

Press release

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A Panorama of Swiss Society 2020: Migration—Integration—Participation

Migration: diverse backgrounds and varying integration pathways

Migrants to Switzerland show a wide range of diversity in terms of educational background, occupational situation, age, migration status and country of origin. In addition, migrants tend to be quickly, although never fully, integrated into the labour market; households with a migration background have lower incomes and wealth. A large proportion of migrants do not stay in Switzerland. These are some of the findings from the first edition of the series *A Panorama of Swiss Society*, published by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) and the Universities of Neuchâtel and Fribourg.

In this publication, specialists from universities and official statistics examine selected aspects of migration, integration and participation. The publication focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on research on labour-market driven immigration from EU/EFTA countries.

Over a third of the population is connected to migration

The FSO makes a distinction between three categories of migrants and their descendants, as presented by Florence Bartosik in Chapter 1. The population with foreign citizenship comprises around 2.1 million people (25% of the whole population), the population born abroad around 2.6 million (30%), and the population aged 15 and over with a migration background around 2.7 million (38%). Integration of the population with a migration background is measured using a system of indicators developed by the FSO. One of the many findings is that the migrant population has the greatest share of tertiary level graduates.

Gap is narrowing but differences remain

To study migration pathways, longitudinal analyses are indispensable, as shown by Philippe Wanner in Chapter 2. Integration into Swiss society with regards to the labour market, language and social participation improves with length of stay. The gap in average income from employment between people with and without a migration background decreases considerably, especially in the first years following immigration (by approximately 10 to 15 percentage points). The integration effect tends to diminish, however, especially among men, after a stay of more than five years. Major differences exist depending on a person's country of origin or certain socio-demographic characteristics.

This finding is confirmed in Chapter 3 by Sandro Favre, Reto Föllmi, and Josef Zweimüller. The much lower employment rate of migrants in the year of their immigration rises the longer they stay. While their labour market participation in the year of immigration is considerably lower than that of persons born in Switzerland, the gap closes over time, without, however, completely disappearing (after 5 years from 16 percentage points to 4 percentage points for men, from 37 to 13 percentage points for women). A third of migrants leave Switzerland in the first year, while half stay for longer than three years.

Lower income and wealth in households with a migration background

In Chapter 4, Laura Ravazzini, Christoph Halbmeier, and Christian Suter compare the income and wealth of households with and without a migration background in Switzerland and Germany. In both countries, households with a migration background have a lower disposable household equivalent income and less wealth. Household size is an important factor: Households with a migration background tend to be larger and share their income and wealth with more people than households with no migration background. Households with a migration background also have a lower home ownership rate. They are less likely to own their own home in Switzerland than in Germany.

Contributions to the social security system exceed the benefits withdrawn

Migrants' contribution to the Swiss social security system varies between the different parts of the system (e.g. OASI, unemployment insurance, and social assistance). However, various studies conclude that overall they contribute more than they receive and that the taxes they pay have a positive influence on gross domestic product, as presented by Monica Budowski, Eveline Odermatt, and Sebastian Schief in Chapter 5. The international transferability of social benefits can pose a problem should migrants return to their country of origin. Social insurance agreements play an important role here. Furthermore, it is sometimes difficult for migrants to find their way around the complex social security system.

Major cantonal differences in internal migration and access to citizenship

Jonathan Zufferey addresses the subject of internal migration in Chapter 6. His research shows that every year, about 9% of Switzerland's population move home and that an average person moves 7.5 times in their life. However, most people move home within the same commune. Moves of more than 100 kilometres concern only 2% of internal migration. Only very rarely do people move across the country's language borders. A comparatively small number of moves are made away from cantons with large agglomerations. Young people and people with a migration background move home particularly often.

In Chapter 7, Marion Aeberli and Gianni D'Amato examine cantonal differences in access to citizenship and the factors influencing the authorities' practice with regard to integration policy: Cantons with a more liberal political orientation are more likely to adopt a more inclusive approach. In cantons with a greater mix of people and a higher degree of urbanisation, the population is more liberal and has a more positive attitude towards cultural diversity than in other cantons. The inclusion of individual factors demonstrates that there is a relationship between a person's attitude towards diversity and their living conditions, migration background and political orientation.

A Panorama of Swiss Society

The series *A Panorama of Swiss Society* is the continuation of the previous Swiss Social Reports that have been published five times since 2000. It now appears under a new aegis: The series is the result of close cooperation between official statistics and social sciences. It is published jointly by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), the University of Neuchâtel and the University of Fribourg. The aim of the publication is to make important findings on key socio-political topics and fundamental trends in Swiss society accessible for an interested public.

The first edition appears in 2020 on the topics of migration, integration and participation. The next edition is planned for 2024.

Migration research

In Switzerland, research on migration is wide-ranging and multi-disciplinary. Research institutions and university courses have been created and new statistics introduced, such as in 2016, the FSO's survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland or the "Migration Mobility" survey from the Swiss National Science Foundation's mobility nexus, "nccr – on the move" from the University of Neuchâtel. Numerous other statistics gather variables relevant to migration, such as parents' place of birth.

Content of the publication

Chapter	Authors	Title
Introduction	Denise Efionayi-Mäder, Jürg Furrer, Marcel Heiniger, and Christian Suter (University of Neuchâtel and Federal Statistical Office)	Introduction
Chapter 1	Florence Bartosik (Federal Statistical Office)	Population with a migration background: integration prospects and comparisons with the native population
Chapter 2	Philippe Wanner (University of Geneva)	International migration and integration from a longitudinal perspective
Chapter 3	Sandro Favre, Reto Föllmi, and Josef Zweimüller (University of Zurich and University of St. Gallen)	Immigration, return migration and integration from a labour market perspective
Chapter 4	Laura Ravazzini, Christoph Halbmeier, and Christian Suter (University of Neuchâtel and DIW Berlin)	Household income and wealth among people with a migration background. A comparison of Switzerland and Germany
Chapter 5	Monica Budowski, Eveline Odermatt, and Sebastian Schief (University of Fribourg)	Migrants' participation in the Swiss social security system: social protection for whom?
Chapter 6	Jonathan Zufferey (OBSAN)	Internal migration in Switzerland: behaviour and impact
Chapter 7	Marion Aeberli and Gianni D'Amato (Federal Statistical Office and University of Neuchâtel)	Which path to inclusion? Citizenship between institutions and attitudes

Information

Jürg Furrer, FSO, tel.: +41 58 463 61 84, email: panorama@bfs.admin.ch

Marcel Heiniger, FSO, tel.: +41 58 463 68 74, email: panorama@bfs.admin.ch

Denise Efionayi-Mäder, SFM / University of Neuchâtel,

tel.: +41 32 718 39 33, email: denise.efionayi@unine.ch

Monica Budowski, University of Fribourg, email: monica.budowski@unifr.ch

FSO Media Service, tel.: +41 58 463 60 13, email: media@bfs.admin.ch

Press and promotion office, University of Neuchâtel, Nando Luginbühl,

tel.: +41 +41 434 12 04, email: nando.luginbuehl@unine.ch

University of Fribourg: Unicom Communication & Media,

tel.: +41 26 300 70 34, email: communication@unifr.ch

<https://www3.unifr.ch/unicom/de/unicom/kontakt.html>

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Access to results

This press release has been established on the basis of the European Statistics Code of Practice, which ensures the independence, integrity and accountability of national and community statistical offices. Privileged access is supervised and under embargo.

This press release was prepared in consultation with the Universities of Neuchâtel and Fribourg, who together with the FSO are joint publishers of the Panorama.

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