

Population

Overview

Population growth

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the population of Switzerland has more than doubled: from 3.3 million (1900) to 7.7 million (2008). This growth peaked between 1950 and 1970, with average annual growth rates of more than 1.4%. The lowest growth rate, 0.15%, was between 1970 and 1980, as a result of immigration restrictions for foreign workers and the economic recession in 1975 and 1976, which caused a temporary net emigration. In the years around 1975 there was also a one-time decline in the population (1976: -0.6%). Since then, population growth has picked up again: between 1980 and 1990, average annual growth rates were 0.6% , between 1990 and 2000 they were 0.7% and since 2000 they have been 0.8%, and in 2007 and 2008 they exceeded the 1% mark.

Growth mainly due to immigration

Population growth depends on two factors: the excess of births over deaths (births minus deaths) and the balance of migration (immigration minus emigration).

Until the end of the 1970s, the excess of births over deaths was the more significant factor. Since 1965, however, the birth rate has fallen, and since the 1980s the balance of migration has

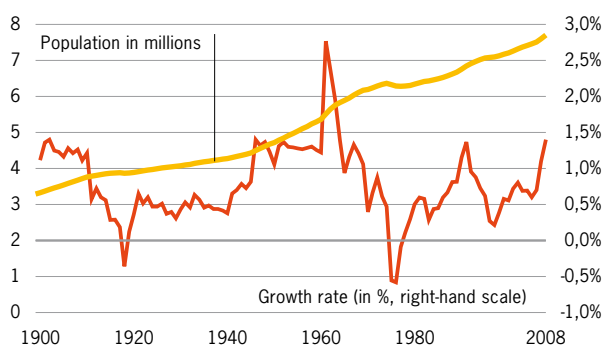
markedly exceeded the excess of births over deaths (annual average of the 10-year periods). But in some individual years, this trend was interrupted, most recently from 1995 to 1998.

Since the 1960s, the excess of births over deaths has been much higher among the foreign resident population than among the Swiss population. This is attributable to three circumstances:

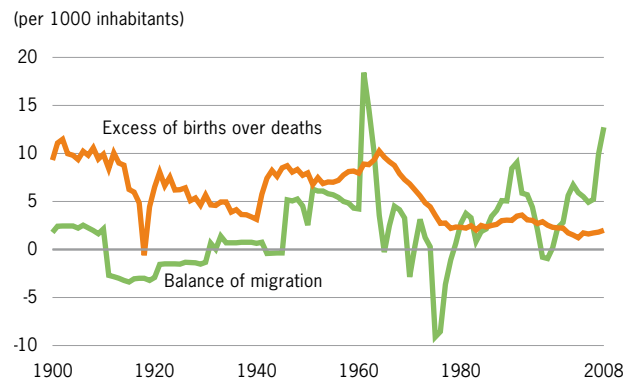
- Foreign women have, on average, more children than Swiss women (2008: 1.9 compared with 1.4);
- the proportion of foreign women of child-bearing age is considerably higher than that of Swiss women; and
- foreigners rarely spend their retirement years in Switzerland. Consequently, the mortality rate of the foreign resident population is correspondingly lower (2008: 3 deaths per 1000 inhabitants, compared with 9 deaths per 1000 inhabitants among the Swiss resident population).

Since 1998, the Swiss population has grown almost only due to naturalisations. In 2008, 2.8% of foreigners resident in Switzerland were naturalised.

Population growth and size G 1.1

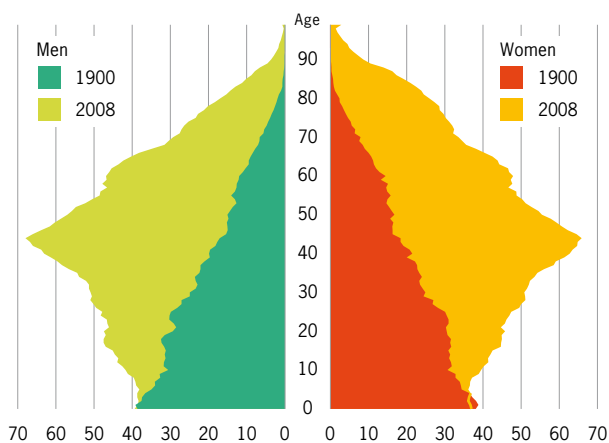


Excess of births over deaths and balance of migration G 1.2



Age structure of the population, in 1000s

G 1.3



Expansion of urban areas

Not all regions have been affected in equal measure by population growth. Urban and suburban municipalities have grown the most; some rural areas have experienced population decreases. There has been a distinct urbanisation of living spaces: Whereas in 1930, only 36% of the population lived in urban areas, by 2008 that proportion had almost doubled (73.6%). In the 1990s, population growth was generally somewhat higher in rural than in urban areas. Since 2000, the reverse has been the case (2008: +1.6% compared with +1.0%).

In urban areas, growth between 1960 and 1999 was concentrated in smaller centres and agglomeration belts; larger urban centres experienced massive population drops in some cases, but since the year 2000, a trend reversal has been observed.

Fewer younger, more older people

The age structure of the population underwent fundamental change during the course of the 20th century. The share of young people (under age 20) dropped from 40.7% (1990) to 21.2% (2008); among older persons (over 64), it rose from 5.8% to 16.6%; among the elderly (age 80 and over), the increase was particularly pronounced (from 0.5% to 4.7%). This demographic ageing process is a consequence of a rising life expectancy and, particularly, of a declining birth rate. It is expected to continue in the next few decades. By 2050, the proportion of persons aged 65 and over is expected to rise from 16.6% (2008) to 28%.

More women than men overall

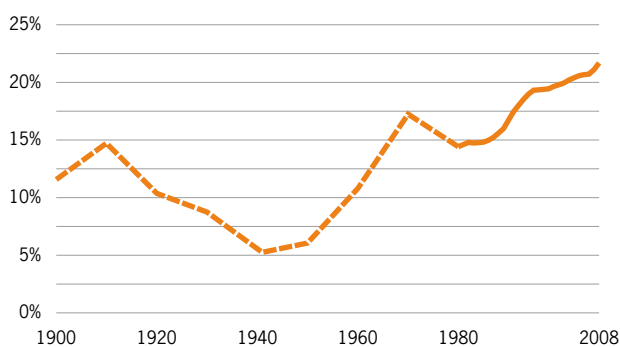
Women live longer than men, and as a result of this difference in life expectancy, women constitute a slight majority of the total population (2008: 50.8%). The proportion is particularly high among 65–79 year olds (54.4%) and significant among those aged 80 and over (65.7%). Until age 55, however, women are generally in the minority (e.g. among 0–19 year olds: 48.6%). The reasons for this are, on the one hand, that more boys than girls are born (106.5 boys per 100 girls) and, on the other, that there are more men than women among immigrants.

One in five has foreign citizenship

The proportion of foreigners fluctuated significantly during the 20th century. Periods of immigration were followed by periods

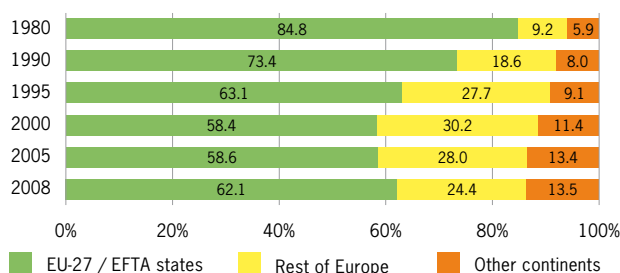
Share of permanent foreign resident population

G 1.4



Citizenship of foreign population¹

G 1.5



¹ Excluding short-term residents and persons in the asylum process

of emigration and return migration. This see-saw generally paralleled economic and employment cycles. In European comparison, Switzerland has one of the highest proportions (21.7% in 2008) of foreigners.

Most foreign citizens have been living in Switzerland for a long time: more than one fifth were born here and are therefore second or third-generation foreigners living in Switzerland. Of residents born abroad, approximately 40% have been living in Switzerland for at least 15 years. Two thirds of foreigners have a permanent residence permit. There are considerable differences between the nationalities with respect to the duration of their residence and their status in Switzerland.

Globalisation of immigration flows

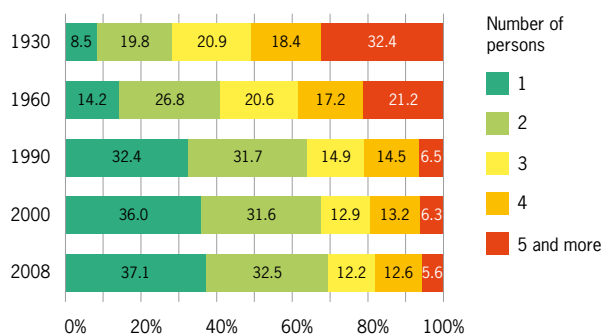
The foreign population is increasingly immigrating to Switzerland from distant countries. Thus, the share of persons from non-European countries has increased from 6% (1980) to 13.5% (2008), while that of persons from countries neighbouring Switzerland has receded from 65% to 39%. The share of EU 27 and EFTA citizens is 62%.

The high number of asylum applications has also contributed to the globalisation of migration flows. Applications peaked at more than 40,000 in the years 1991, 1998 and 1999. Since 2000, their number has declined. In 2007, it was approximately 11,000, and it rose to around 17,000 in 2008. At the end of 2008, a total of 40,800 persons were in the asylum process.

Ever more and smaller households

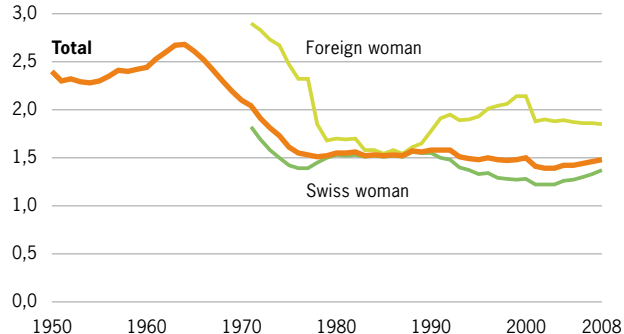
For more than a century, the share of households with more than two members has been steadily declining. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the average household size has decreased

Household size (in %, only private households)



G 1.6

Average number of children per woman



G 1.7

from 4.5 to 2.2 (2008). In 2008, one-person households represented 37% of all households and 17% of the population; two-person households accounted for 32% of households and 30% of the population. It is estimated that by 2015, the majority of the population will live in one or two-person households.

The middle-class family with the father as the sole breadwinner: an outdated model?

At the beginning of the 21st century, family households lost their dominant position. Bigger families with three or more children have become particularly rare: their share of total family households decreased from 26.5% in 1930 to 9.6% in 2000. In 2008, less than half (48%) of the population lived in a family with a father, mother and at least one child (1970: 65%).

The traditional middle-class sole breadwinner model has become less common. Two thirds of mothers (74%) are in employment, although mostly only part-time, because in most families it is still the case that fathers tend to do more paid work (generally full-time) and mothers are mainly responsible for house and family work. This seems to be changing very little (though between 1997 and 2007, the share of fathers in full-time employment living in a partnership with a youngest child under 7 fell from 95% to 91%).

Postponing marriage and childbearing

The difficulty of balancing work and family is, along with more time spent in education, one of the reasons people are starting a family increasingly late in life, if at all. The age of first marriage rose from 26.5 to 31.4 years for men and from 24.1 to 29.1 years for women. The age of mothers at first birth is also rising: whereas in 1970, a clear majority of children (69.9%) were born before the mother was 30, by 2008 almost two thirds of all mothers were aged 30 or older.

The postponement of family formation is one of the reasons for the falling birth rate, which since the 1970s has not been sufficient for the replacement of the population. The replacement level requires an average of 2.1 children born for every woman. In 2008, however, a value of only 1.48 was registered (Swiss women 1.37; foreign women 1.85).

Increasingly multifaceted living patterns

By and large, it can be seen that living patterns have become more multifaceted. Much that was rare or impossible a few decades ago is now taken for granted:

Divorce: people are not only getting married later in life, they are also separating more frequently and are ever less likely to stay together for life. Since 1970, the divorce rate has tripled (1970: 6404; 2008: 19,613). At the current divorce rate, almost half (48.4%) of the marriages contracted in 2008 will end in divorce. The consequences of this increasing proclivity to divorce are a rising number of patchwork and single-parent families.

Single parents: The number of single-parent families has grown by 71% since 1970; today (2008) they account for 17% of family households with children (1970: 10%). In most cases, single parents are mothers, half of whom are divorced. A growing number of children live with only one parent. This proportion is particularly high among 15–19 year olds (2008: 17%; 1980: 11%).

Non-marital partnerships: In the year 2000, 11% of couples living together were not married; in 1980, it was only 4%. But the situation changes when a child is born: 18% of couples without children are not married (1980: 8%), but only 4% (1%) of couples with children. Nonetheless, the share of non-marital births has risen from 11% (2000) to 17% (2008).

Registered partnerships: On 1 January 2007, the Registered Partnership Act came into force at the federal level. Same-sex couples can register at the civil registry office of their place of residence and thereby commit themselves to a partnership

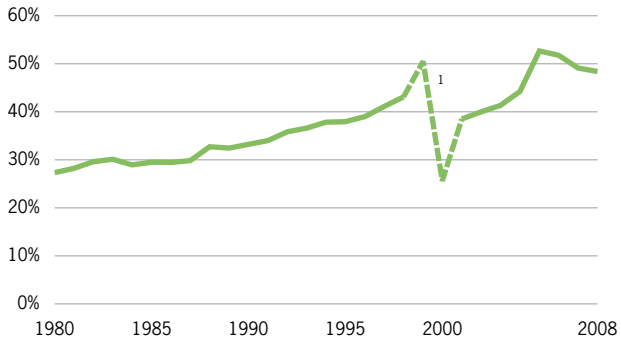
Composition of family households

TT 1.1

	1930		1960		2000	
	1000	%	1000	%	1000	%
Persons living in family households	3,645.7		4,650.1		5,733.4	
as a % of total population		89.6		85.6		82.0
Number of family households	846.4	100.0	1,243.7	100.0	1,931.7	100.0
with children	626.3	74.0	846.5	68.1	1,059.6	54.9
1 child	220.1	26.0	338.3	27.2	430.7	22.3
2 children	181.8	21.5	269.3	21.7	444.1	23.0
3 children	103.4	12.2	137.5	11.1	143.4	7.4
4 children	55.9	6.6	58.7	4.7	33.0	1.7
5 or more children	65.0	7.7	42.6	3.4	8.5	0.4
Couple households without children	188.6	22.3	383.5	30.8	850.0	44.0
Individual with parent(s)	31.6	3.7	13.8	1.1	22.1	1.1

Total divorce rate

G 1.8



1 The evolution of the divorce rate after 1998 (sharp rise in 1999, sharp drop in 2000) is related to the new divorce law, which came into force on 1 January 2000.

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 with precisely defined rights and obligations. In 2007, some 2004 couples availed themselves of this option (1431 male couples and 573 female couples); in 2008, the number was 931 couples (660 male and 271 female couples).

Age groups in %, according to medium scenario

G 1.9

