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01

Population

Neuchâtel 2021

Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

In-depth analysis of the results 2016–2020



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Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

In-depth analysis of the results 2016–2020

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1 Introduction

Carried out for a third time by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), the survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS) serves to analyse the situation relative to the coexistence of different population groups living in Switzerland. The evaluation is conducted by identifying the attitudes and opinions of the population with regard to diversity. The survey monitors changes in certain aspects of the social climate, such as racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

The Swiss population comprises many social groups and people from a variety of backgrounds. More than ten main religious communities are present in the country for example and, in addition to the four national languages, no fewer than ten other languages are widely spoken. The population of Switzerland comprises more than 190 nationalities. Among Swiss passport holders, one person out of eight was born abroad and has therefore experienced migration in person. This diversity is enriching for society, but can also represent a challenge in terms of coexistence. Questions can arise on the acceptance, integration, rejection and exclusion of certain population groups.

The present publication conducts an in-depth analysis of the results of the surveys on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS) carried out in 2016, 2018 and 2020. Using composite indices, temporal evolutions and by focusing on the attitudes of population sub-groups, the survey aims to present a detailed picture of the Swiss population's attitudes towards diversity. The concepts of racism, xenophobia and hostility towards target groups are at the heart of this analysis.

Against this backdrop, the survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS) aims to present an accurate picture of the issues raised by the coexistence of different population groups living in Switzerland. It enables changes in society to be monitored with regard to several aspects, such as racism, xenophobia and discrimination. The data collected are used to observe social change. They provide a quantitative and factual basis for the policies on integration and anti-discrimination. For more information on the survey, see the annexes.

1.1 Context

The time that has elapsed between the three surveys on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS) has been marked by a number of economic, political and social events. Recalling them in this introductory chapter will serve to put the attitudes of the population described in this publication into context. This sub-chapter therefore presents the main events that have occurred between the surveys.

From a demographic standpoint, the Swiss population has continued to grow over the period 2016–2020, increasing from 8 248 349 in 2016 to 8 438 822 in 2019, representing an additional 190 473 individuals. The population has also become more diversified. This diversification can be seen in the increasing number of foreign nationals or people with a migration background. Accordingly, there were 2 101 146 foreign nationals in Switzerland in 2016 compared to 2 175 375 in 2019. The share of the population with a migration background was 36% in 2015, rising to 37% in 2016–2017 and 38% in 2018–2019. These figures bear witness to a gradual but steady increase in the presence of these groups within the permanent resident population. The majority of people with a migration background are originally from European countries, and more particularly member states of the EU/EFTA. When explaining why they have chosen to settle in Switzerland, the migrants primarily cite family and professional reasons.

Over the period 2016–2020, the economic situation in Switzerland was stable and favourable. The proportion of active individuals in the population aged 15 and over remained stable, despite demographic ageing. In 2019, as in 1999, 68% of Switzerland's population were in active employment. The rate recorded in 2019 was one of the highest in Europe (ESPA, 2020). Another indicator of a positive economic situation, the unemployment rate, fell in Switzerland over the period 2016–2020. At the end of 2016, 4.6% of the active population were unemployed according to the International Labour Office (ILO) definition. The rate was lower in 2019, as the unemployed accounted for 3.9% of the active population. Over the same period, the employment situation also improved in the majority of European Union countries. Between 2018 and 2019, for example, the unemployment rate fell in the European Union (EU-28: 6.6% to 6.2%) and in the Euro zone (7.9% to 7.4%).

In socio-political terms, the international context in 2016 was characterised by several armed conflicts and terrorist attacks¹. Like its neighbours, Switzerland is concerned by a growing international need to care for migrants arriving from Greece, in particular those originally from Syria and Iraq. The year was also marked by the British people voting in favour of the United Kingdom exiting the European Union and the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States. In 2016, 58.9% of Swiss electors rejected an initiative aimed at ensuring a firmer stance on deporting “foreign criminals”. In connection with diversity and coexistence, the political agenda was marked by the debate on the wearing of the burka and in September 2016, the National Assembly accepted a parliamentary initiative designed to prohibit this type of full body covering from being worn within the national territory.

During 2018, tensions relating to the question of migration heightened both in Switzerland and abroad, with a difficult humanitarian situation at certain external borders of the Schengen area, further terrorist attacks and electoral successes for parties or leaders committed to restrictive migration policies. The period between the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 was marked by the spread of COVID-19. Public health measures were introduced, in particular social distancing, the temporary closure of certain businesses and shops but also a lockdown limiting the movement of the population. Accordingly, several countries also closed their borders. The health situation had serious repercussions on the European economy, which fell into recession. In spring 2020, racial questions made headline news in both the Swiss and international media following the death of George Floyd, an African-American man who died following police intervention. His death led to a series of demonstrations in the United States, Europe and Switzerland as part of the “Black lives matter” movement.

1.2 Key results

The surveys on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS) conducted over the period 2016–2020 first and foremost indicate a stability of attitudes towards diversity and otherness. Few changes or reversals in the trends are observed, so that positive and negative attitudes remain the same.

These surveys show that the population living in Switzerland is generally open to national or cultural differences. Few people state that they feel uncomfortable in the presence of people from different backgrounds. The population also tends to be in favour of granting more rights to foreign nationals living in the country, in particular the right to family reunification. It considers non-nationals as being necessary to ensuring the Swiss economy functions correctly. A large majority believes that the integration of migrants is going well and is aware that racism is a social problem which must be addressed. Between the surveys of 2016 and 2020, these positive attitudes tended to become stronger.

While general attitudes are favourable, tensions are centred on certain groups and situations. The population's perceptions with regard to Muslims tend to be less favourable than towards other groups. People with an itinerant way of life are also the focus of negative attitudes. Echoing cultural disparities, people who do not speak a national language, who are perceived as not integrated and who do not respect Swiss culture or values are also mentioned.

The surveys of 2016, 2018 and 2020 also showed that almost one third of the population state that they have been subject to discrimination or violence. Over the period, this rate increased from 27% to 32%, potentially indicating an increase in these personal experiences. Most such victims state their nationality as the ground of discrimination. Discrimination most often occurs in the context of work. Public spaces are also mentioned by numerous victims.

1.3 Structure of the publication

The publication on the survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland comprises several chapters. After this introduction, the second chapter presents the composite indices used to measure the concepts of racism, xenophobia and hostility towards target groups. The change in the average values of these indices over time is presented. The third chapter explores the links between attitudes towards diversity and the socio-demographic characteristics of the people who express these attitudes (individual factors). In doing so, it presents the attitudes of the population according to certain specific characteristics. The fourth chapter attempts to compare attitudes towards diversity in space, focusing on the differences between regions and according to the level of urbanisation. Finally, the fifth chapter concludes by presenting an assessment of the results of the 2016, 2018 and 2020 surveys on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS).

¹ Several attacks occurred throughout the year, in Syria, Afghanistan, Turkey, France (Nice), Belgium and Germany.

2 Indices measuring attitudes towards diversity

This chapter examines the attitudes of closed mindedness, rejection or exclusion towards diversity and different forms of otherness. These attitudes are comparatively less widespread than the positive attitudes, but clearly exist (see sub-chapter 1.2). Particular attention is paid to negative attitudes insofar as they are likely to impede the integration and participation of certain population groups while also hampering coexistence in Swiss society.

Indices make it possible to analyse and monitor over time the main attitudes prevalent within the population towards diversity. They focus on the different types of negative attitude which refer to specific dimensions of the phenomenon of racism and of the rejection of differences: so-called "classic" racism¹, xenophobia, threats, hostility and negative stereotypes.

How are the indices calculated?

The key concepts presented in the form of indices are a synthesis of several negative statements concerning people belonging to groups different from the majority; foreigners, Muslims, Black people and Jewish people. Depending on the level of agreement on a scale of 1 to 4 or 1 to 6, an average value is calculated per concept for each person surveyed. This is located between 1 and 4 (attitudes) or between 1 and 6 (stereotypes). 1 reflects a positive attitude, 4 a negative attitude. For stereotypes, 1 expresses a weakly stereotyped perception, 6 a strongly stereotyped perception. The global index values represent the average value of the individual average values based on the combination of answers to the isolated statements. The non-response was ascribed at random based on responses from a single person to other questions measuring the same concept. If a response is not available, the average value of another person is allocated for a given concept.

2.1 Overview of indices

This sub-chapter presents the average values of the 2020 indices, comparing them with one another. For a given year, this makes it possible to establish which type of rejection attitude is expressed particularly strongly and to identify the situations and groups around which social tensions centre.

First and foremost, the analysis of the indices confirms a key result of the descriptive analyses conducted throughout the surveys by means of standard indicators: negative attitudes are less widespread within the population than positive attitudes. This can be seen in particular in the comparatively low average value of the index measuring racist attitudes (1.4 out of 4). The fact that the average values of other indices are close to 2 also indicates a tendency to disagree with the negative attitudes. The detailed results of these indices highlighting the prevalence of positive attitudes over negative attitudes will be presented in the following sub-chapter (see sub-chapter 2.2).

While the values of the indices are similar, statistically significant differences can be observed between certain types of negative attitude. Racist attitudes are less widespread than all other types of negative attitudes towards diversity (1.4 for racist attitudes compared to 1.9–2.0 for hostile attitudes towards target groups and 2.1 for xenophobic attitudes). Although the differences are not visible from the values of the global indices, a detailed analysis shows that attitudes vary according to the target group considered. Muslims tend to be the subject of negative attitudes (12%) more often than Black people (8%) or Jewish people (6%). Among the people with a stereotyped vision of the groups, the prevalence of strong negative stereotypes is higher in the case of Muslims (34%) and Jewish people (39%) than for Black people (20%).

Regarding hostility, the detailed analysis of the distribution of responses on a scale of 1 (disagreement with hostile attitudes) to 4 (agreement with hostile attitudes) shows similar results. Strong agreement with hostile attitudes, as shown by a score of 3.5 (strong agreement) to 4 (total agreement), is more frequent with regard to Muslims than for Black or Jewish people: 4% of the population tends to display hostility towards Muslims while this rate falls to about 2% for the other two groups.

¹ In the sense of racism claiming a biological and genetic basis of different human races. Calling on scientific arguments, this racism is based on the idea of natural or essential differences. For a more detailed description of different forms of racism, see **Efionayi-Mäder, Denise and Ruedin, Didier (2017): Etat des lieux du racisme anti-Noir-e en Suisse**, SFM Studies #67f. Neuchâtel: University of Neuchâtel.

Indices "Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland"¹

T1

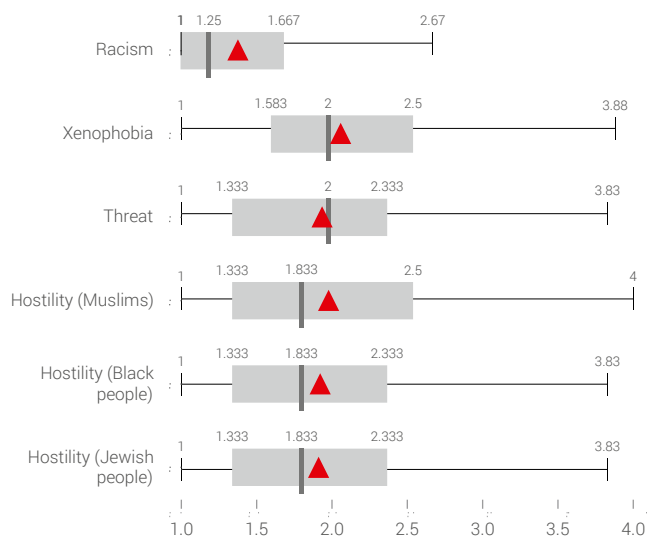
Concepts	Indices	Variables and labels	Scales
Racism	Racist attitudes	Discomfort in everyday life: different skin colour	(1) no discomfort at all
		Discomfort in everyday life: different religion	(2) rather no discomfort
		Discomfort in everyday life: different language	(3) rather discomfort
		Discomfort in everyday life: different nationality	(4) total discomfort
		Discomfort at work: different skin colour	
		Discomfort at work: different religion	
		Discomfort at work: different language	
		Discomfort at work: different nationality	
		Discomfort in neighbourhood: different skin colour	
		Discomfort in neighbourhood: different religion	
		Discomfort in neighbourhood: different language	
		Discomfort in neighbourhood: different nationality	
Xenophobia	Xenophobic attitudes	Foreigners create a feeling of insecurity	Level of agreement:
		Foreigners take advantage of the social benefits system	(1) not at all
		Foreigners are responsible for unemployment rises	(2) rather not
		The presence of foreigners make you feel like a stranger in Switzerland	(3) rather
		Foreign children prevent Swiss children from receiving a good education	(4) totally
		Foreigners are necessary in Switzerland **	
		The immigration of foreigners leads to a strengthening of patriarchal thinking	
		Foreigners must give up their own culture	
		Foreigners should have the right to family reunification **	
		When jobs are scarce, foreigners should be sent back to their country of origin	
		Foreigners born here should be able to obtain automatic naturalisation **	
		Foreigners should gain political rights **	
Threat	Sense of threat	General sense of threat	(1) not at all threatened
		Sense of threat in case of a political conflict	(2) rather not threatened
		Sense of threat in case on the labour market	(3) rather threatened
			(4) totally threatened
Hostility	Hostile attitudes towards Muslims	Muslims should be prohibited from immigrating to Switzerland	Level of agreement:
		Muslims should be prohibited from practising their religion in Switzerland	(1) not at all
		It would be better if there were no Muslims in Switzerland	(2) rather not
		The Islamic terrorists find support among the Muslims	(3) rather
		Muslims want to enforce Sharia	(4) totally
		Muslims strive for world domination	
	Hostile attitudes towards Black people	There are too many Black people in Switzerland	Level of agreement:
		Black people in Switzerland contributes to the increase in crime in the Switzerland	(1) not at all
		It is not good to have too many marriages between Black people and white people	(2) rather not
		One can not really trust Black people	(3) rather
		Black people who do not adapt to our way of life should be sent back	(4) totally
		If we look at their countries of origin, we can see that Black people need external help	
	Hostile attitudes towards Jewish people	Jewish people are complicit in their persecutions	Level of agreement:
		Jewish people have too much influence in the world	(1) not at all
		Jewish people exploit the Nazis' extermination policy for their own advantage	(2) rather not
		Jewish people with a Swiss passport are more loyal to Israel than Switzerland	(3) rather
		Jewish people have too much influence in Switzerland	(4) totally
		It would be best if all Jewish people went to Israel	
Stereotypes	Negative stereotypes of Muslims	Muslims are fanatics	(1) the stereotype hardly applies
		Muslims are aggressive	(–)
		Muslims do not respect women	(6) the stereotype fully applies
		Muslims do not respect human rights	
	Negative stereotypes of Black people	Black people are lazy workers	(1) the stereotype hardly applies
		Black people are violent	(–)
		Black people struggle to respect rules	(6) the stereotype fully applies
		Black people are profiteers	
	Negative stereotypes of Jewish people	Jewish people are greedy	(1) the stereotype hardly applies
		Jewish people are hungry for power	(–)
		Jewish people are politically radical	(6) the stereotype fully applies
		Jewish people remain too cloistered among themselves	

¹ As certain indices are constructed on the basis of positive and negative statements, the response scale sometimes had to be adapted. This is the case for the "Xenophobic attitudes" where the scale was reversed for positive statements (**) such that 1 means "disagree with xenophobic attitudes" and 4 means "agree with xenophobic attitudes".

Attitudes towards diversity

Disagreement (1) or agreement (4) with negative attitudes

G1



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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2.2 Distributions and temporal evolutions

This sub-chapter presents the detailed results of the 2020 indices, i.e. the distribution of the population's responses² on a scale representing a continuum between the positive attitudes (1) and negative attitudes (4, or 6 in the case of stereotypes). According to the subject of the negative attitude, three groups of attitudes are analysed: attitudes towards diversity (racism), attitudes towards foreign nationals (xenophobia and threat) and attitudes towards target groups (hostility and stereotypes). The sub-chapter then presents the indices in the form of a time series. The years compared are 2016, 2018 and 2020. This makes it possible to highlight changes in attitudes or, on the contrary, their stability over the observation period.

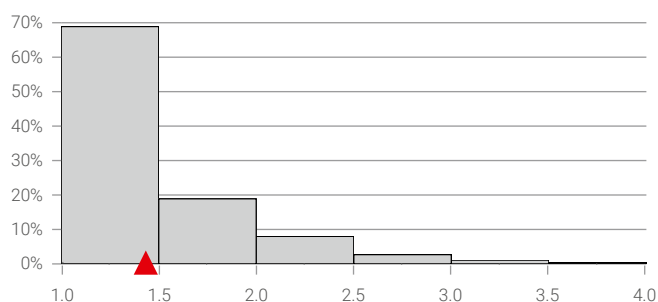
2.2.1 Attitudes towards diversity: racism

Among the negative attitudes towards diversity, the central concept is that of racism. This concept measures the lack of value attributed to certain individuals or groups based on biological or cultural criteria associated with them. This aversion is likely to result in social exclusion³. The racism index makes it possible to capture this attitude. It is founded on the measurement of the sense of discomfort generated by those who are perceived

Racism

Proportion of the population disagreeing (1) or agreeing (4) with racist attitudes, 2020

G2



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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to be different, be it in everyday life, in the neighbourhood or at work. The causes of discomfort taken into consideration are skin colour, language, religion and nationality.

The average value of the index measuring racist attitudes ▲ was 1.4 in 2020 (G2), on a scale of 1 (disagreement with racist attitudes) to 4 (agreement with racist attitudes). Strong disagreement with racist attitudes is the most widespread case: 69% of the population is positioned between 1 (total disagreement) and 1.5 (strong disagreement). A further 19% is located in the range of disagreement between 1.5 and 2 and 8% between 2 and 2.5. Agreement with racist attitudes is rare: 0.4% of the population is positioned between 3.5 (strong agreement) and 4 (total agreement) and 1% between 3.5 and 3. With each bracket of 0.5 points, the proportion of individuals displaying this index value is almost divided by two. The median value splitting the distribution in two equal parts is 1.25 (G1). For this index, the distribution is not very broad, indicating a large consensus within the population towards rejecting racist attitudes.

While the average value of the index measuring racist attitudes was 1.5 in 2018, it was 1.4 in 2020. The difference between the years is statistically significant.

² The survey is conducted on a representative sample of the permanent resident population of Switzerland aged between 15 and 88. The number of subjects in the unweighted 2020 sample is n = 3258.

³ gfs.bern (2014): Short report on the "Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland 2010–2014" study. Situation and evolution of racism, xenophobia and hostility towards Muslims and Jews. Bern: gfs.bern.

2.2.2 Attitudes towards foreigners: xenophobia and threat

The second concept measured is xenophobia. Based on the Swiss context, it examines negative attitudes towards people of foreign nationality. Like the concepts measuring the negative attitudes towards target groups, the concept of xenophobia is based on stereotypes. It nevertheless differs from the other concepts in the manifestations and causes underpinning the stereotypes considered. In the present analysis, xenophobia primarily refers to the nationality of (foreign) people and is measured according to statements referring to the current situation, both economic and social, in Switzerland⁴.

The average value of the index measuring xenophobic attitudes ▲ was 2.1 in 2020 (G3), on a scale of 1 (disagreement with xenophobic attitudes) to 4 (agreement with xenophobic attitudes). The distribution of the individual values of the index measuring these attitudes differs from that measuring racist attitudes: total disagreement (between 1 and 1.5) is not the most widespread case. 22% of the population has an average value of between 1 and 1.5, i.e. displaying strong disagreement with xenophobic attitudes. 30% of the population adopts a position between 1.5 and 2. Beyond this, as the level of agreement increases, we observe a fall in the proportions of individuals per category. 25% are positioned in the category between 2 and 2.5, close to the neutral point of the scale. In total, 56% of the population displays an average value between 1.5 and 2.5. Agreement with xenophobic attitudes, i.e. the values above 2.5, is less common: 15% of the population displays an average value between 2.5 and 3.6% between 3 and 3.5 and 2% between 3.5 and 4. The median value is 2.0.

Over the 2016–2020 period, the average value of the index measuring xenophobic attitudes was 2.2 in 2016, 2.2 in 2018 and 2.1 in 2020. The downward trend observed echoes the results obtained using standard indicators⁵ published after each survey (see sub-chapter 1.2).

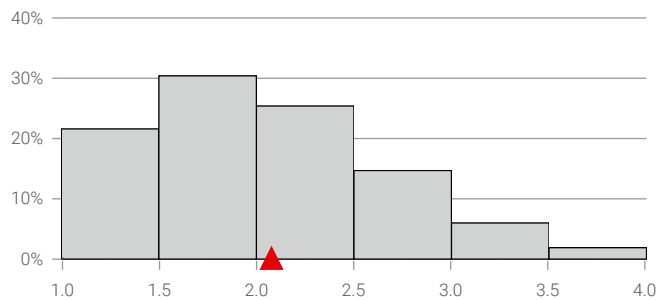
The index measuring the sense of threat refers to another facet of negative attitudes towards foreigners. It focuses on the fears of the population. If the population feels threatened by the foreigners living in the country, this could reflect stronger xenophobic or racist attitudes⁶.

The average value of the index measuring the sense of threat in light of the foreign presence in Switzerland ▲ was 2.0 in 2020 (G4), on a scale of 1 (no sense of threat) to 4 (strong sense of threat). 27% of the population is positioned between 1 and 1.5 and therefore feels no sense of threat with regard to foreigners, be it in general, at work or in the event of political conflict. As with the xenophobia index, the most common position is between 1.5 and 2; some 36% of the population can be found in this

Xenophobia

Proportion of the population disagreeing (1) or agreeing (4) with xenophobic attitudes, 2020

G3



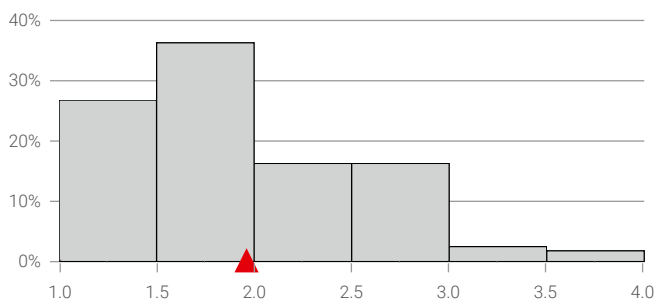
Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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Threat

Proportion of the population that does not feel (1) or feels (4) threatened by foreigners, 2020

G4



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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category. This proportion of the population feels a slight sense of threat. A further 16% lean towards an absence of sense of threat or a low sense of threat – between 2 and 2.5. The proportion of the population that feels threatened by foreigners living in Switzerland is much smaller: 16% of the population are in the category between 2.5 and 3.3% between 3 and 3.5 and 2% between 3.5 and 4. The median value is 2.0.

The distribution of the individual values of this index is similar to that observed for the previous index measuring xenophobic attitudes. The average values of the two indices are identical, bearing witness to the similarity of the phenomena studied.

The average value of the index measuring the sense of threat with regard to the presence of foreigners was 2.2 in 2016, 2.1 in 2018 and 2.0 in 2020. Given that the differences between the years are statistically significant, the sense of threat is diminishing.

⁴ gfs.bern (2014): Short report on the "Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland 2010–2014" study. Situation and evolution of racism, xenophobia and hostility towards Muslims and Jews, page 4. Bern: gfs.bern.

⁵ FSO website: www.statistics.admin.ch → Look for statistics → 01 – Population → Migration and integration → Diversity and coexistence → Foreigners

⁶ gfs.bern (2014): Short report on the "Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland 2010–2014" study. Situation and evolution of racism, xenophobia and hostility towards Muslims and Jews, page 33. Bern: gfs.bern.

2.2.3 Attitudes towards target groups: hostility and negative stereotypes

In the current context, we observe a focusing of social tensions around people associated with the Muslim or Jewish religions or “visible minorities” such as Black people. By capturing and linking hostile opinions and negative stereotypes, the following indices show the attitudes of the population towards three target groups: Muslims, Black people and Jewish people.

Muslims

The average value of the index measuring hostile attitudes towards Muslims ▲ was 2.0 in 2020 (G5), on a scale of 1 (disagreement with hostile attitudes) to 4 (agreement with hostile attitudes). The attitudes towards this group are more positive than negative, as 37% of the population are positioned between 1 (total disagreement) and 1.5 (strong disagreement). The negative attitudes are less widespread insofar as 4% of the population is positioned between 3.5 (strong agreement) and 4 (total agreement) and 12% between 3 (agreement) and 4 (total agreement). Some 30% are positioned in the category 2–3 and thus midway between agreement and disagreement. For this index, the median value is 1.8.

The average value of the index measuring hostility towards Muslims was 2.2 in 2016, 2.1 in 2018 and 2.0 in 2020. The differences between the years are statistically significant. Also bearing witness to the shift towards more positive attitudes, the proportion of people opposed to the negative statements (i.e. between 1 and 1.5) increased over the period: 27% in 2016, 30% in 2018 and 37% in 2020. The share of the population in total agreement with the negative statements (i.e. between 3.5 and 4) fell only slightly (6% in 2016 and 2018 and 4% in 2020).

As sets of characteristics attributed to a group or as a generalisation concerning a group and differentiating it from others, stereotypes represent a specific form of attitudes towards diversity. The average value of the index measuring negative stereotypes of Muslims ▲ was 3.5 in 2020 (G6), this time on a scale of 1 (weak stereotypes) to 6 (strong stereotypes). This average value coincides with the central value of the scale 1–6. A total of 34% of the population⁷ is located between 4 and 6 and therefore strongly adheres to the negative stereotypes⁸ of Muslims. Among the target groups examined, the proportion of the population refusing to adopt stereotypes is also lowest in the case of Muslims (5% compared to 18% for Black people and 16% for Jewish people).

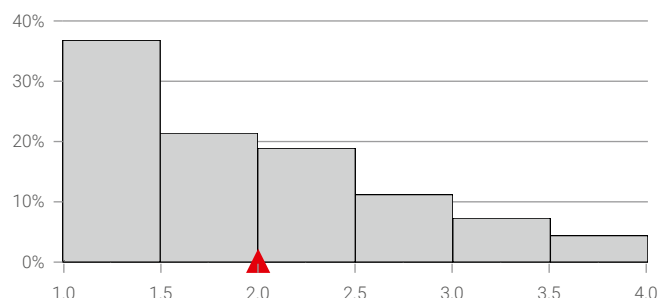
⁷ Limited population: the people initially refusing to adopt stereotypes with regard to Muslims (5%) are excluded.

⁸ The negative characteristics attributed to Muslims on which the respondents were asked to give their opinion and which were used to construct the index were: fanaticism, aggressiveness, oppression of women, and non-respect of human rights.

Hostility towards Muslims

Proportion of the population disagreeing (1) or agreeing (4) with hostile attitudes, 2020

G5



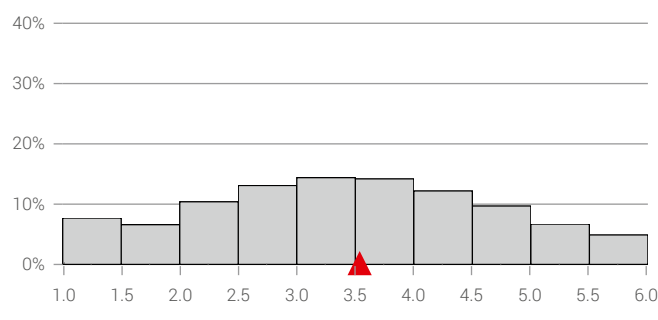
Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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Negative stereotypes of Muslims

Proportion of the population weakly (1) or strongly (6) agreeing with negative stereotypes, 2020

G6



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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In the case of Muslims, a distinction can be made between attitudes towards the person or community and those relating to religion. When attitudes towards Muslims and attitudes towards Islam are analysed separately, the negative attitudes are more common with regard to the religion than with regard to the person or group associated with this religion. This can be seen in the index measuring mistrust of Islam⁹. Over the period 2016–2018, the value of this index was systematically higher than the value of the index measuring hostility towards Muslims (without referring to the religion).

⁹ The index of mistrust of Islam is calculated using a method developed by gfs. bern as part of a pilot project. It is constructed on the basis of three negative statements concerning religious aspects or directly connected to Islam. The calculation method is based on the connecting negative statements by means of a principal component analysis.

Black people

The average value of the index measuring hostile attitudes towards Black people ▲ is 1.9 in 2020 (G7), on a scale of 1 (disagreement with hostile attitudes) to 4 (agreement with hostile attitudes). As is the case for attitudes towards Muslims, attitudes towards Black people are more positive than negative. 37% of the population is positioned between 1 (total disagreement) and 1.5 (strong disagreement). 2% of the population is situated between 3.5 (strong agreement) and 4 (total agreement) with 8% between 3 (agreement) and 4 (total agreement) – i.e. 4 percentage points lower than for Muslims. Some 32% are positioned in the category 2–3 and thus midway between agreement and disagreement. The median value is 1.8.

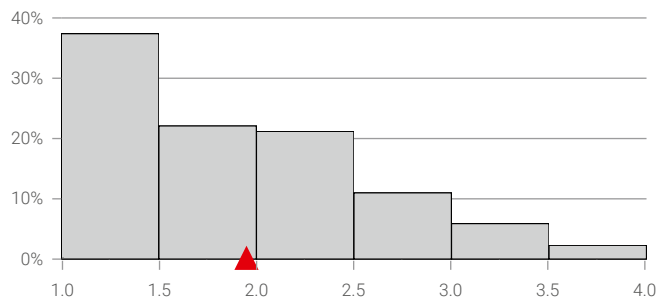
The average value of the index measuring hostility towards Black people followed a downward trend over the period 2016–2020. It was 2.1 in 2016 and 2018 and 1.9 in 2020. While a fall over time can be observed, the differences in the average values observed between the years are not statistically significant. As is the case with attitudes towards Muslims, the proportion of the population in strong disagreement with the negative opinions (i.e. between 1 and 1.5) increased over the period: 29% in 2016, 33% in 2018 and 37% in 2020. The proportion of the population in total agreement with the negative statements (i.e. between 3.5 and 4) remained stable at a low level (2–4%).

Weaker than hostility, stereotypes refer to a specific form of negative attitudes. In the case of Black people, the average value of the index measuring negative stereotypes ▲ was 3.1 in 2020 (G8), this time on a scale of 1 (weak stereotypes) to 6 (strong stereotypes). The proportion of the population¹⁰ situated between 4 and 6 on the response scale – i.e. who accept negative stereotypes¹¹ – is 20%. While the populations considered are different,¹² this proportion is lower than the proportion of the population who accept negative stereotypes with regard to Muslims (34%).

Hostility towards Black people

Proportion of the population disagreeing (1) or agreeing (4) with hostile attitudes, 2020

G7



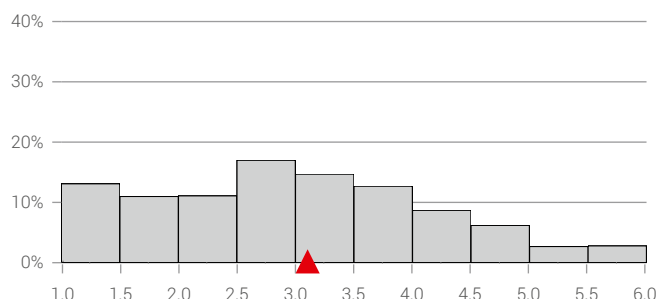
Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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Negative stereotypes of Black people

Proportion of the population weakly (1) or strongly (6) agreeing with negative stereotypes, 2020

G8



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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¹⁰ Limited population: the people initially refusing to adopt stereotypes with regard to Black people (18%) are excluded.

¹¹ The negative characteristics attributed to Black people on which the respondents were asked to give their opinion and which were used to construct the index were: laziness (not hard-working), violence, abusing the system (scroungers) and a difficulty in complying with the rules.

¹² Limited population: the people initially refusing to adopt stereotype are excluded. The proportion of the population refusing to adopt stereotypes is 5% for Muslims, 16% for Jewish people and 18% for Black people. The populations are therefore not the same depending on the groups considered.

Jewish people

The average value of the index measuring hostile attitudes towards Jewish people (anti-Semitism) ▲ was 1.9 in 2020 (G9), on a scale of 1 (disagreement with hostile attitudes) to 4 (agreement with hostile attitudes). As is the case for attitudes towards Muslims and Black people, attitudes towards this group are more positive than negative. 34% of the population is positioned between 1 (total disagreement) and 1.5 (strong disagreement). 2% of the population is situated between 3.5 (strong agreement) and 4 (total agreement) with 6% between 3 (agreement) and 4 (total agreement) – i.e. almost 6 percentage points lower than for Muslims. Some 33% are positioned in the category 2–3 and thus midway between agreement and disagreement. The median value is 1.8, as was the case for the indices measuring hostile attitudes towards Black people and Muslims.

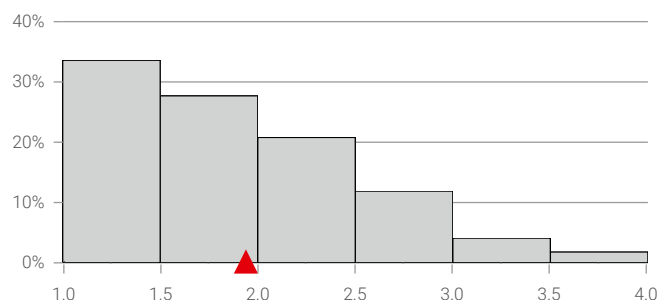
The average value of the index in relation to Jewish people (anti-Semitism) remained stable at 2.0 over the period 2016–2018. It fell to 1.9 in 2020 in a statistically significant change. Unlike the results relating to Muslims and Black people, the proportion of the population in strong disagreement with the negative opinions (i.e. between 1 and 1.5) remained relatively stable over the observation period (between 29% and 34%).

The average value of the index measuring negative stereotypes of Jewish people ▲ was 3.6 in 2020 (G10), on a scale of 1 (weak stereotypes) to 6 (strong stereotypes). Of the groups considered, Jewish people are a priori most frequently associated with strong negative stereotypes. Some 39% of the population¹³ agree that the negative stereotypes proposed¹⁴ apply strongly to Jewish people (compared to 34% for Muslims and 20% for Black people); once again, this is the percentage of responses located between 4 (relatively strong stereotypes) and 6 (strong stereotypes) on the scale.

Hostility towards Jewish people

Proportion of the population disagreeing (1) or agreeing (4) with hostile attitudes, 2020

G9



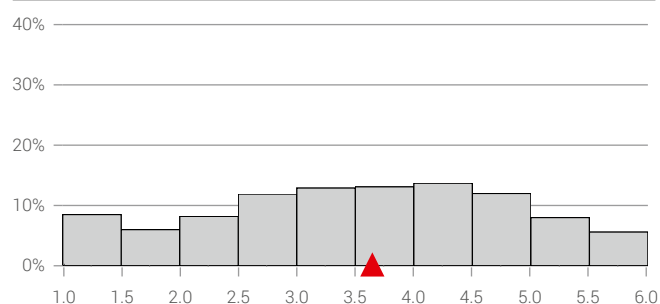
Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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Negative stereotypes of Jewish people

Proportion of the population weakly (1) or strongly (6) agreeing with negative stereotypes, 2020

G10



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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¹³ Limited population: the people initially refusing to adopt stereotypes with regard to Jewish people (16%) are excluded.

¹⁴ The negative characteristics attributed to Jewish people on which the respondents were asked to give their opinion and which were used to construct the index were: greed, thirst for power, political extremism, and keeping too much to themselves.

3 Links between attitudes towards diversity and individual factors

The previous chapter analysed different types of negative attitudes towards diversity and their evolution over time. What are the individual factors underpinning these attitudes? Can differences be observed according to personal characteristics or people's living conditions? Based on an analysis conducted using data from the 2018 survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS), individual factors that were linked to the different attitudes were identified, making it possible to highlight which sub-groups are most likely to display negative or positive attitudes.

3.1 Identifying individual factors

The analysis of the factors interacting with attitudes involves identifying links between the attitudes towards diversity and the socio-demographic characteristics of the population. This approach was adopted for the A Panorama of Swiss society 2020 report: chapter 7 "Which path to inclusion? Citizenship between institutions and attitudes".¹ Within this framework, negative attitudes towards diversity were measured by means of the sense of discomfort the population may feel when faced with otherness in everyday life. This sense is associated with four factors causing discomfort: differences in terms of skin colour, nationality, language and religion². The analysis conducted using data from the 2018 diversity and coexistence survey (VeS) showed that at an individual level, political orientation, migration status and living conditions are the variables which best explain the negative attitudes towards diversity. Furthermore, the link between individual factors and negative attitudes tends to be confirmed more than the link with contextual factors (orientation of the cantons' migration policies) or regional factors (diversity, urbanisation or language region). The individual factors mentioned therefore displayed particularly strong correlations with the attitudes towards diversity compared to the influence of regional factors. These results are partially confirmed by the 2020 data. With the most recent survey, the level of education appears as a third factor, pushing the living conditions into fourth place.

¹ FSO website: www.statistics.admin.ch → Look for statistics → Cross sectional topics → A Panorama of Swiss Society

² The same variables measuring the sense of discomfort with regard to otherness are used to construct the racism index presented in chapter 2 of the present report.

3.2 Attitudes towards diversity according to the individual factors identified

By focusing on the factors adopted as being linked to attitudes (see sub-chapter 3.1), this sub-chapter examines the attitudes of specific population groups. The attitudes of people grouped together according to **political stance, migration status, living conditions and level of education** are compared.

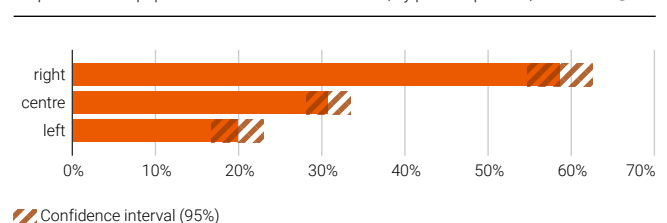
3.2.1 Political stance

Attitudes towards diversity vary according to political affiliation. Of the different factors analysed, political stance – measured by a person's position on the left-right scale – proves to be the most explanatory. Compared to people positioned in the centre, people on the right of the political spectrum are twice as likely to display negative attitudes towards diversity. Close to the very right wing of the spectrum, the estimated value is 8, i.e. the people adopting this political stance are eight times more likely to have such an opinion as those in the centre. Similarly, they are also more likely to feel a sense of discomfort in their everyday life by the presence of people perceived to be different from the majority (G11). In 2020, among the people with a political position close to the centre, 31% stated that they feel discomfort when faced with a different language, religion, nationality or skin colour in their everyday life, their neighbourhood or at work. Among people on the left of the political spectrum, discomfort in the presence of diversity is significantly weaker; only 20% of this group feel a sense of discomfort.

Discomfort caused by the presence of people perceived to be different

Proportion of the population that feels uncomfortable, by political position, 2020

G11



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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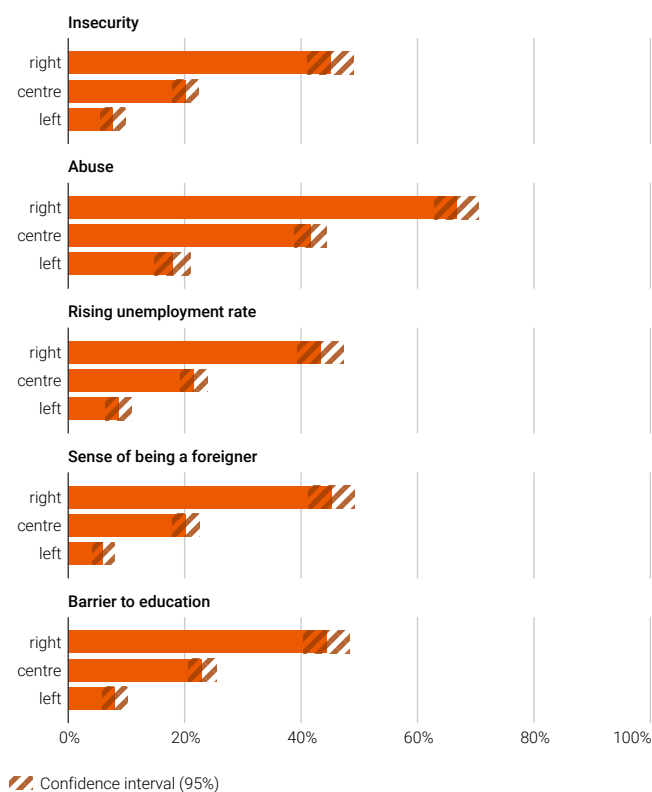
Attitudes towards foreigners living in Switzerland also vary according to the stated political affiliation of the people. On the subject of foreigners' rights, major differences of opinion are observed between the people declaring a political stance on the left, in the centre or on the right. For example, with regard to granting foreigners living in Switzerland the right to political participation, 74% of people on the right are opposed compared to 48% in the centre and 24% on the left. The same trend can be seen with regard to the right to automatic naturalisation for the 2nd generation and the right to family reunification. In the first case, 66% of people on the right are opposed compared to 39% in the centre and 24% on the left. In the second case, 56% of people on the right are opposed compared to 30% in the centre and 11% on the left.

Beyond the question of rights, opinions relating to the roles and behaviours of non-nationals in society are interpreted differently according to political stance (G12). Almost 45% of people on the right believe that foreigners create insecurity on the streets, that they are responsible for increased unemployment, that they hamper the education of Swiss children and that they contribute to Swiss nationals feeling like foreigners in their own country. Between 20% and 23% of people in the centre share these opinions and between 6% and 8% of people on the left. In other words, negative attitudes are almost six times more widespread among people with right-wing political tendencies

Attitudes towards foreigners

Proportion of the population agreeing with the negative statements, by political position, 2020

G12



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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compared to those on the left. On the matter of abuse, the level of consensus is generally high among all political affiliations, although a difference between left and right remains: 67% of the people on the right believe that foreigners abuse the Swiss social benefits system compared to 18% of people on the left, representing a difference of 49 percentage points between the political positions.

3.2.2 Migration status

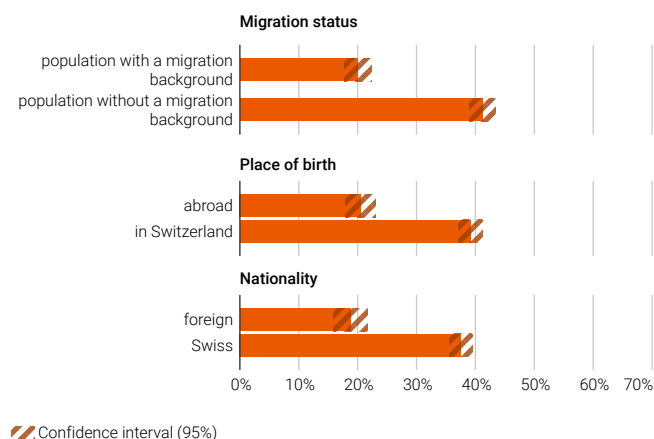
There is also a strong link between attitudes towards diversity and the migration status of the people expressing these attitudes. Migration status is defined according to the nationality of the people as well as their place of birth and that of their parents. Unlike the classification based on nationality alone, classification according to migration status takes into account the migration experience and changes of nationality. This classification can be likened to recording the national or non-national origins of a person. Constructed in this way, migration status is a key factor in understanding negative attitudes towards otherness. Compared to people who have not experienced migration, people with a migration background are less inclined to adopt such attitudes.

The population with a migration background is less likely – and to a statistically significant extent – to feel discomfort in the presence of people perceived as being different in everyday life (G13). In 2020, 20% of this population claimed to feel discomfort when encountering people speaking a different language from them, practising a different religion or with a different nationality or skin colour from them. Among people who have not experienced migration, the rate is twice as high at 41%. Discomfort is also more often felt by people with Swiss nationality or those born in Switzerland than those with a foreign nationality or born abroad. An interaction between a migration background and

Discomfort caused by the presence of people perceived to be different

Proportion of the population that feels uncomfortable, by migration status, 2020

G13



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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attitudes towards diversity can thus be seen regardless of the population typology used (according to migration status, nationality or place of birth).

The two groups defined according to migration status also display contrasting attitudes towards the rights of foreigners living in Switzerland. Whether with regard to the right to vote, the right to automatic naturalisation of the 2nd generation or the right to family reunification, the population that has not experienced migration is systematically less favourable to these rights being granted than the population with a migration background. With regard to political participation and the right to vote, the rate of rejection is 58% among people who have not experienced migration and 30% among those with a migration background. The difference between the rates displayed by the different groups is statistically significant. The situation is the same with regard to automatic naturalisation as, in this case, the rejection rate is 49% among people with no experience of migration and 27% among those with a migratory background.

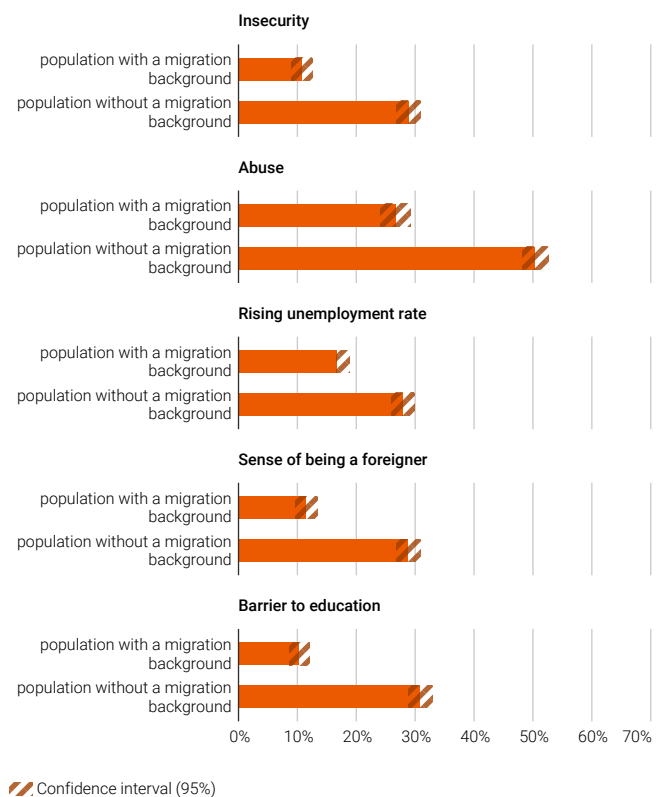
Foreigners living in Switzerland are, moreover, perceived more negatively by the non-migrant population than by the population with a migration background. Negative opinions with regard to their behaviours – either real or imagined – are significantly more widespread among the former than among the latter (G14). For example, among the population without a migration background, between 28% and 30% believe that foreigners create problems on the labour market (unemployment), in the education sector, with regard to public safety and in terms of a general feeling of well-being; among the population with a migration background, however, these rates are close to 11%, around three times lower.

These differences in attitudes according to migration status echo the differences observed according to nationality. For any subject relating to foreigners or diversity in general, people of foreign nationality are more open than Swiss nationals. Conversely, Swiss people generally have more negative opinions, bearing witness to a more closed attitude towards migration. Chapter 7 of the A Panorama of Swiss Society report (2020) reveals that naturalisation also plays a role in the construction and perpetuation of attitudes: the attitudes of naturalised people differ from those of people who are born Swiss and those of foreigners. Generally speaking, foreign nationals remain the group displaying the greatest degree of openness while people who are Swiss by birth are the most closed; naturalised Swiss are positioned between these two groups and, depending on the subject addressed, their attitude may be more inclusive or more restrictive. Finally, as suggested above, the place of birth also plays a role and systematic differences of opinion can be observed between people born in Switzerland and those born in a different country. Because migration status combines different information concerning origins, it faithfully reflects the results of the isolated variables allowing it to be measured.

Attitudes towards foreigners

Proportion of the population agreeing with the negative statements, by migration status, 2020

G14



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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Differences in results between surveys and popular votes

While unfavourable opinions with regard to granting more rights to foreigners living in Switzerland may be in the majority during popular votes, unfavourable attitudes as measured by the survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS) are for the most part below 50%. How can this difference be explained?

In part, it can be explained by the fact that foreign nationals, who are excluded from voting, display more favourable attitudes towards diversity and the granting of more rights to migrants, as demonstrated by the survey results presented opposite (see sub-chapter 3.2.2).

The answer can therefore be found in the composition of the groups of people asked to express an opinion. While surveys include foreigners, this is not the case for the population authorised to vote at federal level. Furthermore, even when foreigners are authorised to vote, we observe that their participation in elections is lower than that of Swiss people.

3.2.3 Living conditions

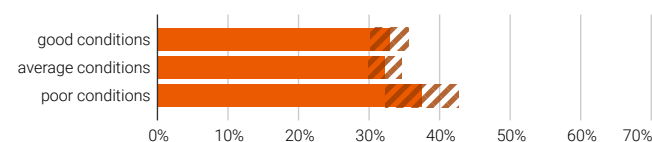
Living conditions, which correspond here to the self-assessed financial situation of the households, represent a factor which in part explains attitudes towards diversity. People living in difficult conditions tend to have a different opinion about diversity from those enjoying good living standards.

The indicator measuring the sense of discomfort in the presence of people perceived as being different in everyday life shows that in 2020, among the people in a difficult financial situation, 38% felt discomfort with regard to diversity (G15). Among people with an average to good financial position, the rate falls to 33%.

Discomfort caused by the presence of people perceived to be different

Proportion of the population that feels uncomfortable, by living conditions, 2020

G15



Confidence interval (95%)

Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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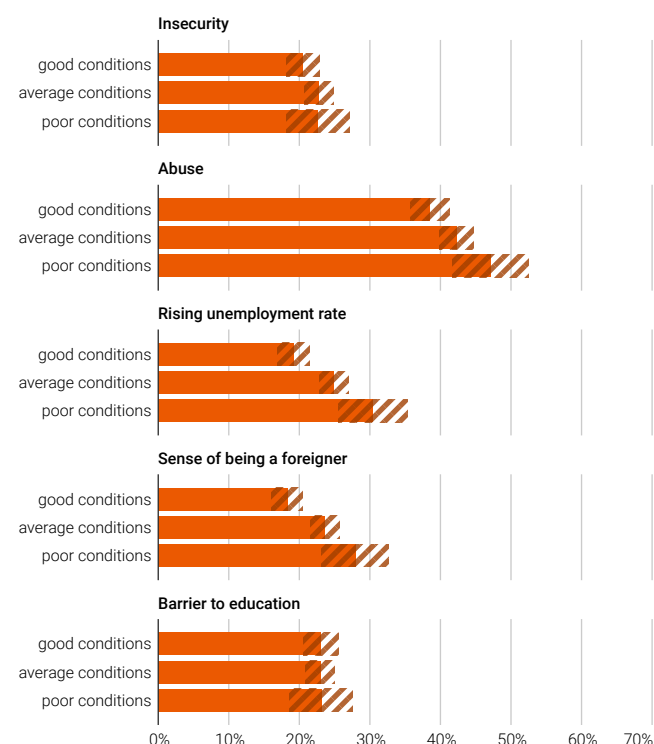
Opinions with regard to the granting of more rights to foreigners living in Switzerland also vary according to living conditions, albeit to a lesser extent than the sense of discomfort. Depending on the rights in question, people experiencing difficult living conditions display less restrictive opinions than the others, but not systematically. This is the case for the right to automatic naturalisation of the 2nd generation and for the right to political participation at cantonal or communal level. In the first case, 32% of people living in precarious conditions are opposed compared to 43% living in more favourable conditions. With regard to the second case (political participation), 37% of people subject to precarious living conditions are opposed compared to 49% of those with a comfortable financial situation. This result might be explained by the over-representation of foreigners in the groups with a less comfortable financial situation, thereby increasing the proportion of attitudes favourable to granting rights. With regard to the right of family reunification, no difference of opinion is observed according to living conditions. Almost 30% are opposed to this right, regardless of the financial situation of the household.

Beyond the issue of rights, attitudes towards non-nationals living in the country also vary according to living conditions (G16). Once again, the trends are less clear-cut than for other factors (3.2.1, 3.2.2) and the attitudes are contrasting depending on the issue. With regard to the impacts of migration on the education of Swiss children or on public safety, people in good or poor living conditions display similar attitudes. However, for issues relating to the labour market and the social benefits system, people in difficult living conditions are more critical than those with a more comfortable living situation. Some 31% of the former believe that non-nationals are responsible for increased unemployment

Attitudes towards foreigners

Proportion of the population agreeing with the negative statements, by living conditions, 2020

G16



Confidence interval (95%)

Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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compared to 19% of people with a healthy financial situation. Among the more disadvantaged, 47% believe that foreigners abuse the Swiss social welfare system, compared to 39% among the more fortunate.

The contrasting results obtained for the factor of living conditions encourage us to explore other factors which may explain the attitudes of the population towards diversity and otherness.

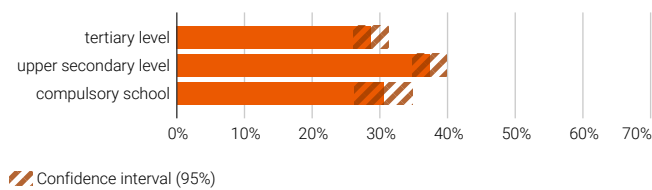
3.2.4 Level of education

Although its impact was weaker in 2018, the level of education would appear, in 2020, to be a key factor linked to attitudes towards diversity and foreigners living in Switzerland. When the level of education is considered, the people with an upper secondary level of education generally have more restrictive opinions than people with a lower (compulsory education) or higher (tertiary) level of education.

Discomfort caused by the presence of people perceived to be different

Proportion of the population that feels uncomfortable, by level of education, 2020

G17



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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The differences of opinion cited are shown by the indicator measuring the sense of discomfort when encountering people perceived as being different (G17). Among people with an upper secondary level of education, 37% claim they feel discomfort in everyday life when encountering a person with a different language, nationality, religion or skin colour from their own. This rate is 31% among people with no more than compulsory education and 29% among those with tertiary level education.

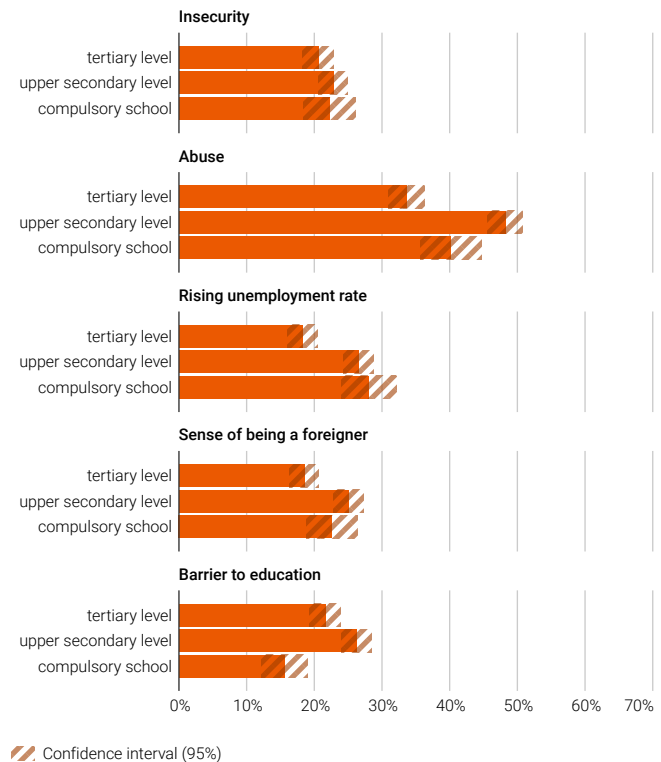
Although a link can be observed between attitudes towards diversity and the level of education, this factor explains the attitudes towards non-nationals less clearly than the factors of political stance and migration status. As in the case of living conditions (3.2.3), the results are contrasting. With regard to granting more rights to foreigners living in Switzerland, no clear trend can be identified. As concerns the right to family reunification, the opinions are the same regardless of the level of education, with a 30% rejection of this right in all cases. With regard to the automatic naturalisation of the 2nd generation, people with tertiary level education display greater opposition (44%), followed by those with upper secondary education (41%) and finally people who only completed compulsory education (28%). In the case of the right to vote, the same pattern emerges as for discomfort: people with upper secondary education display greater opposition to this right being granted (51%) than others (46% for tertiary education; 40% for compulsory education).

In terms of general attitudes towards non-nationals, people with upper secondary education tend to display a less open attitude than people with other levels of education (G18). For example, 48% of them believe that foreigners abuse the Swiss social benefits system compared to 40% among people with only compulsory education as their highest level and 34% among those with tertiary level. Some 26% (upper secondary) believe that children of foreign nationality hold back children of Swiss nationality in their education, compared to 22% (tertiary education) and 16% (compulsory education). The feeling of being a foreigner in their own country is stronger among people with upper secondary level education than among people with tertiary level (25% compared to 19%).

Attitudes towards foreigners

Proportion of the population agreeing with the negative statements, by level of education, 2020

G18



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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As with living conditions (3.2.3), it is difficult to make a clear statement concerning the influence of the level of education. The composition of the sub-groups and, more precisely, the over-representation of foreigners in some of these sub-groups, could explain the differences of opinion observed. The fact that the attitudes of people with compulsory schooling are similar to those of people with tertiary education may be explained by the fact that foreigners are more strongly represented at primary level or, conversely, that the Swiss are more strongly represented at upper secondary level. Nationality or migration status might therefore better explain attitudes towards diversity.

3.3 Interactions between individual factors

Across the 2016–2020 period, political stance consistently remains the factor most strongly linked to negative attitudes towards diversity, and in particular to the sense of discomfort that certain people may feel in everyday life when confronted with this diversity. This result can be explained by the fact that, among those factors considered, this factor is closest to the concept that we endeavour to measure through this analysis: political orientation also reflects an attitude and generally implies specific stances with regard to the issues of diversity and migration. This

proximity of the two variables (dependent and independent) certainly explains the key position of the factor of political affiliation among all the individual factors.

In addition to political position on the left-right spectrum, links with migration status, nationality and place of birth are stronger and clearer than links with living conditions and the level of education. Within the framework of this analysis, a migrant origin appears to be a factor that better explains attitudes towards diversity than social background (social level). It is nevertheless worth remembering that these two explanatory variables are linked to one another: migration or people with a migration background are over-represented in certain social categories and vice versa. Among people with a migration background, almost 17% claimed to live in a poor financial situation in 2020 compared to 7% among people with no migration background. The former are also over-represented in lower levels of education (21% of people with a migration background had a low level of education in 2020 compared to 11% among those with no migration background), whereas the latter are over-represented at upper secondary level (50% compared to 40%). At tertiary level, there is no difference in representation according to migration status or nationality.

While the results of the present analysis appear to indicate that the factor of a migration background (migration status) takes precedence over social background (living conditions, level of education) when considering attitudes towards diversity, this appears to be coherent with regard to the theme of the survey which, as its name suggests, examines diversity and coexistence in Switzerland and thus questions linked to social cohesion, integration and migration.

4 Regionalisation of attitudes towards diversity

While less decisive than socio-demographic characteristics or individual factors (see sub-chapter 3.1), regional characteristics also play a role with regard to attitudes towards diversity. Depending on the type of region, the aforementioned attitudes will be more or less favourable. The population living in urban zones and cities are more open to migration and otherness. Urban zones are places where diversity is more likely to be encountered.

Using data from the 2020 survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS), this chapter presents people's attitudes towards diversity according to their location in the Swiss geographic area and the type of region in which they live. Due to the size of the survey sample, which does not permit analyses at cantonal level, the spatial variables retained are the major regions, the language regions and the degree of urbanisation. The variables adopted refer to the standard regionalisation typologies¹ of the Federal Statistical Office (FSO)². They are also used to break down standard indicators on diversity and coexistence after each biennial survey³.

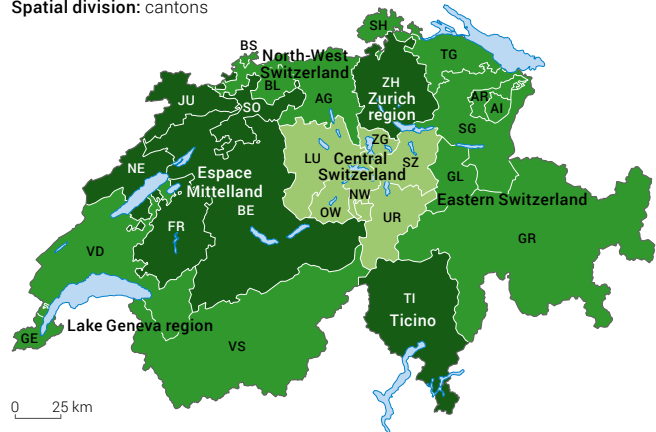
4.1 Major regions

By drawing the sample per regional frame stratum and through a weighting procedure, the results of the survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS) are representative with regard to the major Swiss regions (G19). For regional and international statistical comparison purposes, seven major regions have been created based on the cantonal boundaries. These regions are equivalent to the NUTS 2 regions of EUROSTAT⁴ and level TL2 of the OECD⁵.

Major regions¹

G19

Spatial division: cantons



¹ NUTS II equivalent

Source: FSO – Spatial classifications

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¹ Regionalisation of data is understood here as a geographic break-down of Swiss space according to selected criteria or typologies.

² FSO website: www.statistics.admin.ch → Look for statistics → Cross sectional topics → Territorial analyses → Geographic levels → Analysis regions

³ The standard indicators can be found on the FSO website: www.statistics.admin.ch → Look for statistics → 01 – Population → Migration and integration → Diversity and coexistence

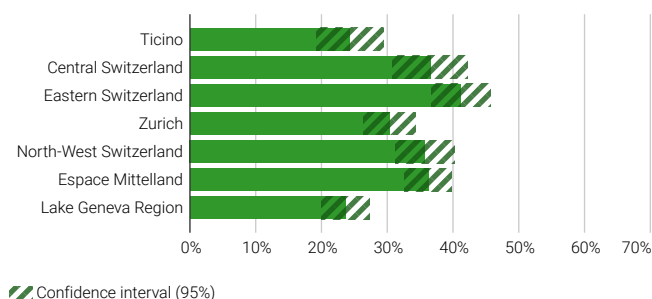
⁴ Statistic Office of the European Union

⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Discomfort caused by the presence of people perceived to be different

Proportion of the population that feels uncomfortable, by major region, 2020

G20



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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Attitudes towards diversity vary according to the major regions. The inhabitants of certain regions more often claim to feel discomfort in the presence of people perceived to be different (G20); this is the case in eastern Switzerland, central Switzerland, north-western Switzerland and in the Mittelland where 41%, 37%, 37% and 36% respectively of the population state a potential discomfort. The sense of discomfort is statistically significantly less common (24%) in the region around Lake Geneva than in the aforementioned regions. With respective rates of 30% and 24%, the regions of Zurich and Ticino also display a less prevalent sense of discomfort.

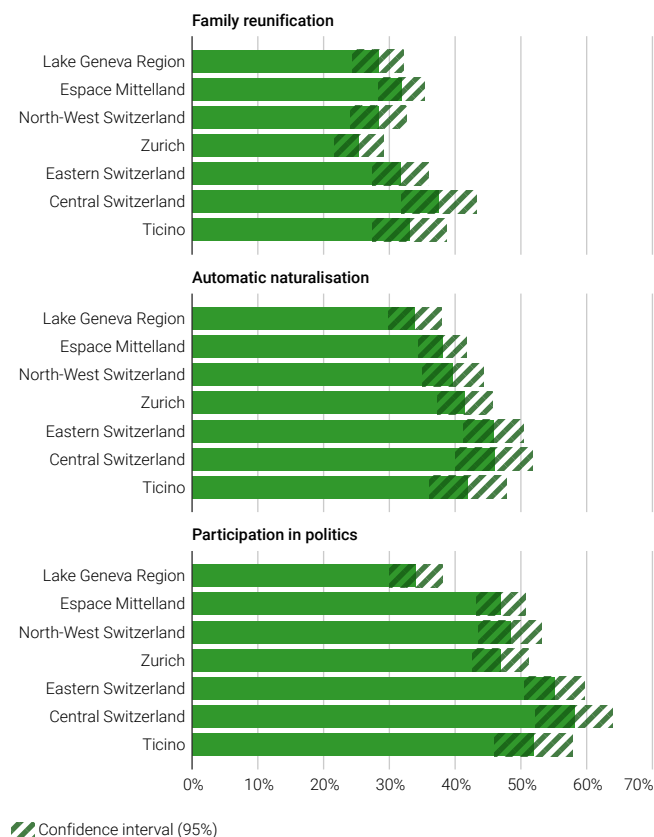
Opinions relating to foreign nationals and to the granting of more rights in their favour also vary from one major region to the next (G21). Regardless of the right in question (family reunification, automatic naturalisation or political participation), it is in central Switzerland that the rates of opposition to the granting of rights are highest (between 37% and 58%). On the other hand, rejection of the granting of rights is less widespread in the Lake Geneva area (between 28% and 34%).

With regard to general attitudes towards foreigners, without referring to their rights, similar trends can be observed in the regions, albeit with noticeable variations depending on the issue addressed (G22). The people of eastern Switzerland most readily agree that foreigners abuse the Swiss social benefits system (49%). The idea that foreigners are responsible for increasing unemployment in Switzerland is more widespread in Ticino than in the other major regions (35%). In comparison with the other regions, the feeling of insecurity on the streets linked to migration is weakest in Zurich and the Lake Geneva area (19% and 15% respectively compared to 26% in eastern Switzerland, central Switzerland and the Mittelland). Individuals living in the Lake Geneva area feel the least like “foreigners in their own country” (15%).

Attitudes towards foreigners

Proportion of the population refusing to grant rights, by major region, 2020

G21



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

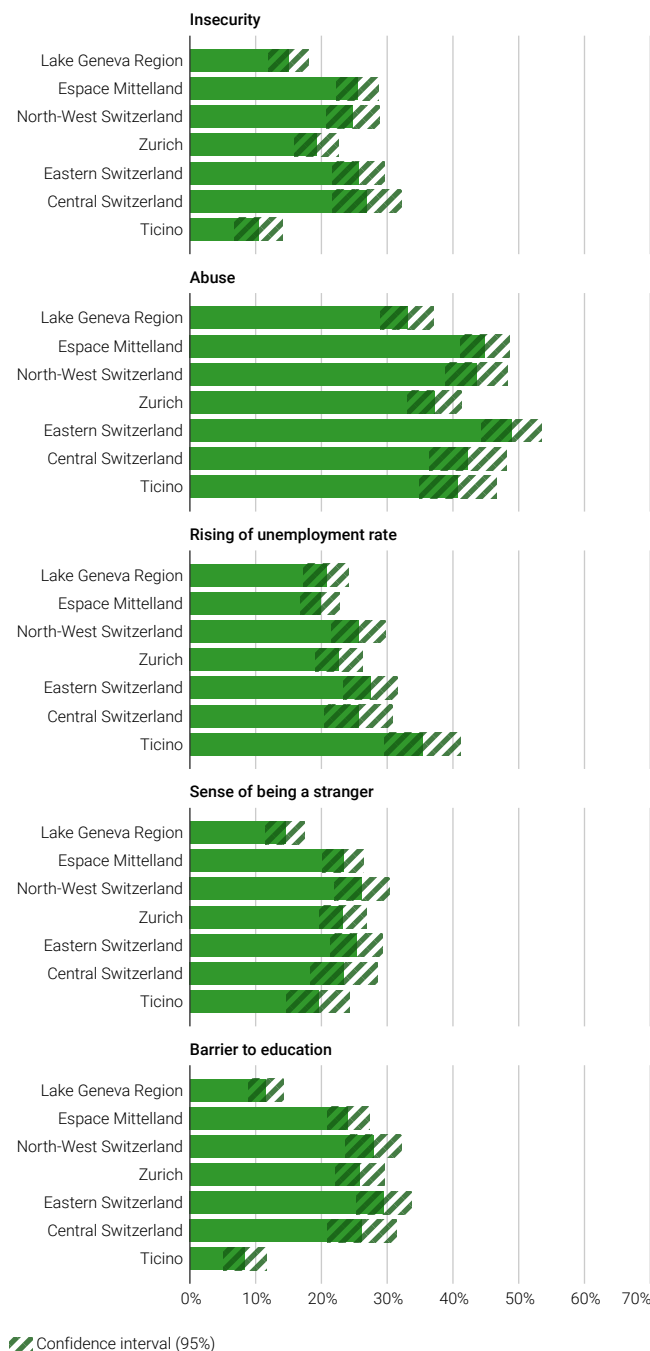
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Due to the size of the survey sample, trends with regard to attitudes according to the major Swiss regions are not always statistically significant. We nevertheless note that people living in the Lake Geneva area display attitudes which are generally more favourable towards diversity and foreigners. Beyond the Lake Geneva area, indicators show that Zurich is also more open than the other major regions. Negative opinions are observed more frequently in eastern Switzerland, central Switzerland, in the Mittelland and in north-western Switzerland.

Attitudes towards foreigners

Proportion of the population agreeing with the negative statements, by major region, 2020

G22



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

© FSO 2021

4.2 Language regions

The language regions represent the oldest form of non-institutional regionalisation of Swiss statistics (G23). The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) demarcates areas where the majority of the population speaks German, French, Italian or Romansh according to federal population censuses⁶.

Language regions in 2016

G23

Spatial division: cantons



Sources: FSO – Territorial typologies of Switzerland, Structural Survey (SE)

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According to the language regions in Switzerland, attitudes towards diversity and migration differ and the degree of openness of the population varies (G24). Analyse of the sense of discomfort shows that people living in German and Romansh-speaking Switzerland⁷ feel the greatest sense of discomfort in the presence of someone with a different nationality, religion, language or skin colour from their own (37%). In comparison this figure falls to 24% in the French- and Italian-speaking regions.

With regard to granting more rights to non-nationals living in the country, the population in the German, Romansh and Italian-speaking regions are less open than that of the French-speaking region (G25). The gap between the latter region and the other regions is greatest with regard to the right to vote: 32% of the people living in French-speaking Switzerland are opposed to granting foreigners the right to political participation compared to 52% in German and Romansh-speaking Switzerland and Italian-speaking Switzerland. The same pattern can be observed with regard to automatic naturalisation of the 2nd generation. It is once again the people of French-speaking Switzerland who display least opposition, with a rate of 33% (compared to 43% in the other language regions).

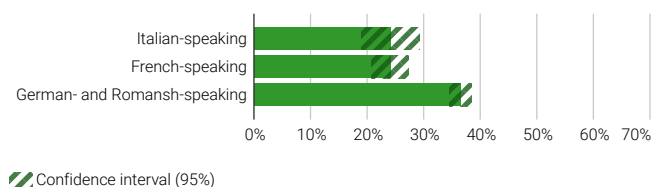
⁶ FSO website: <https://www.atlas.bfs.admin.ch/maps/13>

⁷ The two language regions are grouped together due to the size of the sample and the population numbers in the Romansh region. The Romansh language region cannot be analysed independently.

Discomfort caused by the presence of people perceived to be different

Proportion of the population that feels uncomfortable, by language region, 2020

G24



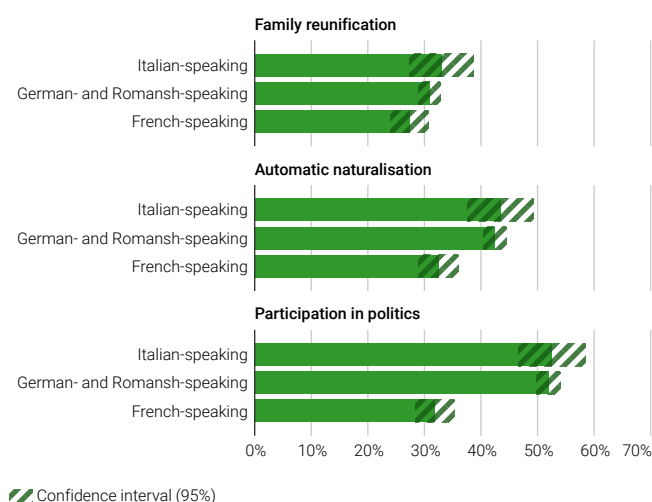
Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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Attitudes towards foreigners

Proportion of the population refusing to grant rights, by language region, 2020

G25



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

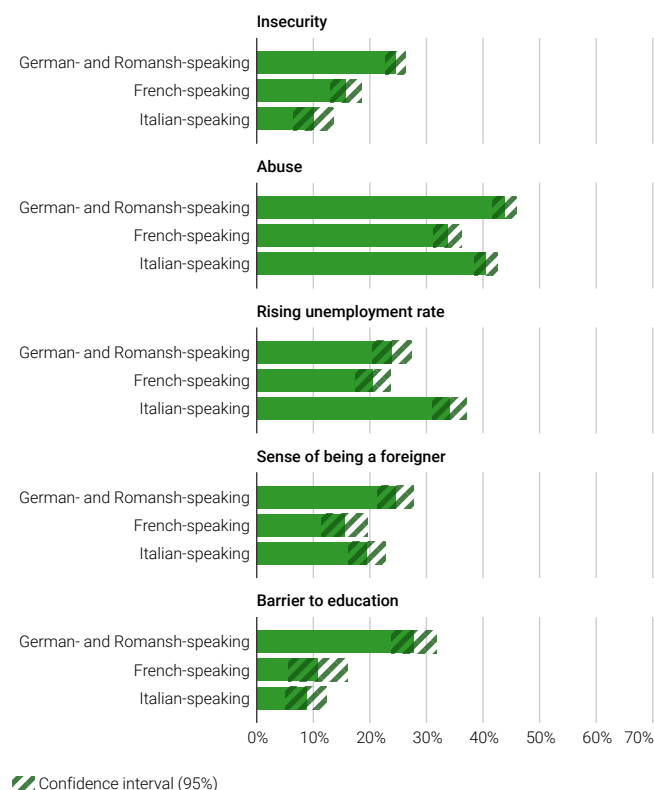
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As is the case for potential rights, the behaviours and roles of non-nationals are interpreted differently according to the language region (G26). With regard to the impact on children's education, the risk of the system being abused, public insecurity and the feeling of not being "at home", people living in French-speaking Switzerland feel less negatively affected by migration than people living in German and Romansh-speaking Switzerland. For example, in the French-speaking region, 11% of the population believe that the presence of foreign children in school is a hindrance to the education of Swiss children, compared to 28% in the German and Romansh-speaking region. The proportion of the population that believes that foreigners are responsible for increased unemployment is highest in Italian-speaking Switzerland (34% compared to about 22% in the other language regions).

Attitudes towards foreigners

Proportion of the population agreeing with the negative statements, by language region, 2020

G26



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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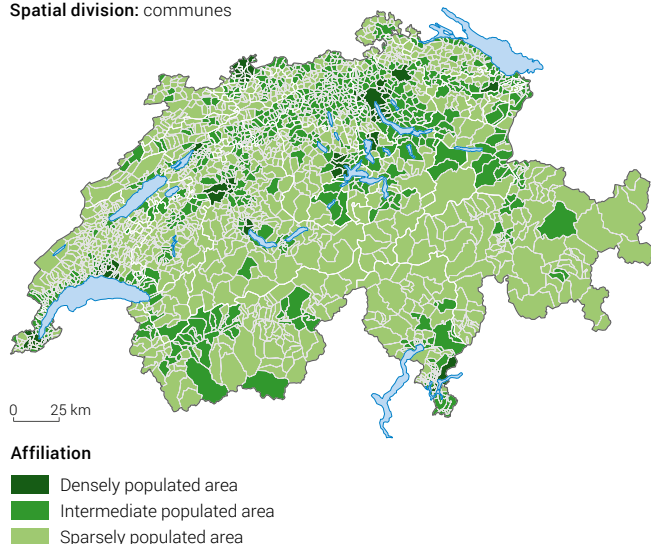
Different attitudes according to the language regions are observed and a pattern can be distinguished between the indicators based on this regional variable. The people living in German and Romansh-speaking Switzerland are generally less open to diversity and foreigners while those in French-speaking Switzerland are shown to be more open. In the Italian-speaking language region, the main issue would appear to be the labour market, as the people living in this region display less openness on this issue.

4.3 Level of urbanisation

The typology of the level of urbanisation groups Swiss communes together according to their density (G27). It distinguishes highly populated zones, intermediate zones and sparsely populated zones.

Degree of Urbanisation 2011 (DEGURBA – Eurostat) on 1.1.2020¹ G27

Spatial division: communes



¹ Definition 2011, revised version 20.08.2020

Sources: FSO – Territorial typologies of Switzerland; Eurostat

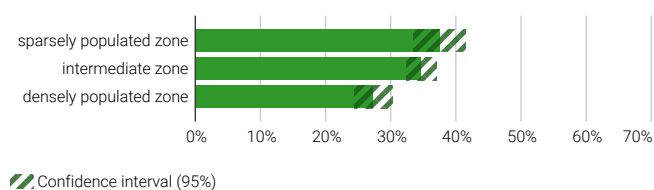
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Attitudes with regard to diversity and people of foreign nationality differ according to the level of urbanisation of the zones analysed. People living in more populated zones generally display greater openness than people living in the other, less populated zones. The sense of discomfort in the presence of people perceived as being different is less common in highly populated zones than in more sparsely populated zones (27% compared to about 35% and 38%) (G28). With regard to the discomfort caused by the presence of otherness in everyday life, no statistically significant difference can be observed between intermediate and sparsely populated zones.

Discomfort caused by the presence of people perceived to be different

Proportion of the population that feels uncomfortable, by degree of urbanisation, 2020

G28



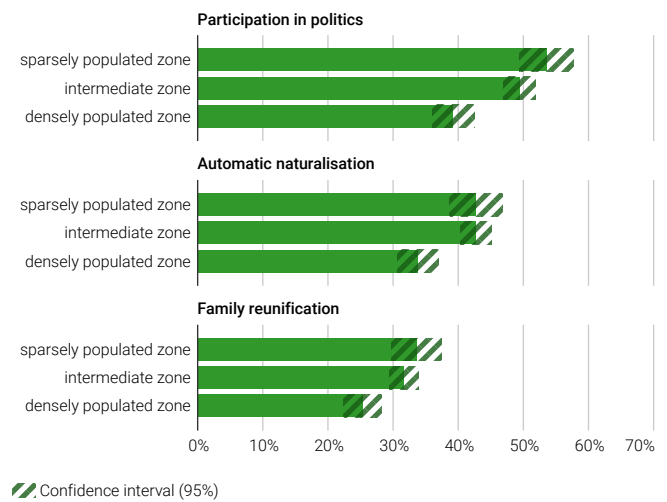
Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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Attitudes towards foreigners

Proportion of the population refusing to grant rights, by degree of urbanisation, 2020

G29



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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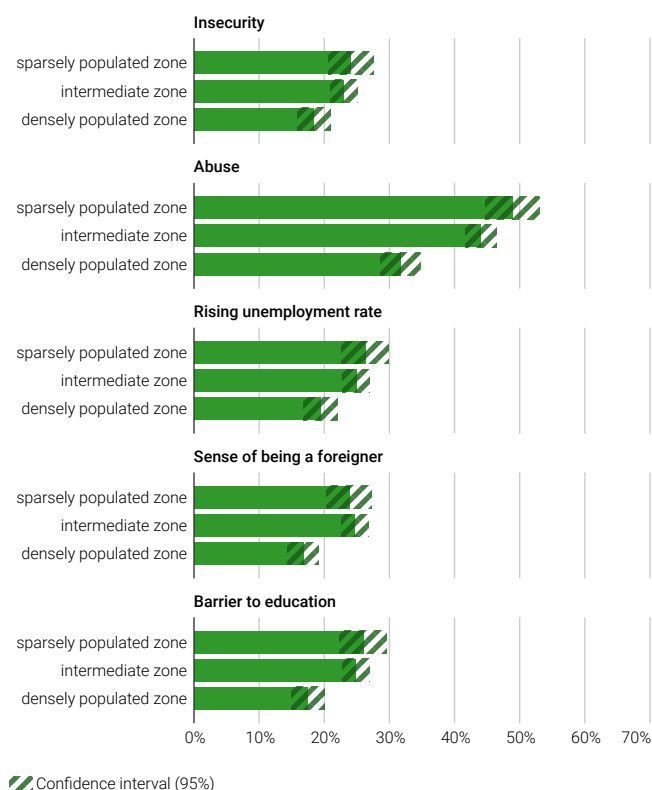
A similar trend can be seen concerning the question of granting more rights to foreign nationals living in Switzerland (G29). Unfavourable attitudes towards granting rights are less common in highly populated zones than in less populated zones. Similar to the observations concerning discomfort, there is little difference between the attitudes in intermediate and sparsely populated zones. Regardless of the right in question, the same trend is observed.

Opinions relating to non-nationals living in Switzerland also vary according to the zone studied and its population density. Once again, negative opinions are less widespread in highly populated zones than in the other zones, where the prevalence is almost identical (G30). For example, people living in densely populated areas feel significantly less insecure on the streets than people living in sparsely populated areas (18% and 24% respectively). They are also less inclined to feel like foreigners in their own country (17% compared to 25%). With regard to the behaviours and roles attributed to non-nationals, people living in highly populated areas display more positive and open attitudes. In particular, fewer people in these areas feel that foreigners are responsible for increased unemployment in Switzerland (19% compared to about 26%) and that they represent a hindrance to the education of Swiss children (18% compared to about 26%).

Attitudes towards foreigners

Proportion of the population agreeing with the negative statements, by degree of urbanisation, 2020

G30



Source: FSO – Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

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Attitudes towards diversity and foreigners change noticeably and according to a clear pattern according to the level of urbanisation of the communes. People living in populated areas are more open while those living in intermediate or sparsely populated areas are more reserved. While the differences in percentage points are sometimes only small, they are almost always statistically significant, thereby confirming the existence of specific attitudes according to the different areas and their population density.

When interpreting these results, it should be taken into account that in urban and densely populated areas, there is a larger presence of the foreign population or people with a migration background. As shown in the previous chapter, (see sub-chapter 3.2.2), this population generally displays more positive attitudes.

4.4 Contacts with diversity

The results of sub-chapter 4.3 relating to the level of urbanisation tend to support the social science theory referred to as the “contact hypothesis” first put forward by Allport (1954)⁸ and echoed by Hewstone and Swart (2011)⁹. According to this theory, openness towards the immigrant population increases with the intensity of contacts between endogroups and exogroups, as demonstrated in chapter 7 of A Panorama of Swiss Society (2020). We observe that densely populated areas, such as urban cores, are home to a more diverse population in terms of nationalities, countries of birth and languages. We can therefore assume that this mixed and cosmopolitan character of urban centres and their population density make them more conducive to encounters between different types of population. Based on this, we can postulate the existence of a link between the urbanisation variable and the variable of contact between different population groups.

To check these links, a variable relating to contacts was introduced into the 2020 survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS). While it is still to prove its worth in the long run, it has revealed trends in line with the hypotheses of contact theory. People who state that they have no contact with people of different backgrounds more often feel discomfort in the presence of diversity than people who have such contact in their everyday life. Furthermore, compared to people who have frequent contacts, those with no contact are less willing to grant more rights to non-nationals living in the country. Predictably, their general opinions about foreigners are less favourable than the opinions of people with contact.

Analysis of the data from the 2017 diversity module concerning the issue of racism against Black people has highlighted links between attitudes towards Black people and frequency of contact. The general attitude of the population towards racism against Black people varies according to the frequency of everyday contact with the Black populations. People who state that they are often in contact with the minority are significantly more likely to admit the existence of racism towards this population (18%) than those who have little or no contact (11%).

⁸ Allport, Gordon (1954): *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

⁹ Hewstone, Miles and Hermann Swart (2011): *Fifty-odd years of inter-group contact: From hypothesis to integrated theory*, *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 50 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.2011.02047>

There is, *at first glance*, a link between attitudes and contact, but this merits more detailed analysis using additional empirical data. For this factor more than others, the direction of causality must be investigated: does contact favour openness or does openness give rise to contact? Considered as an independent variable within the framework of the present analysis, other avenues should be explored in the future. The nature of the contact should also be described more precisely. Is the impact of contact different when it is chosen and when it is “imposed”? The 2022 and 2024 surveys on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS) will provide an empirical basis to endeavour to answer these new questions. They will help highlight the relations between demographic, regional and contact factors and the attitudes of the population towards diversity.

5 Conclusion

Through the different standpoints and approaches (negative attitudes, individual factors and regionalisation), this publication has endeavoured to describe and analyse the attitudes of the population of Switzerland towards diversity. This in-depth analysis of the data from the 2016, 2018 and 2020 surveys on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS) reflect the results published after each survey. Attitudes towards diversity are consistent and, for the most part, stable over the period. This conclusion provides indications about the state of social cohesion at a given time, as well as about the quality of the survey tool used to measure attitudes towards diversity.

Despite focusing on negative attitudes, this publication highlights the fact that positive attitudes towards diversity are predominant, regardless of the aspect examined. The index measuring racist attitudes therefore shows, above all, that the majority strongly disagrees with this type of attitude (see sub-chapter 2.2.1). Almost two-thirds (69%) of the population reject racist attitudes. Analysis of attitudes towards foreigners provides a similar conclusion. While certain people are more open than others depending on their political stance, their migration status, their living conditions or their level of education (see chapter 3), the majority of the population almost systematically leans towards a positive description of non-nationals living in the country. Almost 70% of the population with a non-migrant background believe that foreigners do not create a climate of insecurity on the streets, that they are not responsible for increased unemployment in the country, that they do not represent a hindrance to the education of Swiss children and that they do not create a climate in which people feel like strangers in their own country. These positions are even more common among the population with a migrant background. The same is true with regard to the regionalisation of attitudes (see chapter 4). While the sense of discomfort in the presence of diversity varies from one region to another, it is generally less prevalent than the opposite, i.e. the absence of this feeling. Regardless of the geographic area examined, more than 60% of the population feel no discomfort in the presence of a person with a different nationality, language, religion or skin colour from them.

Analysis of the data from the period 2016–2020 shows an upward trend of positive attitudes, although more time needs to pass before this observation can be confirmed. In particular, this can be seen in the average value of the index measuring xenophobic attitudes (see sub-chapter 2.2.2) which was 2.2 in 2016 and 2.1 in 2018 and 2020. A similar evolution can be observed with regard to attitudes towards Muslims (see sub-chapter 2.2.3). The proportion of the population opposed to negative statements concerning this group increased over the period: 27% in 2016, 30% in 2018 and 37% in 2020.

Further series will be required to satisfy the objective of monitoring attitudes towards diversity via the survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland (VeS). By repeating them over time, the future surveys to be conducted in 2022 and 2024 will provide a broader empirical base. They will make it possible to check the initial results presented in this publication while exploring new fields of analysis.

Annexes

Description

In the context of diversity, the Survey on diversity and coexistence in Switzerland aims to present an accurate picture of the issues raised by the coexistence of different groups currently living in Switzerland. It collects information on the acceptance, rejection and integration of certain groups. The survey also allows monitoring of trends in society in several areas such as racism, xenophobia or discrimination. The data collected are used to observe social change and to make detailed analyses. They help to guide policies on integration and anti-discrimination.

Available since:

2016 – publication of first data in October 2017

Statistical basis and survey units:

Permanent resident population living in private households and aged between 15 and 88

Features registered:

- household and dwelling composition
- feeling of discomfort in various contexts
- perception of migration
- perception of integration and anti-racism policies
- perception of foreigners
- feeling of threat in various contexts
- hostility towards and stereotypes of target groups
- contacts with target groups
- experience of discrimination
- experience of physical or mental violence
- migration status
- level of education and professional situation
- religion (denomination, beliefs and practices)
- interest in politics and ideological stance
- standard of living or social situation of the household

Ad-hoc modules "Diversity" are carried out as complements to the main survey. Topics of such modules vary according to current needs.

Methodology

The survey forms part of the FSO Omnibus series of multiple-theme surveys. It is a sample survey of 3,000 people. People are randomly selected from the FSO's SRPH sample register. It is a mixed mode survey which means it can be answered either by completing an online questionnaire (CAWI) or by telephone interview (CATI).

Degree of regionalisation:

Switzerland and NUTS 2 major regions
Lake Geneva, Espace Mittelland, Northwestern Switzerland, Zurich, Eastern Switzerland, Central Switzerland and Ticino.

Periodicity:

Every two years – without ad-hoc modules
Annual – with ad-hoc modules

2016: Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

2017: Ad-hoc module "Diversity": discrimination of black people in Switzerland

2018: Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

2019: Ad-hoc module "Diversity": different ways of life in Switzerland

2020: Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

2021: Ad-hoc module "Diversity": acceptance, tolerance and exclusion

2022: Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

2023: Ad-hoc module "Diversity": to be defined

2024: Diversity and coexistence in Switzerland

Reference period:

April – June

Revision policy:

Regular revision or continuous revision: Regular adjustments made to questionnaire every two years. Next questionnaire revision in 2022.

Methodology revision or fundamental revision: Data from the period before a revision are not recalculated due to methodological changes.

Legal bases

Federal Act of 22 June 2007 on the Federal Census

Census Act; RS 431.112

Ordinance of 19 December 2008 on the Federal Census

Census ordinance; RS 431.112

Ordinance of 30 June 1993 on the Conduct of Federal Statistical Surveys

Ordinance on statistical surveys; RS 431.012.1

Organisation

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in cooperation with LINK Marketing Services Zürich/Luzern/
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- 10 Tourism
- 11 Mobility and transport
- 12 Money, banks and insurance
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- 14 Health
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- 16 Culture, media, information society, sports
- 17 Politics
- 18 General Government and finance
- 19 Crime and criminal justice
- 20 Economic and social situation of the population
- 21 Sustainable development, regional and international disparities

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