



## **Longitudinal Analysis of Migratory Trajectories** The Case of German Migrants in Switzerland

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### **1. New patterns of migration?**

The past 20 years, migration in Western Europe has been shaped by a post-Fordist economical setting and a context of expanding globalization. European integration has induced a shift from state-controlled manpower recruiting to a predominately market regulated migration (Braun and Arsene 2009; Favell 2008) as well as to an Europeanization of migration flows. Since “the European Union and its frontier-free ‘Schengenland’ create a borderless zone for mobility” (King et al. 1992), migration between EU/EFTA-countries can today be conceptualized as an extrapolation of internal migration, where the opportunity costs of international migration do not exceed the ones for internal migration anymore. Switzerland, although not a member of the European Union, also underwent this shift, notably since the Agreement on the free movements of persons with the EU came into force in June 2002 (Avenir Suisse and Müller-Jentsch 2008; Stutz and Hermann 2010). With its principle of free movement of persons, who now have the right to move, travel, study, work, settle and retire anywhere within the EU/EFTA, current migration patterns can no longer be captured adequately within a traditional labour migration paradigm (King 2002). Due to these changes more temporary and circular forms of migration have become more commonplace (e.g. Faist 2008). While it is central to study (highly-)mobile immigrants, it is important not to ignore certain (less mobile) migrant groups from studies on migration. This applies especially to highly skilled migrants, who live permanently in their host countries (Harvey 2009): 64% of EU15 movers are returning migrants (Favell and Recchi 2009). Even though this number seems quite high, it suggests that of EU migrants, one out of three migrants settled permanently in the host society. Swiss statistics draw a similar picture: between 2002 and 2010, the turnover-rate between EU15 immigrants and emigrants was 42%, which means that almost one out of two persons settled permanently in Switzerland, raising the question of how temporary and circular the current migration patterns really are.

Surprisingly, migratory trajectories, in particular of recent migrants within the EU/EFTA, have rarely been studied. Yet, without an understanding of those dimensions we are left with an inadequate analysis of these new settling and migration dynamics. This research will contribute to fill this gap in the literature by constructing a new longitudinal database that allows us to examine the migratory trajectories of different types of German residents, who arrived in Switzerland between 2002 and 2011. Therefore, we consider the settling process and the demographic behavior, regarding civil status changes as well as internal migration, of different types of migrants (students, workers, retirees, etc.) (Braun and Arsene 2009; Salt 2005). Finally, a special focus lies on emigration, in order to evaluate how temporary and, in case of recurrent immigration, how circular current migration patterns really are.

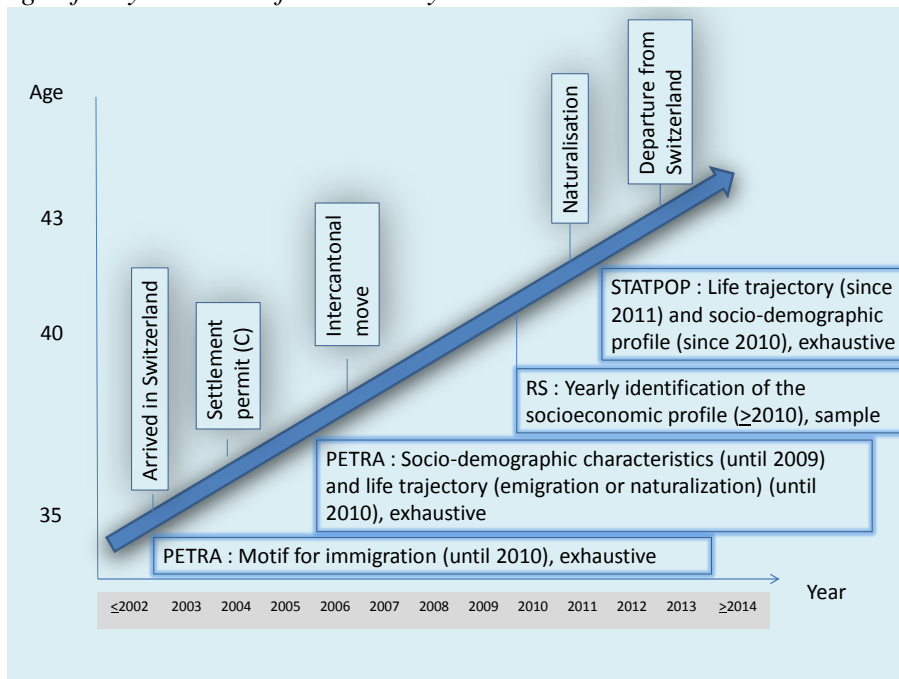
## 2. Scope of the research

The scope of the research is clearly defined. Spatially, it focuses on the specific context of Switzerland, which presents the highest immigration rate in comparison with the EU27/EFTA-countries (Eurostat homepage). Furthermore, the country experienced an increase of short-distance migration (i.e. from Germany, Italy and France) and an increase in the turnover-rates between immigration and emigration. Temporally, the research frame focuses on migrants arrived in Switzerland in the framework of the Agreement of Free Movement of Persons between Switzerland and the EU (after 2002). Since this date, migration has been liberalized between EU countries and Switzerland and in 2007 the privileged access to the labor market of Swiss nationals over EU-15/AELE and Maltese and Cypriote citizens was abolished. Finally, the targeted population are different types of first generation German migrants currently living in Switzerland. German immigration is recently emerging and constitutes a prominent example of the return to immigration from neighbouring countries (Avenir Suisse and Müller-Jentsch 2008; Pecoraro 2005; Steiner 2012a; Stutz and Hermann 2010). They have been the biggest immigrant group for more than a decade in Switzerland and with the Agreement on the free movement of persons (FMP), which came into force in June 2002, the German population in Switzerland increased from 118,000 in 2001 to 277,000 in 2011. Furthermore, we presume that they follow the new more temporary and circular migration patterns, because they stay for a shorter period in Switzerland than other nationalities: half the 14,600 German who emigrated in 2010 had residence duration of less than 2.3 years. All other major groups of foreign nationals in Switzerland had a higher median duration of residence when they emigrated in 2010: Italians 5.6 years and Portuguese 3.3 years (Steiner 2012b).

## 3. Construction of a new longitudinal database

In order to gain new insights into settling and migration dynamics, a longitudinal approach needs to be adopted. However, so far, no longitudinal data, covering recent migratory flows, was available in Switzerland.

*Figure 1 : Example of a migratory trajectory of a German arrived in 2002 in Switzerland at the age of 35 years and left the country in 2013*



Together with the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, we established a longitudinal database, using record linkage and a deterministic data matching approach of three official data sources. The Statistic of the resident population of foreign nationality (PETRA), the register-based Population and Households Statistics (STATPOP) and, due to a lack of socioeconomic and household characteristics in the first two sources, the Structural Survey (RS) (i.e. the new form of the population census).

The record linkage by means of an identical key in the three data sources led to less than 1% of non-linked cases. Thereof, two third could be matched owing to the deterministic data matching approach (imposing a match of seven variables), leading us to the conclusion that the resulting longitudinal database is of good quality.

Our test database<sup>1</sup> contains 27,000 Germans, who account for almost 140,000 stock registrations and 100,000 movements. The maximum stock-registrations, being ten years due to the observation period 2002-2011, was reached by almost 2,500 persons (9% of the total). This result confirms our hypothesis that current migration patterns are not solely of temporary nature. However, the database also revealed circular migratory trajectories, since the maximum of emigrations is 17 (followed every time by immigration, in an interval of three to four months) over a period of 10 years. In general, 30% of all emigrations observed were followed by a (re)immigration.

The new database allows us to follow all German migrants in time (from 2002 until 2011), since their immigration until their dropout from the target population that is by naturalization, death or emigration. However, the latter is not necessary a definitive dropout, since in case of recurrent immigration, they reintegrated into the target population.

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<sup>1</sup> Until the moment of the finalization of the abstract, we had worked with a test database, containing the birth cohorts of 1970, 1971 and 2005.

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