

LIVES

SWISS CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
IN LIFE COURSE RESEARCH

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2025

Dear readers,

We are excited to announce that our newsletters are getting a fresh new look! With the addition of interviews, profiles, videos and illustrated formats, our communication will become more personalised, shining a spotlight on our scientists and their research. From time to time, a member of the LIVES Centre will write an opinion piece in response to scientific news.

Our guiding principles remain unchanged: developing theories, methods and empirical findings to understand vulnerability throughout life; training the scientists of tomorrow in life course analysis; and putting our knowledge at the service of society.

Happy reading!

Kalina Anguelova
Communications officer

HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ **When religions decline** – All over the world, religious decline follows the same three stages. Analysis of a universal phenomenon..
- ♦ **Families in the 21st century** – Switzerland joins the European Generations and Gender Survey. Fertility, inequality and family diversity: finally, we will understand what is really at stake.
- ♦ **Alea exhibition: Life Paths** – How did status, gender and chance shape destinies in the Roman Empire? Join our LIVES guided tour on 13 November to explore the connections between past and present.
- ♦ **And much more...**

RESEARCH 



GENERATIONS AND GENDER

21ST CENTURY FAMILIES: THE RESEARCH THAT WAS MISSING

Increasing family diversity, stagnating gender equality and declining fertility... Switzerland is preparing to join the European Generations and Gender Programme to study all these issues. Coordinated by sociologist Stephanie Steinmetz of the University of Lausanne, this research will provide insight into actual changes in family trajectories and attitudes towards family, work and care responsibilities. Interview.

What is the main objective of this research project?

We want to provide a "reality check" to assess whether Switzerland, compared to other European countries, is well equipped to face crucial socio-demographic challenges related to three key issues: increasing family diversity, stagnating gender equality, and declining fertility.

Family diversity... What are you trying to understand?

The traditional father-mother-child model of Swiss families has evolved considerably. There are now different types of families - blended families, same-sex families, stepfamilies, single parent families. The configurations are diverse. But how does Switzerland compare to other countries in terms of accepting this diversity? And, above all, does our legal and policy framework support these different family forms?

Why is this research important for Switzerland?

Families are diversifying, gender roles are shifting, and fertility patterns are changing - yet our policies haven't kept pace. Without solid comparative data, decisions on how such demographic challenges can be addressed are made blindly. In this project we will show where Switzerland stands, what works, and what doesn't, offering hopefully some evidence to inform and guide policy makers.



INTERVIEW

THE GREAT RELIGIOUS DECLINE

Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism... According to an international study published in [Nature Communications](#), major religions are losing followers all



INTERVIEW

SOCIAL CLASS SHAPES OUR PSYCHOLOGY — BUT NOT IN THE WAY WE THOUGHT

A large-scale international study has revealed that half of the established beliefs about the psychology of social classes are

...religions are losing followers all over the world. Interview with sociologist Jörg Stolz from UNIL, who led the research.

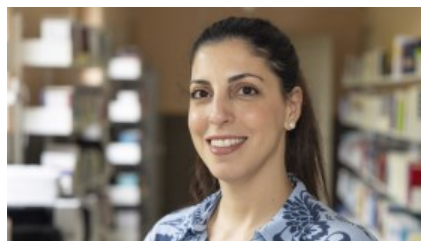
► ON VIDEO

Your study claims that religious decline follows three distinct stages everywhere in the world. Can you explain this phenomenon?

We analyzed data from over 100 countries and discovered a recurring pattern: religiosity always declines in the same order. First, people stop attending religious services — it's the most time- and energy-consuming aspect. Then, they stop considering religion to be important in their personal lives. Finally, they abandon their religious affiliation. We call this the Participation-Importance-Affiliation sequence.



Stolz, J., de Graaf, N. D., Hackett, C., & Antonietti, J.-P. (2025). The three stages of religious decline around the world. *Nature Communications*, 16(1), 7202. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-025-62452-z>



HEARING LOSS, COGNITIVE DECLINE: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF LONELINESS

By combining objective social isolation and subjective feelings of loneliness for the first time, a study from the University of Geneva has revealed a surprising result: it is not isolated people who show the most marked cognitive decline in the face of hearing loss, but those who are objectively surrounded by others yet feel deeply lonely. These findings, published in *Communications Psychology*, pave the way for targeted interventions, starting with the destigmatisation of hearing aids. Interview with Charikleia Lampraki, researcher in developmental psychology.



Lampraki, C., Zuber, S., Turoman, N., Joly-Burra, E., Mack, M., Laera, G., Scarampi, C., Rostekova, A., Kliegel, M., & Ihle, A. (2025). Profiles of social isolation and loneliness as moderators of the longitudinal association between uncorrected hearing impairment and cognitive aging. *Communications Psychology*, 3(1), 101. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44271-025-00277-8>

...psychology of social classes are false. The study, published in *Nature Human Behaviour*, was led by Anatolia Batruch, a social psychology researcher at UNIL.

► ON VIDEO

We often imagine that rich people are more selfish, perhaps even more dishonest. But your study suggests otherwise?

Exactly — that's the kind of assumption our research calls into question. We often expect people from higher social classes to be more self-centered, more individualistic, even more selfish. But we found no evidence that they are less prosocial or more dishonest. In Switzerland, as elsewhere, people from privileged backgrounds do not cheat more, nor are they less supportive of others — sometimes the opposite is true.



Batruch, A., Sommet, N., & Autin, F. (2025). Advancing the psychology of social class with large-scale replications in four countries. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-025-02234-1>



PANDEMIC: WHY THE MOST VULNERABLE PAID THE HIGHEST PRICE

► ON VIDEO

A large-scale European study published in the *International Journal of Public Health*, covering more than 7,000 deaths, reveals the extent of inequalities in the face of the pandemic. The researcher behind this work, Paola Sillitti, PhD candidate in Social Sciences of Medicine and Health at UNIL and Researcher at the CHUV, analyses the results and warns of the challenges ahead for Switzerland and the rest of Europe.



Sillitti, P., Meier, C., Mucchiut, O., Maurer, J., & Jox, R. J. (2025). Socioeconomic and Demographic Factors Associated With Mortality Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic : An Analysis of 28 European Countries. *International Journal of Public Health*, 70, 1608560. <https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2025.1608560>



17 September – 20 December 2025

MUSÉE ROMAIN DE LAUSANNE-VIDY

Exhibition «Alea. Des parcours de vie»

What was life like in the Roman Empire during the 2nd century? How much freedom did people have, depending on their status and gender? This exhibition explores the lives of individuals in a society where more than 50 million people coexisted with profoundly unequal destinies. It offers a glimpse into the private lives of individuals from diverse backgrounds, demonstrating how social constraints, chance, and privilege shaped their lives. These themes resonate with our current research on life courses.

— Join us on Thursday, 13 November at 6 pm for a guided tour of the exhibition with Dario Spini (Professor) and Laure Sandoz (Coordinator) from the LIVES Centre. This will be followed by a conference on life courses yesterday and today - a unique opportunity to understand what has changed and what remains the same.

Participation is free, but places are limited.

You can register by writing to the following address: mrsv-inscription@lausanne.ch



Until 13 November 2025

PARC DES BASTIONS | Genève

«Welcome to your future - Swiss centenarians»

This exhibition invites you to discover the life stories of 13 Swiss centenarians. Beyond the portraits, it brings a comprehensive research project to life. *SWISS100*, the first national study of centenarians led by Daniela Jopp, a psychologist at the University of Lausanne and a member of LIVES, explores the many dimensions of life after 100, including health, memory, social relationships, quality of life, and psychological resources.

Between 1950 and 2010, the number of centenarians in Switzerland doubled every decade. Today, there are more than 1,600 centenarians, and this trend is accelerating. In the face of this significant demographic shift, how are our perceptions of old age evolving? How are our societies adapting? What lessons can we learn from people who have lived through a century? This exhibition provides a space to explore these questions, moving beyond clichés, and gives a voice to those experiencing this reality.



AGENDA

TRAINING



CAS

Migrations et politiques d'intégrations | IDHEAP

Registration by 7 December 2025

What types of inequality do immigrants in Switzerland face, and why? What are the most effective strategies for addressing these inequalities at national and international levels? This CAS course examines the causes and consequences of inequalities relating to the integration of immigrants in areas such as education, the labour market, health, poverty, naturalisation and political participation. It also provides an overview of the most promising public policies for facilitating immigrant integration.



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