Country Report
Switzerland

by Marco Pecoraro

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About the author

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A. Key institutions involved in data collection

The principal institution involved in administrative or statistical data collection is the Swiss Federal Statistical Office or SFSO (www.bfs.admin.ch), which is also responsible for the sampling, validation and diffusion of individual or aggregate statistics at the national level. In other words, the SFSO: (1) run and coordinate Switzerland’s entire public statistics system, (2) produce and disseminate key statistical information showing the current status and trend in the fields of demographics, economy, society, spatial planning and environment, (3) carry out comprehensive analysis, devise indicator systems to monitor complex processes, produce scenario forecasts and maintain a historical database.

Some additional statistical information about administrative data is also provided by other concerned federal offices, such as the Swiss Federal Office for Migration or SFOM (www.bfm.admin.ch) for data on foreigners, asylum seekers and refugees. This Office primarily is responsible for implementing the conditions under which persons can enter Switzerland in order to live and work here. It also decides who will receive protection from persecution. Moreover, the SFOM coordinates federal government, cantonal and communal efforts in behalf of integration and is the organ responsible for naturalization matters.

Administrative data extracted from the information system for placement and labour market statistics (PLASTA) are mainly made available by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs or SECO (www.seco.admin.ch), both as individual and aggregate data. The SECO is the federal government's centre of expertise for all core issues relating to economic policy. Its primary aim is to ensure sustainable economic growth by putting in place the necessary regulatory and economic policy conditions. On the domestic front, SECO acts as an interface between business, social partners and government. It supports the regionally and structurally balanced development of the economy and ensures the protection of employees. Through its labour market policy, it contributes to the prevention and tackling of unemployment and consequently to upholding social peace.

Finally, microdata from the Swiss Household Panel or SHP survey (www.swisspanel.ch), conducted from September to February by the institute M.I.S Trend Lausanne and Bern (www.mistrend.ch) using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), are freely provided by the SHP-team. The principal aim of the SHP is to observe social change, in particular the dynamics of changing living conditions in the population of Switzerland. Since the beginning of 2008, the SHP-project is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, and is run at the newly founded Swiss Foundation for Research in Social Sciences (FORS), located at the University of Lausanne.
B. Historical evolution of national data collection system/ data collection practices and policies on data collection

Since the Federal Statistical Act of 9 October 1992, laying a modern foundation for Swiss statistics, no fundamental changes in data collection has occurred in Switzerland recently. The most common method is the direct enquiry which consists in interviewing individuals, households, firms, municipalities or cantons using written or oral questionnaires. Although surveys can be exhaustive by including every unit in the population (such as a census), they are usually based on representative samples. The SFSO also relies on existing administrative data (in some cases, primarily collected by concerned governmental administrations) instead of survey data so as to reduce respondent burden and to lower collection costs.

In the near future, various reforms will be carried out by the SFSO:

(1) According to the bilateral agreement on statistics, Switzerland and the European Union need progressively harmonised and comparable data in order to develop their relationship in all relevant fields. The agreement on cooperation in the area of statistics enables Switzerland to access the pan-European data for the countries within the European Economic Area (EU states plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and guarantees comparability of statistics. Access to a pan-European database of comparable statistics improves the quality and relevance of the comparisons in areas such as the employment market, social security, transport or the environment. Relevant socio-economic statistics particularly concern the employment market, personnel costs, salaries and cost of living. By harmonising data collection in these areas, Switzerland will have statistical comparative data available on the level, organisation and development of employment, unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. Harmonised information concerning the competitiveness and attractiveness of its employment market is also important for Switzerland, particularly concerning the level, composition and progression of salaries and employers’ labour costs. This type of data is particularly useful to define accompanying measures against possible low-wage dumping within the scope of the agreement for the free movement of persons between Switzerland and the EU.

(2) Another reform consists in the enhanced harmonisation of registers, i.e. cantonal and municipal registers of inhabitants as well as federal registers of persons in the fields of civil status, foreigners and asylum-seekers. This reform will allow statisticians to organise the compilation of registers in the most rational manner possible. Indeed, it is pointless to conduct surveys and use special questionnaires in order to collect information and data that already exist in local registers. The first step is to create a PIN number for every resident of the country as a means of identifying him or her unambiguously and permanently. Therefore, the introduction of a unique identifier common across data sources will ease record linkage efforts.

(3) Finally, the SFSO will modernise the Swiss census from 2010 onwards. The traditional census, which was previously carried out every ten years with the entire population, will be replaced by an integrated statistical system. This combines the use of existing registers containing information on individuals with sample surveys which are carried out and evaluated in an annual cycle.
The new system offers a wide range of benefits. The information will be available more frequently, on a wider range of topics and within a very short period of time. The availability of the latest data on an annual basis will improve the ability to monitor important, politically relevant, sociocultural topics on a regular and systematic basis. The new system can also be constantly updated and developed. Importantly, it also offers an excellent cost/benefit ratio. Improved coordination and the increased use of synergies will result in a significant reduction in costs and administrative work, while at the same time lightening the burden on the interviewees and the municipalities.

C. Key coordination and linking

The system of official statistics has gradually developed according to a decentralized organisation corresponding to the federal structure of Switzerland. About forty federal services and independent institutions (such as the Swiss National Bank or the Swiss Farmers’ Union) collect and analyse important statistical data, on which the planning by public authorities depends. The majority of cantons and some large cities also have their own regional statistical services. Given the decentralized structure of this system, federal offices collaborate in the field of data collection and publications, and thus avoid differences when data are published. There is strong coordination between offices in the process of data collection, especially when administrative data are concerned. This function of coordination is provided by the SFSO, which can rely on various organs and instruments to carry out this task.

The SFSO tries to provide harmonised registers if possible; for instance, the variables included in the Central Aliens Register (RCE - Registre central des étrangers) and the Register of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (AUPER - Automatisiertes Personenregistratursystem) are coded in the same way. However, in most cases, different data sets cannot be directly linked (absence of a PIN code). In order to offer completely harmonised registers, the SFSO will soon introduce a personal identification number common across all registers. Despite the absence of such an identifier, recent attempts were made to link various databases by deterministic or probabilistic linkage methods.

D. Concepts and definitions

D.1. Foreigners

According to the SFSO (2008), foreigners only have the nationality of a foreign state. The foreign population does not include persons born abroad, living in Switzerland and who have acquired the Swiss nationality in the meantime. Those who have the Swiss citizenship in addition to a foreign nationality (dual nationality) are counted as Swiss. On the other hand, stateless persons and those without any nationality are counted as foreigners. To sum up, the population stock defined according to nationality includes: the Swiss (i.e. persons of Swiss nationality) and the foreigners (i.e. persons of foreign nationality).
D.2. Migrants

The immigrant population consists of persons (regardless of their citizenship) who have moved their home from abroad to Switzerland, temporarily or permanently. In addition to those born abroad, this population also includes Swiss citizens who have returned to Switzerland after having spent some undefined time abroad. However, foreign nationals born in Switzerland (i.e. foreigners of the second or third generation) do not belong this category.

D.3. Main types of residence permits

**Resident foreign nationals** (B-permit) are resident in Switzerland for a longer period of time for a certain purpose with or without gainful employment. The residence permit for EU15/EFTA nationals is valid for five years if they are in possession of an employment contract of at least twelve months’ duration or of unlimited duration. The residence permit will be renewed for another five years without any further procedures if the foreign national satisfies the relevant requirements. As a rule, the period of validity of residence permits for third-country nationals is limited to one year when the permit is granted for the first time. First-time permits for gainful employment may only be issued within the limits of the ceilings and in compliance with the Aliens Act (LEtr). Once a permit has been granted, it is normally renewed every year unless there are reasons against a renewal, such as criminal offences or dependence on social security.

**Settled foreign nationals** (C-permit) have been granted a settlement permit after five or ten years' residence in Switzerland. The right to settle in Switzerland is not subject to any restrictions and must not be tied to any conditions. In the case of EU15/EFTA nationals, the issue of settlement permits is governed by the provisions of the Aliens Act (LEtr) and the settlement treaties since the Agreement on Free Movement of Persons does not comprise any provisions concerning settlement permits. EU15/EFTA nationals are granted settlement permits pursuant to settlement treaties and unilateral declarations of the Federal Council after five years' regular and uninterrupted residence in Switzerland. In analogy with the residence permit, settlement permits are checked every five years. As a rule, third-country nationals are in a position to be granted a settlement permit after ten years' regular and uninterrupted residence in Switzerland. US and Canadian nationals are subject to a special regulation.

**Provisionally admitted foreign nationals** (F-permit) are persons who have been ordered to return from Switzerland to their native countries but in whose cases the enforcement of this order has proved inadmissible (violation of international law), unreasonable (humanitarian reasons) or impossible (exclusion technically impossible). Thus their provisional admission constitutes a substitute measure. Provisional admission may be ordered for a duration of twelve months and be extended by the canton of residence for another twelve months at a time.

**Short-term residents** (L-permit) are foreign nationals who are resident in Switzerland for a limited period of time – usually less than a year – for a certain purpose with or without gainful employment. EU15/EFTA nationals are entitled to this
permit provided that they are in possession of an employment contract of between three and twelve months’ duration. The period of validity of the permit is identical with the term of the employment contract. It can be extended for a total period of less than twelve months. Provided the new quota has not been exhausted, the permit can be renewed after an overall stay of one year without the foreign national having to interrupt his or her residence in Switzerland. Third-country nationals can be granted a short-term residence permit for a stay of up to one year, provided the quota of the number of third-country nationals staying in Switzerland has not been met. The period of validity of the permit is identical with the term of the employment contract. In exceptional cases, this permit can be extended to an overall duration of no more than 24 months if the holder works for the same employer throughout this time. Permits issued to foreigners who are gainfully employed for a total of no more than four months within one calendar year are not subject to the quota regulation.

Asylum-seekers (N-permit) are foreign nationals who have applied for asylum in Switzerland and whose application is being processed. During the asylum proceeding, they are basically entitled to be resident in Switzerland. Under certain circumstances, they can be permitted to pursue gainful employment as an employee subject to the Asylum Act.

D.4. Population concepts

There exist three concepts for defining the population stock:

(1) The resident population includes all persons who legally reside in Switzerland over a given period of time regardless of their citizenship, duration of residence and type of permit. Persons who do not legally reside in Switzerland (e.g. cross-border commuters working in Switzerland, tourists, visitors or business travellers) do not fall into this category. Specifically, the resident population includes the following types of foreigners: resident foreign nationals, settled foreign nationals, short-term residents, provisionally admitted foreign nationals, asylum applicants, diplomats and international civil servants and their family members.

(2) The term “permanent resident population” refers to all persons who legally reside in Switzerland for the entire year. Specifically, the permanent resident population includes the following groups of foreigners: resident foreign nationals, settled foreign nationals, holders of a short-term residence permit valid at least 12 months, diplomats, international civil servants and their family members.

(3) The domestic concept describes the productive activity carried out on Swiss economic territory, regardless of whether it is performed by residents or non-residents. This concept can be used to demarcate the population in employment, jobs or even working hours. In practical terms, productive activity under the domestic concept covers activity carried out in Switzerland by the following groups: Swiss citizens residing in Switzerland, holders of a permanent residence permit, holders of a residence permit (including recognized refugees), cross-border commuters, holders of a seasonal work permit (this permit was discontinued on the 1st June 2002), holders of a short-term residence permit, EU/EFTA citizens who are engaged in paid employment (not self-employed) for a Swiss employer for a maximum of 90
days per civil year, asylum applicants, the staff of Swiss embassies and consulates and members of the Swiss naval fleet. In contrast, the activities of foreign embassies and consulates in Switzerland, the work of international civil servants in Switzerland and the activities of persons residing in Switzerland but working abroad are not included in the domestic concept.

E. Availability of data

Individual data concerning the foreign population in Switzerland can be considered as particularly rich and informative. From a statistical point of view, and due to the existence of the RCE/AUPER, the foreign population is more precisely described than the Swiss population. However, in the field of integration, some topics are poorly covered by the statistical system.

E.1. Core demographic data on immigrants and migration control

E.1.a Population stocks and general demographic characteristics

Two main exhaustive sources for statistics on stocks of the foreign population with demographic characteristics such as nationality and place of birth are available in Switzerland: (1) the censuses carried out in 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000, (2) the RCE since 1981 and the AUPER since 1995 (updated annually). Whereas the former also includes the country of birth, the year of immigration is recorded in the latter.

E.1.b Migration flows

Concerning statistics on the migration flows, the RCE/AUPER are the unique sources providing information. The demographic characteristics available in these registers are nationality, place of birth, year of immigration, spouse’s nationality and mother’s nationality.

E.1.c Legal status of immigrants

Many sources include the type of residence permit for foreigners. Among exhaustive sources, there are (1) the census only carried out in 2000 and (2) the RCE/AUPER for all available years. By definition, any changes of status (naturalisation, deliverance of another permit) are recorded as an event in the latter. The information on the legal status of residence is also available in many surveys such as the Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS) or the SHP survey.
**E.1.d Acquisition (and loss) of Swiss citizenship**

In Switzerland, statistics on the change of nationality usually refer to the acquisition of the Swiss citizenship (although the acquisition or loss of foreign citizenship is also retained). Such event is exhaustively recorded in (1) the census only carried out in 2000 and (2) the RCE for all available years. The person’s former nationality and the year of naturalisation is available in the census; only the year of naturalisation is identifiable in the RCE given that a foreign person leaves this register after being naturalised. The SLFS (since 2001) or the SHP survey also provide information on multiple nationality.

**E.1.e Asylum seekers and refugees**

The stock and flow statistics of asylum seekers and refugees are essentially recorded in the AUPER, where the asylum seekers hold the N-permit. In the AUPER, the refugees holding the F-permit, are included as those with a humanitarian status. By contrast, the refugees who have obtained the Geneva status are issued with a B-permit are not strictly identifiable as this permit is also granted in other circumstances (e.g. for foreign workers).

**E.1.f Irregular migration**

By definition, the persons without any authorisation of residence do not appear in the RCE/AUPER, where all the foreigners with a valid residence permit are registered. However, aggregate statistics about foreigners who were refused entry into Switzerland at the borders or foreigners who were expelled from Switzerland due to their illegal status are directly available to the public via the SFOM website.

**E.1.g Changes of status**

As previously mentioned, changes of status (naturalisation, deliverance of another permit, acquisition or loss of a foreign citizenship) are exhaustively recorded as an event in the RCE/AUPER. The census carried out in 2000 and the SLFS occurred since 2001 (excepted for 2002) only consider the acquisition of the Swiss citizenship as change of status, by means of the year of naturalisation. This information is also available in the SHP survey; given the longitudinal property of the latter, other changes of status (deliverance of another permit, acquisition or loss of a foreign citizenship) could be identified over time only among the non-attrited individuals.

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1 In order to measure the phenomenon of irregular migration, Heiniger and Haug (1998) suggest some points of departure. Among the most interesting ideas in their paper, the following can be mentioned: the comparison of the RCE/AUPER with the different censuses can provide some information concerning the number of persons living in Switzerland without any valid permit.
E.2. Measuring integration, discrimination and diversity

There exist few quantitative studies on the integration of immigrants in Switzerland before the 1990s. It is partly due to the lack of relevant datasets; the accessibility of available microdata was also more restrictive than nowadays. Another factor is related to the economic situation prevailing at that time; indeed, even with a large potential flow of immigration, the unemployment rate in Switzerland was very low up to the beginning of the 1990s. Accordingly, the integration of immigrants was not a central issue for researchers.

With the rise of unemployment (especially among foreign workers) and the development of new datasets, studies on the integration of immigrants have grown in importance since the early 1990s. Most analyses have been conducted by economists who restrict themselves to compare the labour market outcomes of migrants with those of the majority population. Recently, other societal domains (e.g. social or health integration) have been examined by demographers and sociologists. As an example, the ongoing project called TIES, which is based on an international survey of more than 10’000 respondents in fifteen European cities, will allow to describe the position of the second generation in several different domains (such as education, labour market, housing, identity, social relations, family formation, transnationalism, religion).

In general, two broad types of data sources relevant for analysing integration are available in Switzerland: (i) administrative datasets (notably statistics of the registered unemployed, judicial and police crime statistics, statistics of scholars attending a tertiary-level education) and (ii) official statistical datasets (notably the censuses, the household panel survey, the labour force survey, the health survey, the wage structure survey).

Before providing a schematic description of the availability of the data in a selected number of thematic fields, we have to enumerate the most important drawbacks of both data sources mentioned above (see also Section G).

First, some administrative datasets in Switzerland do not allow to measure integration between immigrants and natives in a meaningful way, given that they do not include the variable “place or country of birth”. Thereby, migrants may only be identified by means of the nationality (as in the case of unemployment statistics collected by the SECO). Moreover, once foreigners are naturalized, they can no longer be distinguished from Swiss citizens.

Secondly, the use of sample surveys could be problematic. Due to small numbers, it is often difficult to analyse survey data for more than two or three largest groups of immigrants. In addition, most surveys are established from German, French or Italian questionnaires/interviews, excluding other languages spoken by immigrants; such

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2 The study “Sozio-kulturelle Probleme der Eingliederung italienischer Armeitskräfte in der Schweiz” by Rudolf Braun (1970) was one of the first to analyse in quantitative terms the integration of Italian immigrants in Switzerland. The author built up a survey on Italian and Swiss residents from four communes in Switzerland in order to investigate various domains of integration.

3 For more information on this project, see the website www.tiesproject.eu.
surveys could thus be biased towards migrants whose proficiency in one of the official Swiss languages is good.

In Switzerland, it is finally difficult to find longitudinal data, which could allow to track individual changes over time. Only the data provided by the SHP have a longitudinal structure; however, the attrition rate amongst foreigners is impressively high (more than 50% after the fifth wave). In other words, most analyses concerning the integration of foreigners have to rely on cross-sectional data.

The following subsections describe the availability of data in various thematic fields where the integration aspect can be assessed by researchers.

### E.2.a Employment

Since 1991, the SFSO has conducted the **SLFS** on an annual basis at the behest of the Federal Council. The purpose of this survey is to obtain data about working life and the labour market in general. Strict adherence to international definitions means that the SLFS can also be used to calculate a large number of internationally comparable labour force indicators. Since 2003, the Federal Council has decided to supplement the traditional SLFS sample with a sample of 15'000 foreigners selected from the RCE. This makes it possible to observe the impact of the free movement of persons on the Swiss labour market. The main variables identifying the foreign/migrant population are nationality, place or country of birth, and year of naturalization; moreover, the origin of an individual can be specified through the nationality and the country of birth of parents. Key indicators available from the SLFS are: type of work permit, duration of stay in Switzerland, last or current occupation, economic branch, income, unemployment and employment, duration of unemployment, inactivity, search of job, full time vs. part time status, tenure, working conditions, educational attainment.

The **Swiss Wage Structure Survey** allows to regularly describe, from representative data, the structure of wages within firms of all economic sectors. The unique variable identifying the foreign/migrant population is the category of nationality with only two possible values: Swiss vs. foreign citizens. Key indicators available from this survey are: type of work permit, (gross or net) professional income, salary agreement, form of salary, compulsory and extra social security contributions, earnings from overtime, bonus and gratification.

Since its inception in 1999, the **SHP survey** covers a broad range of topics and approaches in the social sciences. Subjective assessments complement the factual information. The yearly panel survey is conducted from September to February. It constitutes a unique longitudinal database for Switzerland. The new data are available after approximately one year after collection. The main variables identifying the foreign/migrant population are nationality, place of birth, and year of naturalization; moreover, the origin of an individual can be specified through the

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4 The place/country of birth and the year of naturalization appear in 2001 and are always available since 2003.
5 The citizenship and the place of birth of an individual’s parents only appear in 2001 and 2003.
6 The year of naturalization is only available since 2004.
nationality at birth of parents. Key indicators available from this survey are: type of work permit, duration of stay in Switzerland, last or current occupation, economic branch, income, unemployment and employment, duration of unemployment, inactivity, search of job, full time vs. part time status, job satisfaction, educational attainment, work-life balance.

The administrative data from PLASTA contain rich information about unemployed and job seekers. The PLASTA system is the online information database of the regional placement offices. A person remains in the PLASTA system as long as he or she makes use of the services of the Unemployment Insurance system, regardless of unemployment status. Data are organised in monthly records based on the last working day of each month. The unique variable identifying the foreign/migrant population is nationality. Key indicators available from these data are: type of work permit, unemployment and employment, last or current occupation, full time vs. part time status, educational attainment. Until 2001 no direct information about education or schooling was available.

The Federal Population Census reveals the demographic, spatial, social and economic developments that have taken place in Switzerland. Data from the Census 2000 are largely comparable with those of the three previous censuses (1970, 1980 and 1990). The main variables identifying the foreign/migrant population are nationality, country of birth, and year of naturalization. Key indicators available from these data are: type of work permit (only in 2000), place of residence five years ago, occupation, economic branch, unemployment and employment, inactivity, occupational status, full time vs. part time status, distance to work, educational attainment.

**E.2.b Incomes, transfers and social benefits**

The Income and Consumption Expenditure (EVE) Survey allows regular updates of the basket of commodities listed in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in line with current consumer behaviour. This survey also provides an overview of the income of private households in Switzerland. The unique variable identifying the foreign/migrant population is nationality. Key indicators available from this survey are: type of work permit (until 2003), professional income, wealth income, income from social insurance (old age pension, invalidity pension, unemployment benefit), income grants or scholarship, spousal support.

Key indicators available from the SLFS are: type of work permit, duration of stay in Switzerland, professional income, bonus or gratification, wealth income (available before 1998, 2002 and 2005 modules), old age pension (no more available since 1998), invalidity pension (no more available since 1998), income from social assistance (no more available since 1998), professional income of the spouse (available in 2002 and 2005), social insurance (2002 and 2005 modules).

Key indicators available from the Swiss Wage Structure Survey are: type of work permit, (gross or net) professional income, salary agreement, form of salary,

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7 The year of naturalization is only available in 2000.
compulsory and extra social security contributions, earnings from overtime, bonus and gratification.

Key indicators available from the SHP survey are: type of work permit, duration of stay in Switzerland, professional income, income satisfaction, bonus or gratification, social public transfer income, social informal transfer income, old age or invalidity pensions (since 2000), income from pension insurance (since 2002), income from unemployment fund (since 2002), income from social assistance (since 2002), grants or scholarship (since 2002), family or child allowances (since 2004).

Additional information concerning the SLFS, Swiss Wage Structure Survey and SHP survey can be found in the thematic field Employment.

**E.2.c Housing and residential patterns**

Key indicators available from the EVE Survey are: type of work permit (until 2003), duration of stay in current home, number of rooms, type of housing, date of construction, housing space in square meters, possession status, housing expenses, satisfaction concerning neighbourhood (in 2006).

Key indicators available from the SLFS are: type of work permit, duration of stay in Switzerland, possession status, number of rooms (not available in 2004 and 2006), monthly rent (available before 1996, in 2002 and 2005), amount of mortgage interests (available before 1996, in 2002 and 2005), maintenance expenses (available before 1996).

Key indicators available from the Federal Population Census are: type of work permit (only in 2000), place of residence five years ago, number of rooms, housing and building characteristics, date of construction, homeowner characteristics (since 1980), housing space in square meters (since 1980), possession status (since 1980), monthly rent (since 1980).

Additional information concerning the SLFS and the Federal Population Census (resp. the EVE Survey) can be found in the thematic field Employment (resp. Incomes, transfers and social benefits).

**E.2.d Health and access to Healthcare**

Setup by the SFSO, obligatory Swiss medical hospital statistics have been introduced in 1998 and provide an encoded summary for each hospital stay. The statistics contain demographic and social data on hospitalized patients, as well as principal and secondary diagnoses and procedures. Variables studying continuity of care (where was the patient before the hospitalization, and where is he sent to) are also collected. The unique variable identifying the foreign/migrant population is nationality. Key indicators available from these statistics are: days since admission in hospital, mode of admission, decision of hospitalization, type of stay in hospital, mode of reimbursement for the basic care, decision of exit, type of care after the exit, principal diagnosis, information on newborn babies.
Statistics on induced abortions/ terminations of pregnancy are derived from exhaustive count established according to indications provided by doctors. Note that three types of questionnaires are used in order to register induced abortions: a short form compiled by the SFSO (basic questions required by the law), a long form compiled by the SFSO with 16 questions and a specific form provided by some cantons (including the basic questions required by the law). Moreover, the woman’s nationality is not necessarily taken in the basic questionnaire and therefore not available in all cantons (in 2005, the woman’s nationality is available in 63 % of induced abortions in Switzerland). The unique variable identifying the foreign/migrant population is nationality (only long form of the questionnaire). Key indicators available from these statistics are: duration of stay (only long form of the questionnaire), week of pregnancy at the time of the termination, date of the termination of pregnancy, method used for the termination.

There exist three types of statistics included in the Federal Statistics of Natural Movement of Population (BEVNAT) which allow demographers to compute indicators in the field of health: (i) Life births Statistics, (ii) Perinatal deaths Statistics and (iii) Deaths Statistics. The main variable identifying the foreign/migrant population is nationality; in addition, we find the parents’ nationality in the Life births Statistics and the Perinatal deaths Statistics. Key indicators available from the Life births Statistics are: months since marriage, months since the former life birth, father's characteristics, mother’s characteristics. Key indicators available from the Perinatal deaths Statistics are: date of birth, baby’s characteristics, father's characteristics, mother’s characteristics, initial illness, consecutive illnesses. Key indicators available from the Deaths Statistics are: nationality of the partner (since 1987), date of birth, baby’s characteristics, father’s characteristics, mother’s characteristics, initial illness, consecutive illnesses.

The Health monitoring of the Swiss migrant population provides a comprehensive picture of health status and health care for as large a proportion as possible of Switzerland’s migrant population. The methods used for this purpose are a combination of the 2002 Swiss Health Survey (SGB) and additional interviews. Included in the latter are groups that on account of language problems had not been adequately represented in the SGB or, as asylum seekers, have explicitly not been addressed by that survey. The main variable identifying the foreign/migrant population is nationality; moreover, the origin of an individual can be specified through the nationality at birth of parents. Key indicators available from this survey are: nationality of the partner, year of immigration, satisfaction with health status, psychic or physical problem, type of disability, alcohol consumption, tobacco consumption, narcotics consumption, physical activity, overweight and obesity, doctor consultation, personal doctor, type of treatment, cholesterol rate, blood sugar, cervical cancer screening, breast cancer screening, HIV test.

Key indicators available from the SHP survey are: type of work permit, duration of stay in Switzerland, health status, satisfaction with health status, health problems, years since illness onset, main cause, accident, number of doctor consultations, number of days in hospital or clinic. Additional information concerning this survey can be found in the thematic field Employment.
E.2.e Education

The administrative data derived from the Register of Pupils and Students exhaustively inform on basic characteristics of students attending one of the universities, the federal institutes of technology or the specialised universities of applied sciences in Switzerland. The unique variable identifying the foreign/migrant population is nationality. Key indicators available from this register are: type of high school diploma, years since the achievement of the high school diploma, place before the beginning of studies, level of studies, branch studied.

Key indicators available from the SLFS are: type of work permit, duration of stay in Switzerland, educational attainment, ongoing education, years since the latest education completed (since 1996), participation in professional training courses (since 1996), continuing education (available every year; special module in 1996, 1999, 2003 and 2006).

Key indicators available from the SHP survey are: type of work permit, duration of stay in Switzerland, educational attainment, ongoing education, date of the latest or highest education completed, participation in professional training courses.

Key indicators available from the Federal Population Census are: type of work permit (only in 2000), place of residence five years ago, educational attainment, ongoing education.

Additional information concerning the SLFS, the SHP survey and the Federal Population Census can be found in the thematic field Employment.

E.2.f Family and household

There exist two types of statistics included in the BEVNAT which allow demographers to compute indicators in the field of family and household: (iv) Marriages Statistics and (v) Divorces Statistics. The main variables identifying the foreign/migrant population are the husband’s nationality and the wife’s nationality; in addition, we find this information before the marriage and at the time of the divorce in the Divorces Statistics. Key indicators available from the Marriages Statistics are: number of children before the marriage was registered, marital status before the marriage was registered, husband’s characteristics, wife’s characteristics, husband’s residence status (since 1999), wife’s residence status (since 1999). Key indicators available from the Divorces Statistics are: number of minor children, decision on parental authority, total number of children, husband’s characteristics, wife’s characteristics.

Key indicators available from the **SHP survey** are: type of work permit, duration of stay in Switzerland, number of persons in household, number of children, type of household, civil status, child care, spouse’s characteristics, housework characteristics, satisfaction with respect to the household.

Key indicators available from the **Federal Population Census** are: type of work permit (only in 2000), place of residence five years ago, number of persons in household, number of children, type of household, civil status, spouse’s characteristics.

Additional information concerning the SLFS, the SHP survey and the Federal Population Census can be found in the thematic field *Employment*.

### E.2.g Political participation

Key indicators available from the **SHP survey** are: type of work permit, duration of stay in Switzerland, type of membership in a political party, interest in politics, satisfaction degree concerning democracy, feeling about political influence, degree of trust in Federal Government, electoral status, participation in federal polls, political position. Additional information concerning this survey can be found in the thematic field *Employment*.

### E.2.h Crime and justice

In the field of "crime and criminal justice", there exist many types of statistics provided by the SFSO: (1) **Swiss statistics on drugs**, (2) **Statistics on criminal sentences for adults**, (3) **Statistics on penal sentences for minors**, (4) **Swiss penitentiary statistics**, (5) **Statistics on community service** and (6) **Statistics on detention**. The unique variable identifying the foreign/migrant population is nationality. Key indicators available from the Swiss statistics on drugs are: drug type, seized quantity, type of drug offence, recidivism, drug dependency. Key indicators available from the Statistics on criminal sentences for adults are: date of judgement, date of the first offence, date of the last offence, type of deprivation of liberty, duration of the sentence, fine, duration of pre-trial detention, type of security measure, form of the offence. Key indicators available from the Statistics on criminal sentences for minors are: status of residence, date of the first offence, date of the last offence, type of sentence, type of sanction, type of offences. Key indicators available from the Swiss penitentiary statistics are: place of incarceration, date of incarceration, purpose of incarceration, situation before incarceration, date of release, type of detention regime, main sentence, date of judgment, date of the first sentence, date of the last sentence, type of deprivation of liberty, duration of the sentence, fine, duration of pre-trial detention, type of security measure, mitigation of sentence. Key indicators available from the Statistics on community service are: type of sentence execution, period of community work, work done during the community service, main sentence, date of judgment, date of the first offence, date of the last offence, type of deprivation of liberty, duration of the

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8 In the statistics on detention, the variable identifying the foreign/migrant population is the category of nationality with only two possible values: Swiss vs. foreign citizens.
sentence, fine, duration of pre-trial detention. Key indicators available from the Statistics on detention are: number of places in the institution, days since the institution has been open, number of entries (per institution), days since incarceration (per institution), number of suicides (per institution), type of detention (per institution).

F. Accessibility of data

F.1. Individual data

According to the Law on Data Protection, the SFSO has access to all administrative data for statistical purposes. The diffusion of such data among researchers is allowed for statistical use only. In practice, Swiss researchers have access to most anonymised databases after agreeing a contract of data protection. In other words, they have no access to identification variables (such as name, surname or address).

The collection of data from public or administrative sources, or of personal data on a voluntary basis, may be carried out by the SFSO on the basis of the Swiss Statistics Act. The law allows the SFSO to use administrative data for statistical purposes, in collaboration with other administrative offices or cantons. However, the harmonisation of administrative data and its integration in the statistical system is rather difficult, especially due to the fact that the Swiss administration is characterised by a division of competences between local communities, cantons and the federal government (federalism).

F.2. Aggregate data

Concerning the accessibility of aggregate data, they are generally available without any constraints. Indeed, internet users have free access to selected outputs and publications by field of study on the SFSO website. More generally, an extensive collection of downloadable files (tables, graphs, maps, texts and entire publications covering all subject areas of Swiss statistics) are available in the Swiss Statistical Encyclopedia (www.annuaire-stat.ch). There are two types of access to the Swiss Statistical Encyclopedia: a free public access to a limited number of downloadable files and a full subscriber access to the entire range of downloadable files (with username and password). Additionally, dataset entries are accessible online through the database STATWEB (www.statweb.admin.ch); note that this kind of access involves costs. The SFSO can also produce aggregate statistics on request, for a consideration if necessary.

The SECO makes its own labour market statistics accessible through their website. A direct link (www.amstat.ch) offers free accessibility to monthly aggregate labour market statistics through either PDF publications or an interactive database.
G. Quality and scope of data collection

Data quality in Switzerland is generally considered to be good, though there may be exceptions. In particular, this is true with respect to data from the civil register, survey data, and census data, given the good level of coverage at the national level. The use of sample surveys could nevertheless be problematic. Most of them are not representative as far as the foreign population is concerned because of the difficulty to reach foreigners not speaking one of the country’s official languages or living in communities. Due to small numbers, it is also difficult to analyse survey data for more than two or three nationalities or groups of nationalities (e.g. Swiss, EU15/EFTA citizens, other nationalities). Since 2003, the sample size of foreigners in the Labour Force Survey is drawn from the RCE and has augmented up to 15’000 persons. This extra sample allows to improve the analyses concerning the labour market outcomes of foreigners in Switzerland. For the first time, interviews in this survey have then been realised in English, Serbo-Croatian and Albanian.

As far as administrative data is concerned, the quality of data depends on the source, the subject, and the quality of the work performed by agencies and boards responsible for data collection. Data on socio-demographic characteristics of the foreign population and on migration may be considered as exhaustive and of rather good quality. Comparison of sources (RCE/AUPER, census, etc.) shows a good level of comparability. However, administrative data concerning the professional activities of migrants is not always reliable.

H. Conclusions - Recommendations

With a view to take full advantage of the information derived from the Swiss perspective, some recommendations to users are necessary. First, the online database makes available the characteristics as well as the list of variables proper to datasets where the foreign population is identified through the nationality at least. Given the research intentions, this database thus provides a preliminary outlook regarding the feasibility of any studies on the integration of migrants in Switzerland (and in the context of many European countries too). The online database is also relevant for policymakers that may be interested to interpret the statistical data. In particular, they can rely on aggregate statistics from many data sources that allow them to design a coherent approach to immigrant integration policy(ies).

However, the overall situation in Switzerland needs to be improved with respect to the following points.

The first difficulty refers to the availability of information, which is sometimes incomplete given the fact that datasets are often collected to administrative purposes. Gaps in methodological information are also existing for old surveys (released more than 10 years ago). Even if it is likely that this kind of information should be available somewhere, it is difficult to identify the persons in charge of data collection at that time. Moreover, some statistics officials are reluctant to provide all the information needed by researchers; but most of them are in general ready to resolve any
question. Only the SFSO, by his own will, could (and should) improve the way of accumulating information over time for datasets with incomplete information.

The second difficulty is more frustrating because related to the lack of information on the residence permit, even the nationality, in some data sources that are crucially fundamental for the analysis of integration processes. Sometimes, the nationality can only be decomposed in two parts i.e. either "Swiss" or "Foreign" citizens. In such cases, it is really important that the SFSO takes the initiative to describe the foreign population with more precision, especially for datasets where the integration aspect matters.

The less than compatible statistical system between Switzerland and the European Union is another difficulty. Due to the fact that Switzerland does not belong to the European Union, the statistical system is quite different from that of other European countries. In particular, the European Surveys (Eurobarometers, household panels, etc.) are not systematically carried out in Switzerland. This situation is however changing since the bilateral agreements with the EU came into force on the 1st June 2002, even if “harmonisation” reforms still need to be carried out.

In conclusion, we concede that more and more Swiss datasets include rich information regarding foreigners, information that allows to study their integration according to various thematic areas. However, the SFSO who is the main institution in charge of collecting data should keep this trend, even improve it, in order that researchers fully assess the integration processes among foreigners in Switzerland over coming time.
Bibliography

