

# Editorial

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## Editorial

Christian Suter\*

This Editorial gives an overview of the most important events and decisions of the Swiss Journal of Sociology, and summarizes the activities of its editorial team for the calendar year 2013.<sup>1</sup> As in the last few years, the Editorial will also appear on the website of the journal together with some additional information.

After the current issue, the editorial team will change in two important respects: Firstly, Philippe Gonzalez, the editor responsible for French-language book reviews, has resigned and we would like to express our grateful thanks to him for his commitment to the journal over the past six years. Under his leadership the French-language book review section has developed successfully, both from a qualitative and a quantitative perspective. Secondly, Pascale Gazareth, who served as submission manager for the past four years, is leaving the journal. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Pascale Gazareth for the great job she did, especially with regard to improving the administration and the transparency of the review process (as witnessed by this annual report), as well as the timeliness of the production of the journal. We should like to continue and add to these achievements with the new editorial team which will be composed of Nora Linder and Fabienne Robert-Nicoud as submission managers and editorial assistants.

*Special issue:* Last year's special issue dealt with the topic of change and reform in educational systems and organizations. The eleven articles (and an introduction) highlight the specific contribution of sociology to educational research, as well as the current developments in society reflected by the changes and reforms in educational systems. The special issue to be published in July 2014 "Institutional doing gender: How politics impacts on gender (in)equality" (vol. 40, issue 2) will focus on the persistence of gender inequality and will contain nine articles. Finally, two special issues (as an exception) are planned for 2015. They will address the themes of "Economic socialization and the financial practices of young people" and "The transformation of retirement policies." We would like to thank all guest editors for their valuable contributions and commitment to the journal.

*Website:* The integration of the journal's website into the new website of the Swiss Sociological Association was completed in 2013. We would like to express our special thanks to Lukas Neuhaus, who managed the old website for many years, as well as to Marie-Eve Zufferey who had to correct the bugs which appeared after

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1 During 2013 the editorial team was composed of Christian Suter serving as editor-in-chief, Pascale Gazareth as submission manager and Nora Linder as submission manager and editorial assistant.

the transfer. Moving old technology into a more recent one is a complicated task and we apologize for the malfunctioning that sometimes occurred during the past year. The situation will stabilize in 2014 and further improvements are planned. Thanks to the new website, open access to the Swiss Journal of Sociology has been substantially improved. We would like to thank our colleagues at the Geneva office of the Swiss Sociological Association for digitizing all the old volumes and issues of the journal. As a consequence, all issues (as from volume 1, 1975) are now fully available in PDF format on the journal's website (except the current issue, which is still reserved for our subscribers).

During the calendar year 2013 the Swiss Journal of Sociology published 24 articles and 13 book reviews in the three issues (March, July, November) – all three were published on time. In 2013, 51 manuscripts were submitted to the journal. A detailed overview of the published articles and manuscripts submitted can be found in Table 1. It should be noted that success rates cannot be calculated from these numbers, as the data bases of published and submitted manuscripts are not identical.

*Publications:* A clear majority of the articles published in the year 2013, namely 19 out of 24, were empirical; two fifths of them (seven articles) using quantitative methods and one third (ten articles) qualitative methods of analysis. This strong representation of qualitative contributions is due to the special issue, which included mainly qualitative papers but also some non-empirical contributions. Most articles were written in German (14) – which is also directly related to the special issue; six were published in English and four in French. Regarding language region of origin, seven contributions came from German-speaking Switzerland, seven from French-speaking Switzerland and ten from other countries, notably from Germany (eight of ten). With regard to the gender of first authors, we observe perfect equality (12 men compared to 12 women). A more detailed examination reveals that most articles, namely 15, were written by mixed-gender teams; thus, six of the 12 articles with a male first author were co-authored by one or several women (and nine of the 12 articles with a female first author were co-authored by a man).

*Submissions:* The largest portion of manuscript submissions was empirical qualitative (39%), followed by empirical quantitative (33%), and theoretical (20%); 4% were methodological contributions and the remaining 4% empirical articles with a combined qualitative-quantitative analytical design. With regard to language, submissions were almost equally balanced this year with 39% in German, 27% in French and 33% in English. Regarding (language) region of origin, the distribution reflects the diversity of the (first) authors' origin with 35% from German-speaking Switzerland, 27% from French-speaking Switzerland, 4% from Italian-speaking Switzerland, 12% from Germany, 4% from France, and 18% from various other countries (Austria, Belgium, Canada, Central African Republic, India, Ivory Coast, People's Republic of China, and South Africa). As to the gender of the first author, 2013 is marked by a balance between male (53%) and female (47%) submissions.

Table 1 Swiss Journal of Sociology: Articles published and manuscripts submitted in the calendar year 2013

	Articles published		Manuscripts submitted	
	N	%	N	%
Total	24	100	51	100
<b>Methods</b>				
Empirical – qualitative	10	42	20	39
Empirical – quantitative	7	29	17	33
Empirical – mixed	2	8	2	4
Theoretical	2	8	10	20
Methodological	2	8	2	4
Introductory & review articles	1	4		
<b>Language</b>				
German	14	58	20	39
French	4	17	14	27
English	6	25	17	33
<b>Region of origin (first author)</b>				
German-speaking Switzerland	7	29	18	35
French-speaking Switzerland	7	29	14	27
Italian-speaking Switzerland	0	0	2	4
Germany	8	33	6	12
France	1	4	2	4
Other countries	1	4	9	18
<b>Sex (first author)</b>				
Female	12	50	27	53
Male	12	50	24	47

However, a substantial proportion of submissions consisted of mixed-gender co-authored papers (25%). A more detailed analysis demonstrates that submissions from two or more women had the highest acceptance rate in 2013 and submissions from a single male author the lowest.

During the review process, 172 experts were approached, and 111 agreed to write one or more reviews. Altogether the editorial team requested 195 reviews, 126 of which were completed. These figures illustrate not only the considerable effort required to carry out the review procedures on the part of the editorial team, but also the great contribution made by the Editorial Committee and the reviewers contacted. We should like to take this opportunity to thank very much all those

involved in this work. A list of the reviewers' names can be found on the journal's website.

Of the 51 manuscripts submitted, 41 were reviewed and a decision was taken during the calendar year. The number of reviews per manuscript varied in 2013 between two and four. In 73% of the reviewed manuscripts, our internal guideline of three reviews was achieved. The average duration of the review process (i. e., mean response time from submission to decision) was 3.6 months, which is below the internal guideline of four months. In 63% of the decisions taken the response time was below four months. About 51% of the submitted (and reviewed) manuscripts were accepted, the majority, however, on condition that amendments were made. A quarter of the reviewed manuscripts had to be refused, 2% were withdrawn by the author, and the remaining 22% were returned for extensive revision, whereby the revised versions of these manuscripts were reviewed once more.

Enhancing the journal's professional standing requires additional financial means. A part of these resources has been contributed by our readers via the journal's subscription fees. In addition, the sociological institutes of various universities in Switzerland were contacted requesting financial support. The editorial team and the Swiss Sociological Association is exceptionally grateful that six of the institutes approached gave such financial support in 2013 (the Sociological Institute of the University of Zurich, the Sociology Seminar of the University of Basel, the Chair of Sociology of the ETHZ, the Department of Social Sciences of the University of Fribourg, the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lausanne, and the Department of Sociology of the University of Neuchâtel); moreover several of these institutes have already agreed to support the journal again in 2014. These funds allow the editorial team to continue its efforts to improve the journal's quality and professional standing.

Neuchâtel, January 2014.