qualification, etc.) and their relationships with work and life satisfaction? How do people (especially women with small children) handle conflicting demands from the workplace and from home?
- d) *Poverty and social exclusion*: What kind of living conditions are associated with poverty and social exclusion? What are the family or individual characteristics of the poor and the mechanisms which lead to poverty and lead out of it? Who remains poor despite policy measures of support? What are the complex relationships between poverty, social isolation and externally induced social exclusions?
- e) *Gender, social, and economic participation*: How do life trajectories diverge depending on gender? Why do professional careers of men and women with similar educational resources still diverge?
- f) *Social determinants of health*: How is the life course of individuals and families of widely different origins and social conditions related to health behaviour and outcomes? What are the consequences of worsening living conditions on health? What impact does ill-health have on living conditions, employment and quality of life later in time?

Evidence-based answers to these and other questions are highly valuable for developing and implementing new policies; through increased transparency they facilitate political decision-making.

The *sample* of the SHP is a stratified random sample of private households whose members represent the non-institutional population resident in Switzerland. For the first wave in 1999, slightly over 5,000 households and almost 8,000 persons have been successfully interviewed. To date, the five waves have been carried out successfully and the sixth wave will start with an up-dated sample in September 2004.

By the end of 2003, the *Living in Switzerland* research network had 260 registered members and about 160 researchers analysing data on a variety of topics: types of households and families, poverty, health, living conditions of elderly people, living conditions of first and second-generation immigrants, political participation, and life satisfaction, etc. The rapid growth in data use has been considerably aided by the NSF “SHP-Data Analysis Grant” administered by the SHP Scientific Board. The active data users belong to the following institutions: *Swiss universities* (56 %), *public administrations* (19 %), *private institutes* (15 %), *international academic institutions* (12 %).

Created as a “data generator”, the database allows analyses in different disciplines using a large variety of conceptual approaches. At the outset the SHP survey was designed and operationalized so that national and international comparative analyses would be possible. SHP data is compatible with various databases generated by the *Swiss Federal Statistical Office* (SFSO), in particular the two largest periodic population surveys, the Swiss Labour Force Survey and the Swiss Health Survey. In May 2002 the *Swiss National Science Foundation* and the *Swiss Federal Statistical Office* finalized a strategic agreement called “LiS 2020 – LIVING IN SWITZERLAND 2020” (Zimmermann et al. 2002) dealing with the continued operation of the Swiss Household Panel after 2003 in conjunction with the EU-SILC (*European Statistics on Income and Living Conditions*). Both institutions are equal partners in the collection of annual cross-sectional and panel data and share the funding. A cooperative project will begin in 2004 and hopefully trigger considerable synergies between the “statistical and academic communities”. The agreement builds on and expands the already fruitful collaboration between Swiss social sciences and official statistics.

With regard to international collaboration, the SHP is a partner in the *Consortium of Household Panels for European Socio-Economic Research* (CHER). The CHER core data set on income, employment, living conditions and health contains information from the following countries: *Germany* (since 1984); *United Kingdom* (since 1991); *Denmark, Netherlands, France, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal* (since 1994); *Austria and Finland* (since 1995); *Sweden* (since 1997); *Switzerland* (since 1999). The SHP also forwards its data to the LIS (Luxembourg Income Study). Both data sets enable international comparisons in the fields of labour-market participation and income from various sources both at the household and individual levels. Finally, starting in 2004, the SHP data will be comparable to the data from the *European Statistics of Income and Living Conditions* (EU-SILC) which is the continuation of the European Community Household Panel (ECHP). Its main purpose is to collect comparable cross-sectional and longitudinal data on living conditions and income, with particular emphasis on poverty and social exclusion, for each country and for the European Union as a whole.

The annual collection of panel data from a relatively large sample is a costly undertaking. The Swiss National Science Foundation's Priority Programme *SPP – ZUKUNFT SCHWEIZ / DEMAIN LA SUISSE* has allocated considerable financial resources to the Swiss Household Panel since its inception in 1998. As the SPP has come to an end in December 2003, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) is committed to further financing the SHP from 2004 onwards. This has been made possible by the creation of a new NSF section supporting lasting infrastructures in physics, medicine and the social sciences.

Various organisations located in Neuchâtel and in some way connected to its university are engaged in quantitative social science research. They are: the *Swiss Household Panel* (SHP), the *Swiss Information and Data Archive Service for the Social Sciences* (SIDOS) and the *Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies* (FSM) and the *Swiss Federal Statistical Office* (SFSO). For Switzerland, they represent a great potential for applied quantitative social science research. The University of Neuchâtel has committed itself to the creation of a centre of excellence, called the *Swiss Observatory of Social Change*, as an integrating platform for the already existing project oriented collaborations and scientific exchanges.

Social Change and Household Panels

Dynamic transformations on a multitude of levels constitute an important characteristic of modern societies (Leisering and Walker 1998; Suter and Pahud 2000; Therborn 1995). Demographic changes call for analyses (Fux et al. 1997), as well as various changes in the labour market (Flückiger 2000). The latter, in particular, are considered to impact on the well-being (material and psychological) of households and individuals (Paugam 2000), as well as on the informal production of services, such as child care or care of elderly (Bauer 1998). The proportion of women in the labour market is increasing, often entailing changes in the organization of domestic life (Buchmann et al. 2002). In Switzerland, data is available to describe the current social structure. Panel data allow for more: *panel data* are data collected about the same units at more than one point in time. They allow insight into dynamic transformations – social processes and changes over time (Berthoud and Gershuny 2000). Instead of simply taking a snapshot of people and households at any given point in time, interviewing the same households and their members annually enables changes to be observed for the same entities and the reconstruction of the nature and development of their actions, the examination of precedents, concurrent dynamics, and the consequences of alternative strategies.

Household panels provide insights into the population on three levels: (i) social change can be studied at a micro-level, (ii) on an intermediate level (the level linking the individual with society, i. e. the household level) and (iii) the level regarding the assessments of dynamics between the structural and the cultural dimension and behaviour over time. (i) *The first perspective* enables the observation of individual lives, relating them to living conditions, and decisions or reactions following life events. (ii) An intermediate level of analysis permits an understanding of the interrelationship between socio-structural and cultural aspects and individuals' resources, constraints, and strategic responses or deliberate choices. Household and family dynamics shed light on gender, generation relationships and their possible consequences. Household and family strategies and reactions may be studied, as in principle all the household members aged 14 and older are interviewed. This perspective leads to a better understanding of the link between individuals and society. Households (often equivalent to families) as units of analysis provide a rare opportunity to examine the "black box" of household

dynamics, i. e. the constraints or privileges of unequal access to resources across time (e. g. division of labour in terms of paid and unpaid work, or caring responsibilities, unequal access to household resources such as time and money, life events, etc.). (iii) Finally, panel data offer the opportunity to go beyond the description of the status quo, by allowing us to assess the dynamics between the structural and the cultural dimension and behaviour over time. In many domains, change takes place slowly and gradually, even though it may not be immediately apparent. Furthermore, although the dynamics and/or patterns of the same social phenomenon may have changed, the phenomenon as such continues to exist. For example, although poverty may be present at a fairly constant rate over time, the mechanisms of entry and exit may have altered, or the population groups constituting the “poverty-prone” may have changed. Alternatively, the institution “family” may continue to exist but its meaning, internal organization or other factors may have varied. Snapshots from transversal surveys reveal a status quo and reveal over time net change or, alternatively, document stability. Gross changes, however, cannot be measured. In sum, household panels are considered to be tools for fine-tuning our conceptions and analyses of social dynamics. The dynamics (or social changes) at the macrosocial level do not directly belong to the field of observation covered by a panel survey. What panel surveys are intended to investigate, however, are the effects of changes at the macrosocial level on the living conditions of individuals and households, the manner in which these changes affect them and how they produce social change on a microsocial level.

While a repeated cross-sectional survey allows us to calculate *net transitions* between two dates (e. g. a drop in the proportion of the population receiving social benefits, or a rise in unemployment), *gross transitions* (e. g. the number of unemployed still without a job one year later) can only be estimated with panel or cohort data. Beyond the sheer estimation of gross transitions the analysis of panel data also helps to “understand” the observed transitions i. e. the circumstances (family events, a change in the activity status, events related to the state of health, etc.) causing movements in and out of a given state (e. g. the fact that an individual or a household is living below the poverty line). In other words, it is not only possible to study the change in numbers but also the flows between various states and to establish links of causal relationships between different factors and sequences of events. Last but not least, panel data also reveal the continuities, the stable features over time. Where a status

quo can be defined, change as well as continuity can be examined. Indeed, despite profound structural changes that contemporary societies are currently undergoing, which are the consequence of economic globalization, uneven regional development around the world, and worldwide demographic changes in general, daily life is characterized more by stability than change. This is true as much for social structures, norms and values, as for individual and institutional behaviour. Daily life is enacted within a prevalent social order in time and place, characterized by a structural and cultural dimension that is lived, produced, reproduced, and altered by behaviour. These dimensions (the structural and cultural dimension, and that concerning behaviour) are found both on a macro and a micro level. Change may take place within any of the three dimensions and need not necessarily go hand in hand with changes in the other dimensions.

The *Swiss Household Panel* and other National Household Panels

Thus, the principal aim of the *Swiss Household Panel* (SHP) is to observe social change, in particular, the dynamics of changing *living conditions* in the population of Switzerland, which has been carried out in annual surveys since 1999.

The Swiss Household Panel was inspired by various international panel studies. However, it is not a blend of existing panels for two main reasons: the SHP (1) covers various domains of everyday life and not only one or two in depth and (2) attempts to define the dimensions necessary to continuously anticipate social change in Switzerland. This is done by means of a yearly panel survey based on an architecture, situating the types of questions to be chosen for the survey (“objective questions” such as questions about living conditions; “subjective questions”, such as the evaluation of certain objective situations and behaviour as a reaction to them). The two types of questions are necessary to understand both the change of “objective” conditions and the importance given to them or the assessments made about them. Changes may occur regarding the subjective assessments or regarding the objective conditions, and they need not occur simultaneously. Thematic and methodological adaptations to the particularities of Switzerland were carried out and proved to be necessary.

The *household questionnaire* covers the following areas:

Composition of the household: containing basic information about all the members of the household, such as the age, sex, relations between the members of the household, nationality, level of education and occupational status;

Accommodation: containing “objective” elements, such as the type and size of the accommodation, home ownership or tenancy, the cost of and/or the subsidies received for housing, as well as “subjective” elements, such as satisfaction with the accommodation, evaluation of the state of the accommodation and assessment of perceived nuisances;

Standard of living: referring to a list of goods owned by the household or activities that its members can carry out, together with the reason (financial or otherwise) why goods are not owned or activities not carried out;

The household’s financial situation: containing “objective” information such as the existence of financial difficulties (and the household’s reactions to different situations), indebtedness and the reasons for it, the total household income, the amount of tax paid, and the social and private transfers, as well as “subjective” elements, such as satisfaction, an estimate of the minimum income the household considers necessary or an evaluation of how the household’s financial situation has evolved;

The household and the family: collecting information on any external help available to the household for housework or child-care, the sharing of tasks, and decision-making within the household.

The *individual questionnaire* is administered to every household member aged 14 years or older; the interviews cover the following topics:

The household and the family: comprising “objective” elements, such as the existence of children living outside the household, the sharing of housework and child-care, as well as “subjective” elements, such as satisfaction with private life and with the sharing of the housework;

Health and “victimization”: covering “objective” elements, such as general illness and health problems, visits to the doctor and hospitalization, long-term handicaps, threats or attacks endured, together with “subjective” elements such as the self-perceived state of health, the estimated evolution of the state of health, or satisfaction with one’s own health;

Social origins: referring to information related to profession, professional position, educational level, and the nationality of both parents together with possible financial difficulties in the family of origin;

Education: covering the various levels of achieved education, education currently being pursued, fluency in foreign languages, and participation in on-the-job training;

Employment: considering four different aspects: firstly, the collection of information necessary to determine the status of the interviewee in the labour market, secondly, information covering the current main employment, thirdly, information on second jobs, and finally details about the last main job held; these modules also comprise “objective” elements, such as profession, status of the profession, the number of hours worked, work schedule, atypical work, as well as “subjective” elements such as satisfaction with various aspects of the job, the evaluation of promotion prospects or of personal qualifications;

Income: including information such as total personal income, total professional income, received social transfers, received private transfers, and other income, and “subjective” elements, such as satisfaction with the financial situation and an evaluation of changes concerning the personal financial situation;

Participation, integration, networks: taking into account “objective” elements, such as frequency of social contacts, non-remunerated work outside the home, participation in associations, membership of and participation in religious groups, and “subjective” elements such as the evaluation of potential practical help and emotional support (from the partner, family, friends, etc.);

Politics and values: referring to “objective” elements such as political participation, membership, party identification, political positioning; and “subjective” elements such as satisfaction with the political system, the evaluation of issues or even political values; a few indicators of gender attitudes are available; and finally

Leisure and media: comprising “objective” elements, such as leisure activities and the use of the media (e. g. Internet), as well as “subjective” elements, such as satisfaction with leisure and free time³.

3 For a more detailed presentation, see Robin Tillmann, Erwin Zimmermann, Monica Budowski, Boris Wernli, Annette Scherpenzeel, and Alexis Gabadinho (2001). «*Vivre en Suisse*». *Panel suisse de ménages 1999-2003. Présentation du projet*. Actualités OFS. Neuchâtel: Office Fédéral de la Statistique (also available in German).

From the second wave on, the questionnaire also includes a “life events” module and an “occupational calendar” module (covering the 12 months prior to the interview). From the third wave onwards a module, containing both subjective and objective elements, about the situation of young people in school or studying was added. The income module was continuously improved and has become comparable with the SILC (European Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) for all questions that can be asked using the CATI data collection mode.

From the very start, the SHP planned to obtain, on a single occasion, additional information about the respondents’ life course prior to their panel study involvement. A retrospective *biographical questionnaire* was developed for that purpose, asking about educational, working, and family history. This questionnaire was to be sent by mail. However, the main objective of a panel study is to obtain repeated measures and it therefore is crucial to keep the drop-out rate between interviewing waves as low as possible. It was feared that an extra mail questionnaire between two regular interview waves would burden the respondents and thus discourage some of them from further participation in the phone survey. In general, the drop-out rate of panels appears to be highest at the second wave of interviewing and attain a stable rate from the third wave onwards. Therefore, the biographical questionnaire was only sent after the second survey wave. A pre-test was carried out to estimate the effect of the mailing of the biographical questionnaire on the response rates in the subsequent panel wave. In addition, the effect of combining the questionnaire with a special incentive was evaluated (Scherpenzeel et al. 2002). As a result of the evaluation of the “experiment”, namely that no particularly high drop-out rate (defined as more than 5 %) could be found, the final biographical self-administered questionnaire was sent after the third wave (2002) to all persons, 14 years and older who are eligible respondents of participating households and who had not been sent a biographical questionnaire after the second wave (2001) during the “experiment”. The participation rate is 70 % for the “experiment” and slightly lower for the final survey.

The *sample* of the SHP is a stratified random sample of private households whose members represent the non-institutional population resident in Switzerland. The first wave of the SHP-survey data was collected in autumn 1999 through February 2000 (Table 1). These households and their members are to be re-interviewed annually for 10 to 15 years. Due to continuous loss of these original (longitudinal) sample members (deaths, hospitalization, migration,

refusals) the SHP will refresh the sample every four years by injecting the number of “new” households required to obtain a starting base in 2004 of 5,000 households that includes the remaining number of households with longitudinal respondents.

Table 1: Participation in the “Living in Switzerland Survey” 1999–2003

Number of participating units	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003*
Participating households	5,074	4,532	4,314	3,690	3,150
Persons living in participating households	12,931	11,678	11,116	9,544	8,000
Persons over 14 years old eligible for individual interview	10,293	9,297	8,942	7,515	6,300
Interviewed persons	7,799	7,073	6,601	5,705	5,200
Proxy Interviews	2,638	2,381	2,174	1,987	1,800
Longitudinal respondents	–	6,335	5,425	4,480	3,900

* provisional figures

Source: Swiss Household Panel

The reference population for the Living in Switzerland survey is the population permanently resident in Switzerland. The sample which has been chosen is representative of the whole of Switzerland, without regional imbalances. It includes households of various nationalities provided that their members live on Swiss territory throughout the year. Seasonal workers, cross-border workers, and foreign tourists are not part of the permanent resident population and are therefore not taken into account in the sample (Table 2). Switzerland is divided into seven large statistical regions. The methodology section of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office drew a random sample in each of these on the basis of SWISSCOM’s electronic telephone directory (TERCO) which covers over 98 % of all private households⁴. The households selected in this way are a proportionally stratified random sample of the various social groups in all regions of Switzerland. However, as the interviews are carried out in the

4 In 1999, only 2 % of households in Switzerland did not have a phone connection. In the absence of a reliable and accessible comprehensive register of Swiss households, the phone directory TERCO by Swisscom offers the best base for random sampling of households. Due to the considerable expansion of mobile phones, the situation is changing quickly. In 2000, an estimated 8 % of households do not have a registered phone connection.

three official national languages (German, French, and Italian), population groups which have recently migrated to Switzerland are likely to be under-represented.

Table 2: The resident population of Switzerland and SHP sample characteristics

Code	Regions of the national territory (cantons)	Population in 1999		SHP sample, 1999 (1st wave, number of eligible persons)		SHP sample, 1999 (1st wave, number of individual interviews)	
		#	in %	#	in %	#	in %
1	Lake Geneva region (VD, VS, GE)	1,295,000	18 %	1,797	17 %	1,366	17 %
2	Mittelland (BE, FR, SO, NE, JU)	1,656,000	23 %	2,622	25 %	2,001	26 %
3	North-west Switzerland (BS, BL, AG)	988,000	14 %	1,491	14 %	1,146	15 %
4	Zurich	1,199,000	17 %	1,680	16 %	1,254	16 %
5	Eastern Switzerland (GL, SH, AR, AI, SG, GR, TG)	1,042,000	15 %	1,406	14 %	1,012	13 %
6	Central Switzerland (LU, UR, SZ, OW, NW, ZG)	677,000	9 %	920	9 %	693	9 %
7	Ticino	308,000	4 %	453	4 %	327	4 %
Totals		7,165,000	100 %	10,369	100 %	7,799	100 %

The *household* concept refers not only to households comprising individuals or groups of individuals but also collective households (e. g. homes or prisons) and non-profit organizations (NPO) such as charitable organizations, political parties, trade unions, religious communities. However, the Living in Switzerland survey includes *only private households*, collective households and NPOs are excluded. The Living in Switzerland survey has adopted a fairly broad definition of a “household” so that it does not automatically underestimate new types of cohabitation (in particular collective non-institutionalized ways of living) as compared with the classic concept of the “household/family”. Consequently, the *SHP household definition* is based on five fundamental cumulative criteria: 1) sharing *at least one common dwelling room*; 2) *sharing certain expenses*; 3) taking *at least one meal together per week*; 4) *stability* (the household

is considered a long-term arrangement); and 5) the individuals consider it to be their *main dwelling* (rather than a second home, work-related accommodation, etc.). In each household a “reference person” needs to be defined. In the Living in Switzerland survey the reference person is designated freely by the household itself. However, it is specified that this person should *know the household very well*. The reference person should also, as far as possible, be 1) an adult (age 18 or older), 2) a *longitudinal respondent* of the panel – an original sample member (OSM), and 3) the *same person* from one wave to the next. In the first wave, it is the reference person who answers the questions of the grid and the household questionnaire (in addition to the individual questionnaire).

The *method* of data collection is CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing). This method was complemented by a written self-administrated biographical questionnaire that was carried out during the months of April to June in 2001 as an experiment to examine whether this written survey would have a negative impact on the CATI survey response rates. As this was not the case (Scherpenzeel et al. 2002), the written self-administrated biographical questionnaire was sent in 2002 to all the 2001 wave respondents that had not taken part in the “experiment”. The written self-administrated biographical questionnaire will also therefore complement the CATI method periodically for the panel survey once in between four consecutive waves to obtain the same information from the “new” members of the panel as are available for the original sample members from 1999 in order to provide greater “depth” for longitudinal analyses of the data collected with the CATI method.

The data collection of the *first wave* was carried out from September 1999 to February 2000. Of the 14,174 addresses receiving an invitation to participate in the survey, telephone contacts were made with 12,084 households (85 %). At the household level, the net response rate was 64 %. To warrant reliable extrapolations for the whole resident population of Switzerland and a panel of about 4,000 households and 6,600 individuals for the second wave, it was necessary to obtain the participation of at least 5,000 households in the first wave. This goal was achieved, as the first wave yielded valid data for 5,074 households and 7,799 individuals. As the first wave was to furnish a wealth of “baseline information”, the questionnaire was very detailed and rather long regarding the interview time. The household interviews lasted an average of 12 minutes and individual interviews an average of 55 minutes. In total, slightly fewer than 8,500 hours of telephone interviews were carried out. The data collection for the *second wave* started in September 2000 and

ended in February 2001. Valid data was collected for 4,425 households and 7,073 individuals. The longitudinal sample (individuals interviewed in the first and second waves) comprises 6,335 individuals.⁵ The data collection for the *third wave* was carried out from mid-September 2001 to the end of January 2002. With the exception of “final refusals”, all the first wave households were contacted in early September 2001. 4,139 households and 6,601 persons were validly interviewed. The data collection for the *fourth wave* was carried out from mid-September 2002 to the end of January 2003. 3,587 households and 5,705 persons were validly interviewed. By the end of the fourth wave, the longitudinal sample comprised around 4,500 individuals. Table 3, below, displays interview participation figures for the years 1999–2002. Due to panel attrition (non-traceable departures, refusals, deaths, etc.), the number of households and individuals validly interviewed in wave 4 represent roughly 70 % of the corresponding numbers in 1999 (wave 1).

Table 3: Participation rates

	1999		2000		2001		2002	
	gross	net	gross	net	gross	net	gross	net
Individual response rate	76 %	85 %	76 %	84 %	74 %	88 %	76 %	89 %
Grid response rate	42 %	64 %	87 %	91 %	82 %	88 %	80 %	86 %

Source: Swiss Household Panel.

Remarks: The *gross* response rate is the ratio of the number of respective interviews completed to number of individuals or households who were contacted but did not participate for whatever reason. The first year, 1999, however, is an exception, as the gross individual response rate refers to the ratio of number of individuals interviewed to the number of all household members eligible to be interviewed. The *net* response rate is the ratio of the number of interviews completed to the number of individuals or household reached excluding those who did not participate for neutral reasons.

Given that in a panel survey it is important that the data obtained continue to be representative of the target population, it is most important to ensure that respondents continue to participate year-on-year, or more precisely said, that no systematic losses of participants occur. Given that the losses are most

5 These data are principally used in this book.

probably not random, a high and continued participation rate is the best solution to ensure representativity. Representativity of the sample is important not only for the examination of incidences of phenomena, but also for the analyses of changes in individual trajectories and circumstances and the identification of the reasons for them. Various means or strategies are possible to counteract attrition: (i) measures of encouragement for participation and panel maintenance strategies (information, utility, interest), and (ii) methodological analyses as to which strategies might be most conducive to best response rates. The Swiss Household Panel has from the beginning applied both these two strategies (Zimmermann and Budowski 2003).

For panel designs, *cross-sectional* and *longitudinal* weights need to be distinguished. The cross-sectional weights are to improve the *sample estimates* for the population from which the sample is drawn. The longitudinal weights aim at maintaining the first wave sample characteristics over time, despite losses of original sample members. *Cross-sectional weights* compensate for unequal selection probabilities (*design weights*) and response rates (*response weights*), most public surveys assign weights to the response units (households and persons). Under certain conditions, weighting the data helps obtain approximately unbiased estimates of population parameters. The characteristics of a sample may still be improved by adjusting sample distributions to the distributions observed in the population (*post stratification weights*). The *cross-sectional household weights* for the SHP-first wave data adjust for *design* and *non-response* biases (Cornali and Vonlanthen 2001). The household weights correct mainly the non-response of households composed of foreign nationals and elderly persons, a bias which is common in Swiss household surveys. Within the participating households *individual weights* are computed in order to adjust a) for *non-response* differences according to sex, age and nationality and b) for deviations from the structural characteristics of the resident population in Switzerland, mainly sex within age groups, nationality and geographic regions. *Statistics Canada* has been mandated to calculate the *cross-sectional* and *longitudinal weights* for waves 2 to 4 (Latouche and Naud 2001).

The data obtained was checked for its *validity* by comparison with existing data sources. The comparison with 1990 census data indicates that single-person households are somewhat underrepresented within the SHP. This tends to be the case in surveys in general as single persons are more difficult to reach at home (see Table 4).

Table 4: The SHP household structure in comparison with the census data 1990

Type of households	SHP-1999		SFSO-1990	
	#	%	#	%
Single-person households	1,355	26.7 %	920,330	32.2 %
Single parents	300	5.9 %	145,108	5.1 %
Couples without children	1,442	28.4 %	755,989	26.4 %
Couples with children	1,811	35.7 %	919,433	32.2 %
Other households	166	3.3 %	118,906	4.2 %
Total	5,074	100.0 %	2,859,766	100.0 %

The data from the first wave of the SHP is very similar to that obtained in other household surveys carried out periodically by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO). For example, Table 5 compares the distribution of the population according to status within the labour market.

Table 5: Status in the labour market according to sex (percentages, weighted results)

Status in the Labour Force	Swiss Labour Force Survey 1999			ERC98 Living conditions			Living in Switzerland 1999		
	men	women	total	men	women	total	men	women	total
Working employed	74.4	55.5	64.7	76.4	56.7	66.2	74.4	55.1	64.4
Unemployed	3.7	2.6	3.1	1.9	2.3	2.1	1.4	2.3	1.9
Non-working	21.9	41.8	32.2	21.7	40.9	31.6	24.2	42.6	33.7

The Nature of this Book

This book is the result of collaboration between the members of the Swiss Household Panel and various authors from several institutions (see list of authors at the back of the book). Its purpose is to introduce the Swiss Household Panel, both to general readers and to potential users, and to demonstrate its usefulness for understanding change in Switzerland. The book gives a first picture of cross-year change in the late 1990s. It uses the available data from the Swiss Household Panel at the beginning of the project: including Wave 1 (collected between September 1999 and February 2000) and Wave 2 (started in September 2000 and completed in February 2001). One chapter uses the data from the biographical questionnaire. Each wave contains a large body of information about events, conditions and subjective assessments during this period. It does provide some knowledge about Swiss social trends that is unavailable elsewhere, albeit with all the necessary cautionary warnings associated with inferring change from only two waves of data.

The initial findings presented here will form the basis of more in-depth longitudinal research over the coming years.

This book contains five parts and thirteen chapters. The *first part* is concerned with *social stratification and resources*.

In *Chapter 1*, *Tillmann and Budowski* tackle the question of poverty in Switzerland. After an overview of the problems linked to definition, measurement, and poverty indicators, the authors define various approaches to explain the phenomenon (in terms of social stratification, cumulated disadvantages, and finally individualization). Two of their results can be mentioned in this introduction. First of all, the population consistently defined as poor increases slightly during the period of observation; in addition, the flows into and out of poverty are not negligible. Thus, for example, a significant proportion of people considered poor in 1999 are no longer poor one year later (approx. 44 %). In addition, the authors consider that none of the three approaches chosen covers by itself all observations. However, the results tend to show that the social stratification approach is the best predictor of a situation of persistent poverty.

In *Chapter 2*, *Falter and Flückiger* cover a closely related topic: low wages and the working poor. The study shows the characteristics of individuals who

have a low salary or who live in a precarious situation. After a description of their methodology, the authors analyse the extent of the phenomenon, the likelihood of belonging to the underprivileged categories, as well as the transitions towards the status of low salaries or working poor. The observation tends to confirm the extent of the phenomenon (the authors obtain, for example, a proportion of working poor higher than 6 % of the working population in 1999 and in 2000). In general, this chapter shows that professional income is not the only factor to determine the likelihood of belonging to the working poor. It can be seen in particular that the family structure is a major risk factor.

In the *third Chapter* by *Joye and Bergman*, professional careers are examined on the basis of a biographical analysis. The core of the analysis comprises the construction of a typical career profile. The authors define three major types: the first (39 % of respondents) relates to full-time professional activity and provides a conception of life centering around paid work; the second (45 %) also shows a major insertion in professional life, but in this case on a part-time basis after an initial period of working full-time; the third type (16 %) corresponds to a career characterized by a return to the domestic sphere after an initial phase devoted to paid work. The authors establish in particular that, although it is possible to distinguish some intra-generational social mobility within careers, it is not particularly pronounced. Furthermore, such intra-generational advancement appears to be stronger for older generations. This means that the potential for upward mobility within a career trajectory decreases for younger cohorts.

The essays in the *second part* of this book are about *working, family and social life*.

In *Chapter 4*, *Widmer and Levy* look at *the professional and domestic involvement according to the position in the life cycle*. Family living evolves through stages which considerably influence the involvement of family members in the spheres of professional and domestic activities. Considering the various stages of the family life cycle introduces a longitudinal perspective and overcomes the more traditional static perceptions of families. According to the presence and the ages of the children in the household, six phases of family life are distinguished: (1) young couples in the pre-children stage, (2) families with children of pre-school age, (3) families with school age children, (4) families with children out of school, (5) couples whose children have already left home, and (6) couples without children (women older than 36 years). Within the

2,884 family households interviewed twice, in 1999 and 2000, 7 % have switched from one stage to another during this one-year period. Looking more closely at the transitions it appears that these changes are quite significant: a) 12 per cent of young couples (stage 1) have moved into stage 2 with children of pre-school age; b) 14 percent of families with pre-school children in 1999 have at least one child in school by the year 2000; c) 10 per cent evolve from school-age children to the out-of-school stage; and d) in 6 per cent of the families with out-of-school children, the children have left home, moving consequently from stage 5 to stage 6. Relating the phases of family life to the amount of domestic work, it appears that the number of weekly hours of housework is considerably higher for women with children but quite constant for men across the various family life stages. For women the passage from the pre-children to the pre-school children stage adds about five hours of domestic work per week. The contrary can be observed for the labour force participation of women, for which the birth of a child causes a reduction from 80 to 20 percent. In brief, while young couples without children share quite equally the amount of housework and are both professionally active, the birth of the first child changes radically the situation for both members of the couple.

Chapter 5, written by *Baumgartner and Fux* is closely related to the previous chapter but focuses more specifically on *the differences between men and women with regard to their participation in the labour force*. During the last few decades, women's labour force participation has increased. Nevertheless, aggregate data indicate only marginal corresponding behavioural change for fathers, in particular no increased involvement in household chores. In addition, the individual-level data analysed in the present essay indicate that the labour force participation of men is barely influenced by the composition of the family; only very few fathers work part-time. The wish to reduce the amount of working hours, frequently expressed by fathers, does not materialize; on the contrary, fathers tend to increase their workload after the birth of their first child. Traditional work patterns appear to be well-established; fathers adapt their labour force participation only very marginally to the changing needs of family life.

In *Chapter 6*, titled *Social Relationships and Social Support*, *Suter, Iglesias and Oegerli* investigate the social relationships by which individuals are connected with their fellow human beings and with their social environment. The majority of the Swiss population have a broad social network. Despite phenomena such as individualization, plurality of life styles, larger numbers

of one-person households and increasing divorce rates, over 90 per cent have a partner or family and enjoy good relationships with relatives and friends. These networks of both primary and secondary relationships contribute to “good” social support, though family life and friendship are of greatest importance. The relevance of these networks for social support is, however, quite different for men and women. Partnership in the couple plays for men a far greater role than for women, especially in the realm of emotional support. While men have, in general, a broader network, women have more intensive contacts and enjoy greater social emotional and practical support within their everyday social environment. In addition, social support promotes well-being and health. In particular, during times of personal and social stress, social support considerably alleviates their potentially negative impacts on health. While social networks and social support hardly changed from 1999 to 2000, changes at the individual level are quite notable. As these changes remain unexplained by changes in living conditions and the occurrence of network-relevant life events, most of these apparent changes are likely to be due to the random and situational variability of response behaviour.

The *third part* of this book is devoted to *lifestyles and practices*.

In *Chapter 7*, Wanner and Gabadinho analyse *the situation of families and any mobility observed* (formation of couple, births, separation of couple) in terms of certain socio-economic characteristics. The authors underline the limitations of their study on account in particular of the small number of family transitions during the period under observation. But despite this they present some interesting results. Thus family mobility characterises more than one in ten private households; in addition we can underline the relative inability to predict family events over time, in particular those with a negative connotation (separation or divorce, accident or illness, death).

In *Chapter 8*, Modetta, Gazareth and Branger examine *cultural and leisure activities*. The authors determine in particular different dimensions of leisure activities. Their cross-sectional analysis shows a very heterogeneous situation in terms of cultural activities: the differences according to age groups are striking, but there are also differences according to the level of education and the amount of household income. The longitudinal analysis of the major changes to have occurred in leisure activities between the two waves of the survey – which takes account of social positioning and life cycle elements

(gender, age, nationality, domicile, family situation, main activity, socio-professional position, and health) – shows that age plays a decisive role. The authors observe a very strong proclivity for change among the youngest and great stability among the oldest participants. These results are closely linked to various family and professional elements that appear as important and that characterise different stages of the life cycle.

In *Chapter 9, Becci and Bovay* examine religious attitudes and practices. The authors find that religion nowadays is both a private matter and a public one. And it is in this perspective that they carry out their empirical analyses of the data from the Swiss Household Panel. They examine both religious practice and membership, discussion and tolerance. However, their longitudinal analysis concentrates on changes in the frequency of attendance of religious services. In particular, the authors highlight two distinct yet associated phenomena: firstly, we can observe that a society whose level of education increases sees its average practice of collective activity drop; secondly those who have a high level of practice (the elderly, those with less education in particular) tend to reduce their practice more than others. This appears to be a sort of general social or cultural phenomenon, relatively independent of specific biographical factors. All in all, the authors consider that we can observe an evolution marked by a reduction in institutional religion (collective practice) in favour of individual choices (prayer and discussion).

The *fourth part* of this book is devoted to the domains of the *media and politics*.

In *Chapter 10, Molo-Bettelini, Wernli and Alippi* analyse the *uses and impacts of the Internet*. In comparison with the other countries of the European Union, Internet use in Switzerland is among the highest. By the end of the year 2000, the Internet is used by 47 per cent of the Swiss population aged 14 years and over (57 % among men and 37 % among women). Internet use is most common among professionally active young men with a high educational level. On average, little less than four hours is dedicated weekly to its use. The vast majority of Internet users look for “specific information” (96 %), enjoy it for “entertainment” (64 %), read “newspapers or magazines” (50 %), make “financial transactions” (32 %), and last but not least “send and receive electronic mail” (92 %). Highly educated and professionally active persons make practical use of the Internet, while less educated and professionally inactive

persons use it for entertainment purposes. Internet use is rapidly expanding. It has almost doubled over the one-year period under investigation (27 % in 1999 and 47 % in 2000). The profile of new users (women, increased average age, lower education) indicates the diffusion of the Internet to all strata of society. More detailed analyses also show how users move over time from a recreational to a more utilitarian use of the Internet.

Chapter 11, authored by *Wernli* looks at *changes in political attitudes and behaviour over the one-year period 1999–2000*. The political landscape of Switzerland has undergone a profound evolution over the past few decades. Party identification has declined from 63 % in 1971 to 37 % in 1999 and the traditionally strong centrist parties have weakened in favour of both the left and the right of the political spectrum. Net changes in political attitudes and behaviour between 1999 and 2000, though statistically significant, are rather small and most likely due to the panel selection process: longitudinal participants tend to be politically more alert and more satisfied with the Swiss political institutions. There is nevertheless a indication of a small shift towards the political left and a slight decrease in the proportion of persons favourable to the adhesion of Switzerland to the European Union. Considering the changes at the individual level, overall stability prevails as evidenced by high inter-wave correlations ($r \geq .70$). More such changes are observed in the respondents' attitudes towards their own political influence and activism. Indicators of changes in living conditions such as household finances, only slightly explain the individual changes in political attitudes over the one-year period. In contrast, changes in partisan orientation appear to be a consequence of corresponding changes of the individuals' political orientation, particularly as related to the parties' positions towards the European Union.

The *fifth part* of this book covers changes in *quality of live and health* in the Swiss population.

Chapter 12 by *Scherpenzeel* concentrates on one-year changes in *life satisfaction*. Satisfaction with life is often used as an indicator of quality of living or "subjective well-being". The thought that satisfaction is changeable, that you could make people happier if you knew the necessary conditions, stimulated research into the causal mechanisms of satisfaction. In this study the predictions of the most common causal theories with regard to changes in life satisfaction are formulated. The dynamic model used to test these predictions is a structural

equation model describing changes in satisfaction through time, effects of changes in living conditions, comparative evaluations, and the effect of a stable component. The same model is tested several times, within different domains. Sociological theories of invariant societal position would predict no change in satisfaction or in living conditions over time. This prediction was proven wrong, because in all domains change was found. The psychological trait theory of satisfaction was proven partially true, because on the one hand the effects of the stable component were significant but on the other hand changes in living conditions did affect satisfaction. The latter finding also disproved the comparative theories of satisfaction. At the same time these theories proved partially true because comparisons with the past did contribute to the explanation of satisfaction. Finally, sociological theories of changeable satisfaction or “social engineering” were confirmed by finding satisfaction to be highly related to living conditions. The conclusion of the model tests is that trait theory, comparison theory, and sociological change theory all three explain a significant part of satisfaction. We therefore propose the “Composite model”, which defines satisfaction as a composition of living conditions, comparison with standards and stable traits.

In *Chapter 13, Zimmermann and Burton-Jeangros* analyse changes in *health* over a one-year period. Switzerland currently enjoys the highest life expectancy at birth of all European countries. The overall illness prevalence has remained stable over the last two decades. It is shown that this apparently constant net ‘stock of ill people’ masks changes in health at the individual level: 15 to 20 per cent of the respondents report changes in their health between the two interviews which took place roughly one year apart. By demonstrating the impact of social characteristics such as *gender, education* and *ethnicity*, the analyses of longitudinal data confirm the already well-known connection between a person’s position within the social structure and health. However, it goes further than typical studies of health inequalities by highlighting how social determinants also affect health evaluations and changes over time, even when prior health and health threatening life events are taken into account. In terms of future health policies, the results suggest that health promotion should target the reduction of social inequalities in the long term, or at least try to prevent a widening of the gap between the bottom and the top of Swiss society.