

Chapter 4

Who Are the Serial Movers?

Sociodemographic Profiles and Reasons to Migrate to Switzerland Among Multiple International Migrants



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4.1 Introduction

In recent years, more and more individuals are experiencing mobility, which leads to an increase in international migration (Castles 2013). In parallel with this increase in population movement, migration is becoming more complex and can no longer be analysed as a unique and definitive settlement in a new country (King 2002). Although previous research has extensively deepened our understanding of why individuals leave a place to settle in another country, little is known about individuals who have gone through several international movements.

Using the Migration-Mobility Survey (see Chap. 2), this research aims at deepening the understanding of individuals who have undertaken one or more international migrations before settling in Switzerland. As a country of migration – in 2017, 29% of the population is foreign born – Switzerland is a good laboratory to study new mobilities in the European context. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there have been important changes in the migration forms (Piguët 2009 or see Chap. 1). Between World War II and the beginning of the 1990s, most migratory flows were of workers who responded to the needs of the Swiss economy for a low-skilled workforce. Due to trends in the labour market structure and the entry into force of the free movement of persons between the European Union and Switzerland in 2002, the long-standing demand for a low-qualified workforce persists but is being overtaken by highly educated migration flows (Müller-Jentsch 2008; Wanner et al. 2016). However, little is known about the evolution of these migration flows and the resulting settlement processes. European highly qualified

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migrants are presumably more mobile (Favell 2011; Recchi 2015), but more empirical evidence is needed to understand the forms of migration currently occurring.

This chapter aims at providing a better overview of multiple migration phenomena in the context of the free movement of persons between the European Union and Switzerland. It contributes to the understanding of the Migration-Mobility Nexus in determining the magnitude and the main sociodemographic characteristics of multiple movers. It also presents why migrants have arrived in Switzerland and how the reasons vary according to the number of multiple migrations. Finally, it explores the last country of residence of multiple migrants. Before presenting empirical results, the first section proposes an overview on multiple migrations in the scientific literature.

4.2 Multiple Migrations in Previous Research

4.2.1 *On Multiple Migrations*

Migration was long considered a unique event leading to a definitive settlement in the host country. Before the beginning of the twenty-first century, there was almost no research on multiple migrants because the topic did not arise in this early conceptualization of migration. However, because it appeared that not every migrant settles in the long term in the host country, empirical studies initially developed on return or temporary migrants (Borjas and Bratsberg 1994; Cassarino 2004; Lindstrom 1996). Then, research explored other forms of multiple migrations and tried to conceptualize and define them through the notions of *circular* (Constant and Zimmermann 2011; Hugo 2003; Schneider and Parusel 2015; Vadean and Piracha 2010), *repeated* (Constant and Zimmermann 2011), *secondary* (Takenaka 2007), *twice* (Agrawal 2016), *onward* (King and Newbold 2007; Lindley and Van Hear 2007; Toma and Castagnone 2015; Kelly and Hedman 2016), *stepwise* (Paul 2011), or *serial* (Ossman 2004) migrations. There are of course slight differences between these definitions, but all of them refer to a trajectory of migration that includes stops in multiple countries. The concept of multiple migration has been defined by Oishi (2014) as “extensive geographical movements of individuals across multiple national borders within one generation, which could be circular, linear, or both”. The non-linearity of the trajectory and the multiple borders crossed make this phenomenon complex.

Due to a methodological nationalism in the data production (Kalir 2013), quantitative research had difficulties in approaching extensive sequences of multiple migration (Toma and Castagnone 2015) or could only map those occurring within national borders. Therefore, multiple movers have usually been studied in the country of destination using qualitative interviews, biographical questionnaires or census data (King and Newbold 2007; Nekby 2006; Ossman 2004; Takenaka 2007).

4.2.2 Literature Review

As stated, research on multiple international migrations has grown in recent years. In one of the first studies on this topic, Greenwood and Trabka (1991) were surprised to find that more than 85,000 migrants have lived in a third country before settling in the United States. They explained this large number of multiple migrants with the indirect trajectories of Southeast Asian refugees in the 1980s who stopped in several countries before reaching the USA.

The high level of multiple migrations among refugees has been confirmed in other research (Lindley and Van Hear 2007). War, population displacements, and economic crises in *failed states* led to significant flows of refugees or illegal migrants that, due to the absence of a clear international response, manage their way to a new destination. These turbulent trajectories from southern country migrants, as described by Schapendonk (2012), are diverse, unpredictable, and conducted according to opportunities and constraints.

Nevertheless, in Western societies, the majority of migrants who have arrived through a secondary destination are characterised by a high level of education and highly qualified occupations (Agrawal 2016; Nekby 2006; Takenaka 2007). At the individual level, multiple migrations are a means of developing social and human capital in different countries, languages, and contexts and should allow developing a professional career and attaining highly qualified occupations (Kelly and Hedman 2016). At the macro level, the mobility of the highly skilled is promoted by states that compete to attract the highly qualified professionals needed by their economies (Shachar 2006). In the European Union (EU), the principle of circulation between country members of a highly skilled work force has even been fostered by the EU commission as a political strategy to avoid highly qualified labour shortages and prevent negative public attitudes to mass immigration (Agunias 2006; Hugo 2003). Multiple migrations are however not only driven by highly qualified individuals; stepwise migration trajectories are also used as a strategy by low-qualified migrants from southern countries who accumulate experiences in several neighbouring countries that can offer the opportunity to move to a desired destination, that is, North America or Europe (Paul 2011).

Therefore, education – or skills – can be considered the most important factor in understanding the multiple-migration phenomenon, but its effects and the strategies applied differ according to the origin country. In an early work on remigration from the United States, Borjas and Bratsberg (1994) demonstrated that selection on remigration depends not only upon the origin but also upon the skills and the reasons for remigration. For the authors, remigration occurs either after accumulating sufficient financial resources or because of a failure of the migration project, i.e., not being able to realize the expected economic opportunities in the host country. Additional research has shown that remigration tends to occur when facing difficult situations; unemployment, sickness or lack of integration foster individuals to seek more success in an onward destination or to return to the home country (Kelly and Hedman 2016; Toma and Castagnone 2015). In a study on Sweden, Nekby (2006) showed

that selection processes of the highly qualified are stronger among onward migrants compared with return migrants. However, the research of Nekby also showed that there were important differences in onward migrations by country of origin. Other factors being equal, North and South Americans and Africans were more prone to undergo an onward movement than were West Europeans. In contrast, Nordic neighbouring country immigrants were less prone to move to an onward destination. The trajectories of multiple migrations are therefore highly associated with the origin and interact with the distance, a North-South divide, historical links between countries, and the education selectivity of the flows.

Previous research showed that individual factors are of great importance in the decision to migrate. A study on Senegalese migrants moving stepwise within Europe highlighted that having social or family networks in a third European country fosters the decision to re-migrate (Toma and Castagnone 2015). Family configurations are also important because migration involves a family decision process and should match the expectations of all family members (Mincer 1977). Having a partner and/or children can therefore be considered a barrier in undertaking a migration (Clark and Davies Withers 2007). Conversely, family formation is a reason for migrating when partners do not live in the same country, particularly for South-North family migration (Kofman 2004). The position in the life cycle is decisive because mobility behaviours are known to increase among young adults (25–35 years). In the European context, this phenomenon is exacerbated by international student programmes such as Erasmus, which supports student migration experiences in another country (Wächter 2014). In a cross-sectional study, age reveals not only the position in the life course but also period and generation effects. Thus, older individuals clearly had more time to have experienced multiple migrations (Schwartz 1976). This chapter does not intend to analyse age effects in detail but does control for position in the life course.

If aspirations, social position, and networks shape the planned – or unplanned – individual migration trajectories, institutional factors, such as nationality and legal status, can definitely eliminate the opportunities to migrate (Paul 2011). In the EU, built as a fortress open on the inside but closed to the outside, there is a divide between those who have extended access to any European country (EU citizens and highly qualified migrants) and those, in less favourable situations, who cannot move to their desired destination (King 2002; Van Mol and de Valk 2016). The labour market rules the possibility to settle because employment is the main entry gate to any European country. Finding a job is often a prerequisite for citizens of non-EU countries who aspire to settle in the European Union. The legal alternatives open to non-EU citizens involve migrating through family reunification, for studying, or as asylum seekers.

4.2.3 Research Hypotheses

This chapter describes the main characteristics of frequent movers who have recently arrived in Switzerland.

It focusses on the articulation between origin, level of education, and family structure. In particular, we aim at testing the three following hypotheses:

- H1. Highly qualified migrants experience more mobility.
- H2. There are large heterogeneities in the trajectories by nationality. The right to stay, the reasons to migrate, and the historical and geographical links are of great significance in explaining multiple migrations.
 - (a) Citizens from EU countries tend to be more mobile and use the facilitated access to the union labour market to move and work elsewhere.
 - (b) Neighbouring countries and countries with a long history of migration with Switzerland (Portugal and Spain) however come more directly to Switzerland and experience less mobility.
 - (c) Low-qualified southern country migrants tend to be more mobile, and follow a stepwise migration strategy.
- H3. Family (partner and children) restrains highly mobile trajectories.

This research also aims at determining in an explorative setting the main factors that have made individuals undertake one more move and arrive in Switzerland. In Sect. 4.6, we also explore the trajectories of multiple migrants in analysing the last country of residence.

4.3 Data and Methods

This research is based on the Migration-Mobility Survey, a survey on recent immigrants in 11 selected groups of migrants living in Switzerland by the end of 2016. For the analyses, we exclude 43 individuals who had another nationality than the selected ones in the sampling procedure. Our sample size reaches 5930 individuals representing 455,733 migrants; for more details on the survey, see Chap. 2.

The main dependent variable is the number of countries lived in by the migrant before arriving in Switzerland. The question is as follows: “Except Switzerland and your country of birth, in how many different countries have you lived for three or more months?” The answer ranges from 0 to 19, but less than 9% of migrants lived in three or more other countries.

In the next section, we display the weighted distribution of the number of countries lived in for the three categories, “0”, “1”, and “2 or more” by nationality, level of education and family composition. We then examine whether the reasons for migration can be associated with multiple migrations. In Sect. 4.5, we run multinomial logistic regression models to analyse, *ceteris paribus*, the contribution of individual characteristics in explaining multiple migration trajectories. In Sect. 4.6, we examine the trajectories of multiple migrants and, more precisely, the last country lived in. In the final Sect. 4.7, we discuss the main finding, and to conclude, we check whether multiple movers expect to be mobile in forthcoming years.

The independent variables used in this research are as follows: level of education (secondary or less, technical and professional training, Bachelor, and Master/PhD), nationality (Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom (UK), North America, India, West Africa, and South America), family configuration at arrival (built using the partner status at arrival and the date of birth of the first child), self-declared reasons for migration (multiple choices between professional, study, start a family, accompany a family, lifestyle reasons, new experience, and other), and age and gender as control variables.

4.4 Socio-demographic Profiles of Multiple Migrants

In the population under study, almost one-half of immigrants have lived in a country other than their country of birth before coming to Switzerland: 27% had a unique experience in another country, 11% in two countries, and 9% in three countries or more.

4.4.1 Education

Recent migration flows to Switzerland are characterized by a general high level of education. In the population under study, 53% of the immigrants hold an academic degree. Compared with the one-time movers, multiple migrants are better educated (Table 4.1): the higher educated, the more mobile. The share of academics among the one-time movers is approximately 40%; it increases to 61% for migrants who have lived in one other country and to 76% for those who have lived in two or more different countries.

Previous research highlighted that the highly skilled are more mobile, a point particularly true in Switzerland. The Swiss labour market faces a shortage of highly qualified workers and tries to attract the foreign highly skilled. Scholars have explained that multiple migrations by the highly educated was a strategy to

Table 4.1 Column distribution of the level of education by the number of other countries lived in before coming to Switzerland (in %)

	0	1	2+	Total
Secondary or less	49.1	31.3	16.7	37.9
Technical and professional training	10.9	8.2	7.7	9.6
Bachelor	12.3	14.0	13.9	13.1
Master/PhD	27.7	46.5	61.7	39.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	2916	1683	1331	5930

Note: Cramer's $V = 0.217$

Source: Migration-Mobility Survey 2016. Weighted results

strengthen professional skills (Kelly and Hedman 2016; Takenaka 2007). Those who have been mobile appear to have ease of access to the job market in Switzerland. In parallel, institutional factors foster the mobility of those who are going to be highly qualified. In the Bologna context, there has been an internationalization of university studies. Numerous students experience a mobility for a few months in a programme such as Erasmus or Socrates, or for their whole Bachelor or Master study (Wächter 2014) because studying abroad has been shown to have a positive effect on labour market integration (Parey and Waldinger 2011). Thus, individuals holding an academic degree have been more mobile during their courses.

4.4.2 Nationality

Table 4.2 shows the large heterogeneity in the migration trajectories of international migrants by nationality. Approximately 70% of recent migrants from the United Kingdom and North America have lived in third country prior to their arrival in Switzerland – 42% have even lived in two or more other countries. Among French, Austrian and West African migrants, the share of multiple migrants rises to between 52% and 59%. For Spain, India, and South America, the proportion of multiple migrants lies between 48% and 50%. In contrast, the most numerous origin groups in Switzerland, Italian, German, and particularly Portuguese are less prone to multiple migrations with, respectively, 45%, 44%, and 32% being multiple migrants.

These differences cannot be explained only by univariate factors, i.e., the ease of entry in Switzerland (permit), geographical proximity, or a North-South divide as observed in the United States by Takenaka (2007). It appears that the phenomenon of multiple migrations simultaneously includes several factors covered by national-

Table 4.2 Row distribution of the number of other countries lived in before coming to Switzerland by nationality (in %)

	0	1	2+	Total	N
Germany	55.8	25.0	19.2	100.0	541
France	41.4	29.1	29.5	100.0	554
Italy	54.7	29.7	15.6	100.0	560
Austria	48.2	27.3	24.5	100.0	578
Portugal	67.8	22.9	9.4	100.0	571
Spain	49.8	28.5	21.7	100.0	501
United Kingdom	28.1	30.3	41.6	100.0	506
North America	33.8	24.5	41.7	100.0	576
India	50.6	34.0	15.5	100.0	570
West Africa	47.0	33.6	19.5	100.0	407
South America	51.5	31.1	17.4	100.0	566
Total	53.4	26.8	19.8	100.0	5930

Note: Cramer's V = 0.167

Source: Migration-Mobility Survey 2016. Weighted results

ity. The main entry door to Switzerland is the labour market, which is profoundly segmented among migrants (Pecoraro 2005). This segmentation relies on the labour market structure and the need for both highly qualified and low-qualified workforces.

The less mobile Portuguese have for instance a long tradition of low-qualified migration to Switzerland that started in the 1980s (Piguet 2009). Since then, historical links and family and social networks have fostered a continuum of direct migrations. In the population under study, Portuguese are the least qualified group, with only 17% holding an academic degree. The share of academics stands at 61% for all of the other nationalities.

Italians and Germans are the two largest foreign communities in Switzerland. Both have developed strong labour immigration links to Switzerland (Piguet 2009). Those links and their cultural (language) and geographical proximity most likely explain why the share of multiple migrants is relatively low among them. Surprisingly, this point is not true for French and Austrian migrants, who despite coming from a neighbouring country have more frequently experienced multiple migrations before arriving in Switzerland. UK, North American and Indian migrants are characterized by a high level of education and highly qualified occupations in Switzerland, but only the first two are characterized by a high degree of international mobility. West Africans and South Americans are more diverse and less qualified, but they are over-represented among those who have lived in one other country before arriving in Switzerland.

4.4.3 Family Composition

Family composition at arrival does not have a clear influence on the number of previous migrations (Table 4.3). Only single parents have been less numerous in experiencing multiple migrations prior their arrival in Switzerland. The share of multiple migrants is approximately the same among those who were single or in a relationship at migration, having or not having a child. In other words, partnership and family are not obstacles to having experienced multiple migrations. Thus, the multiple migrations belong to a family decision process. Therefore, we can expect that

Table 4.3 Row distribution of the number of other countries lived in before coming to Switzerland by family situation (in %)

	0	1	2+	Total	N
No partner no child	53.4	26.6	20.0	100.0	1485
No partner but child(ren)	60.0	24.7	15.3	100.0	346
Partner and child(ren)	53.4	27.3	19.3	100.0	2035
Partner no child	52.3	26.7	21.0	100.0	2064
Total	53.4	26.8	19.8	100.0	5930

Note: Cramer’s V = 0.027

Source: Migration-Mobility Survey 2016. Weighted results

multiple migrations refer not only to an individual strategy of gaining individual migrant capital but also at the collective, family level, strategy as theorized by Mincer (1977).

4.4.4 *Reasons to Migrate to Switzerland and Multiple Migrations*

Multiple migrations have often been interpreted as a strategy to gain migration capital, skills, and experience that foster professional careers. In this explanatory section, we would like to understand whether the reasons for moving to Switzerland changed according to the past trajectory, i.e., whether the decision to move is the same for those individuals who experienced their very first migration and for those who have previously lived in one or more countries. The Migration-Mobility Survey asked about the reasons for immigrating to Switzerland; the respondents could choose one or more responses from among 10 propositions.

Almost 62% of the new immigrants indicated that they migrated for professional reasons. Family reasons are also important; 28% of the weighted sample indicated migrating either to accompany a family or to start a family. Then, lifestyle reasons and envy to gain new experiences were cited by, respectively, 19% and 18% of the respondents. Except coming for studying (8%), other reasons to migrate only collected a few percentages.

Table 4.4 shows how the cited reasons vary according to the number of previous countries lived in. It is not surprising that the share of individuals who mention professional reasons to migrate increases with the number of multiple migrations. Professional reasons are indeed more often cited by highly qualified individuals. Thus, 56% of the individuals who have only lived in their birth country prior coming to Switzerland cited professional reasons. The percentage rises to 65% for those who have lived in one other country, and it increases to 73% for the more mobile.

Table 4.4 Reasons to immigrate by the number of other countries lived in before coming to Switzerland (in %)

	0	1	2+	Total
Professional	55.8	65.4	72.9	61.8
Study	7.4	10.4	7.9	8.3
Start family	14.2	10.5	8.4	12.1
Accompany family	18.2	16.0	15.4	17.0
Lifestyle	20.8	17.9	18.1	19.5
New experience	18.9	19.6	15.0	18.3
Other	19.3	16.8	13.4	17.5

Note: N = 5930

Source: Migration-Mobility Survey 2016. Weighted results

In contrast, the share of those indicating family reasons tends to decrease with the number of countries lived in. This point is particularly true for those who want to start a family. Family reasons were cited by 14% of the direct migrants, by 11% of those who have lived in another country, and by 8% among the more mobile; for those who indicated accompanying their family, the gradient is slighter at, respectively, 18%, 16%, and 15%.

Lifestyle factors and envy to gain new experiences in Switzerland were also less cited by the multiple movers than by those who came without a secondary migration. A similar pattern can be observed for those who cited other reasons to migrate.

4.5 Explaining Multiple Migrations: A Multivariate Analysis

In the previous sections, the diversity of the multiple migrants has been highlighted. Some factors appear to play a determinant role in the migration trajectories and the decisions to migrate to Switzerland. There are of course interdependences between these factors that a multivariate analysis will be able to disentangle. A multinomial logistic regression has been run to identify the most important drivers of multiple migrations, all other factors being equal. The reference category of the dependent variable involves the individuals who have not lived in any country other than their birth country and Switzerland. The variables presented in the previous section are included in the model; age at migration and gender are also included as control variables. The results are presented in Table 4.5.

The coefficients in the table indicate the change from the reference category of the log odds of having experienced multiple migrations. For example, for the first coefficient, French individuals are, all other factors being equal, $\exp(0.408) = 1.5$ more likely to experience one migration compared with the likelihood that Germans will.

First, despite the control for education levels and reasons for migrating, there remain important differences in the migration experiences between nationalities. Except for Indian immigrants, the larger communities – German, Portuguese, and Italian – have been less prone to have experienced multiple migrations. In contrast, migrants from the United Kingdom and North America appear to have experienced the highest mobility before arriving to Switzerland; they have, respectively, 4 and 3.2 times higher likelihood to have experienced two or more multiple migrations than have the German migrants. For most nationalities, compared with the Germans, there is an increase – or stagnation – in the likelihood of having done an increasing number of multiple migrations. Italians are the exception with a decrease; they are more likely than Germans to have moved once but equally likely to have moved twice or more.

In the regression models, the education level appears the most important driver of multiple migrations¹: a clear gradient can be observed between an increase in the education level and an increase in the number of migration experiences. Thus, edu-

¹ This variable has the highest effect on the model quality in an AIC stepwise model selection (forward and backward).

Table 4.5 Results of the multinomial logistic regression on the number of previous countries lived in, reference no other country lived in

	One country		Two countries or more	
	Coef.	Sig.	Coef.	Sig.
Nationality (ref. Germany)				
France	0.41	***	0.68	***
Italy	0.30	**	0.03	
Austria	0.33		0.54	**
Portugal	0.11		-0.13	
Spain	0.31	*	0.39	*
United Kingdom	0.82	***	1.39	***
North America	0.41	*	1.18	***
India	0.21		-0.31	
West Africa	0.90	**	1.02	**
South America	0.69	***	0.64	**
Education (ref. Secondary or less)				
Technical and professional training	0.11		0.48	**
Bachelor	0.48	***	0.86	***
Master/PhD	0.87	***	1.58	***
Family situation (ref. Single no child)				
Single but child(ren)	0.06		-0.05	
Partner and child(ren)	0.16		0.03	
Partner no child	0.05		0.04	
Professional reasons (yes)	0.24	**	0.46	***
Accompanying family (yes)	-0.04		0.01	
Starting a family (yes)	-0.24	*	-0.30	*
Education reasons (yes)	0.27	*	-0.05	
Age at migration (ref. 18–29)				
30–39	0.28	***	0.41	***
40–49	0.19		0.40	**
50 and more	0.03		0.45	**
Sex (ref. Male)				
Female	-0.12		-0.07	
Constant	-1.62	***	-2.67	***

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. $N = 5930$

Source: Migration-Mobility Survey 2016. Weighted results

ational attainment level is the key dimension of the recent rise in multiple migrations in the European context.

Despite the control for education, migrants who have come for professional reasons are more prone to move internationally before arriving in Switzerland. Accompanying a family or coming for study reasons has no significant effects on explaining multiple migrations; those who have cited these reasons are neither more nor less mobile. However, migrants who intend to start a family have experienced less mobility.

Concerning the control variables, no gender effect could be observed. Fewer individuals aged less than 30 years have lived in two or more countries, most likely because they had less time to do so.

4.6 Arrival Trajectories of Multiple Migrants

Section 4.5 highlighted an important variability in the migration practices by origin, all other factors being equal. However, little is known about the trajectories that led multiple migrants to Switzerland. This question has not been widely studied mostly because of the lack of good data. It can however bring new insights on the strategies developed by international migrants. Indeed, migration from southern countries has often been interpreted as a stepwise strategy that brings step-by-step migrants to their desired destination (Paul 2011; Takenaka 2007). What about migrants from other origins? Analysing the last country of residence allows understanding the main pathways used to arrive in Switzerland.

Table 4.6 shows the distribution of the last country of residence of multiple migrants. The first column “nationality” indicates migrants who came directly from their country of nationality and who have lived in one or more other countries in the past. The other columns are divided by continent except for Germany, Spain and the UK, which gather large flows of onward migrants to Switzerland.

First, more than one-half of multiple migrants have come directly from their country of nationality. The share of *direct* migrants is higher for the Germans and French, above 60%. As expected, the lowest percentages are observed for southern country migrants – 27% for West Africans, 28% for Indians, and 37% for South Americans; all of those countries have approximately the same share of multiple migrants (see Table 4.2). Interestingly, a majority of stepwise southern migrants have come from a small number of European countries. The trajectories of West African multiple movers have mostly passed through Italy, France, Spain and the United Kingdom (40%), those from India through Germany, North America, and the United Kingdom (35%), and those from South America through Spain, the UK, and Germany (32%). However, 20% of the Indian multiple migrants have lived in another Asian or Oceanian country before coming to Switzerland. For West Africans, 19% have previously lived in another African country, but only 6% of South American multiple migrants have come to Switzerland through another South American country. Thus, multiple South American migrants differ in their trajectory by having a very low mobility in the sub-continent before moving to Switzerland because their preferred destination is Spain due to their region’s long-standing cultural and economic relations with Spain.

For European and North American immigrants, the last country of residence of a majority of multiple movers was the country of nationality. This means that the migration episodes were interrupted by a return to the home country. For the minority who has come through stepwise movements, some previous countries of residence emerge as dominant: Germany for Austrians (15%), the UK for Italians

Table 4.6 Row distribution of the previous country of residence by nationality among multiple migrants (in %)

	Country of nationality	Germany	Spain	UK	Other Europe	North America	South America	Africa	Asia-Oceania	Total
Germans	62.6	–	2.0	4.3	13.9	7.9	1.5	2.5	5.5	100.0
French	60.9	4.8	1.8	7.0	10.6	7.8	1.8	1.3	4.2	100.0
Italians	40.4	7.0	4.1	12.1	19.1	8.5	2.5	2.0	4.2	100.0
Austrians	49.3	15.1	2.0	4.1	16.0	6.7	1.5	0.7	4.6	100.0
Portuguese	46.8	6.6	10.5	4.4	22.4	2.9	0.9	4.8	0.7	100.0
Spanish	54.8	8.5	–	8.4	19.2	3.7	2.3	0.7	2.4	100.0
UK-citizens	58.5	6.1	1.8	–	17.3	4.4	0.7	1.1	10.2	100.0
North Americans	53.6	5.8	0.9	6.0	15.6	3.7	2.5	2.2	9.7	100.0
Indians	28.4	12.4	0.7	10.6	14.1	12.4	0.4	1.2	19.9	100.0
West Africans	27.3	3.1	8.3	8.7	30.6	0.4	0.4	18.8	2.4	100.0
South Americans	37.2	7.2	15.4	9.7	14.2	5.4	5.8	0.3	4.8	100.0
Total	53.5	4.8	3.8	6.3	16.1	6.5	1.8	2.3	5.0	100.0

Note: N = 3014

Source: Migration-Mobility Survey 2016. Weighted results

(12%), and Spain and French for Portuguese (11% and 10%). Furthermore, North America appears an important hub of European migrants who thereafter moved to Switzerland. Between 7% and 9% of multiple migrants from Italy, Germany, France and Austria who have arrived in Switzerland have lived previously in North America, almost exclusively in the United States.

These exploratory results have shown very different pathways to arrive in Switzerland among multiple migrants. If some evident pattern of stepwise strategies appears for West Africans who immigrated to southern Europe (Italy, France and Spain) before arriving to Switzerland, or for South Americans who initially arrived in Spain before being able to move to Switzerland, more research is needed to understand and explain the longitudinal trajectories of multiple international migrants.

4.7 Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter has shown that multiple migrations are very common among recent migrants. Almost one-half (47%) of the recent migrants surveyed through this study have lived in one or more countries before their arrival in Switzerland. The origins of this phenomenon are diverse, but it clearly demonstrates the globalization of mobility among migrants.

In the relatively rare academic literature on the topic, a sub-population is known to be very mobile – the highly skilled. This research confirmed the predominance of the highly skilled among multiple migrants (our first hypothesis); among those who have lived in two or more countries, 76% have a university degree. The highly skilled benefit from multiple experiences in various countries that improve in particular their professional skills, languages competences, and social and professional networks. After gaining experiences in one or more other countries, they are more valued in the labour market. Because Switzerland faces a highly skilled worker shortage, those who have been mobile could most likely gain facilitated access to a job. Furthermore, with the internationalization of university studies, an increasing number of students chose a mobility during their studies. Thus, some highly educated individuals are inherently multiple migrants by means of a mobility during their studies.

This research has shown an important heterogeneity in multiple migration experiences between countries. In the context of free movement of persons between the European Union and Switzerland, it was expected that European nationals, who have a facilitated settlement to every EU country and Switzerland, experienced more mobility before their arrival in Switzerland (Hypothesis 2a). Although migrants from the UK confirm this trend, it cannot be observed for most European nationals. Furthermore, the second-most-mobile group comes from North America. In fact, as shown by Nekby (2006) in the Swedish context, migrants coming from neighbouring countries tend to experience less mobility (Hypothesis 2b). This research showed that not only geographic but also cultural distances reduced the

complexity of the previous international migrations. Therefore, the lowest mobility is observed in the largest communities – the neighbouring German and Italian, and the Portuguese, who have a long history of migration with Switzerland. Their lower propensity for multiple migrations demonstrates the dominant role of historical links and of social and family networks in fostering trajectories that are more direct. However, despite their geographical proximities, migrants coming from France and Austria are surprisingly more mobile than are those from the other neighbouring countries. For Austria, the analysis in Sect. 4.6 showed that many multiple migrants have had a previous experience in Germany. Their higher mobility can thus be explained by a type of stepwise trajectory to Switzerland.

Spain and Switzerland also have a long history of migration; Spaniards are today the fifth-largest foreign group in Switzerland. The apparent high mobility among recent migrants in the descriptive and multivariate analyses is actually overestimated and resembles the behaviours of the Portuguese. This similarity is due to the large proportion of Spanish migrants who were born outside Spain and obtained the Spanish citizenship. Indeed, almost 20% of the holders of a Spanish nationality are born abroad, and most of them come from South America. Latin American migration to Spain has experienced a dramatic increase in the last two decades. Because of a facilitated naturalization process – 2 years of continuous legal residence in Spain (Hierro 2016) – in a time of economic crisis and as their socio-economic condition deteriorates in Spain, naturalized immigrants from South America had the opportunity to move within the Schengen area to seek better job opportunities and to fulfil a multiple migration strategy (Mas Giralt 2017). Many South Americans who lived in Spain but did not naturalize most likely also followed this pathway (Sect. 4.5), seeking better life conditions in Switzerland.

It was hypothesized that southern country migrants tend to use a step-by-step migration strategy to reach a destination that improves their socio-economic conditions (Hypothesis 2c). This point is partially true for South American migrants who massively immigrated to Spain and moved on thereafter; Mas Giralt (2017) showed that their onward movement was not planned but can be interpreted as a coping strategy after the rise of the economic crisis. Among West African migrants, multiple movers mostly lived in only one previous country; France, Spain and Italy are the entry doors to Europe for African migrants who try to move onward when facing vulnerable situations (Toma and Castagnone 2015). Indian migrants are an exception because they appear in the multivariate analysis to have experienced a low level of multiple migrations despite their high average level of education. India is known to export highly skilled workers in the information technology and engineering sectors (Chanda and Sreenivasan 2006). Thus, Indian migrants immigrate more easily, due to a high demand of these sectors in the Swiss labour market.

The analyses in this chapter have also shown that professional reasons are the most important driver of recent migrations to Switzerland (62%). Professionals have been more mobile in their course regardless of their levels of education. Contrary to the hypothesis on family migration (see our third hypothesis), the family configuration (having a partner or children), or having a reason such as accompanying a family, does not reduce the number of previous international migrations.

Family is therefore a component of multiple migrations that will be analysed in more depth in Chaps. 5 and 6 of this book.

This chapter has given an overview of the current multiple migration phenomena in Switzerland. When asked about their future intentions, the respondents of the survey answered, in a majority (58%), that they do not yet know if they want to settle in or remigrate from Switzerland. Among the remaining 42%, 80% aim at staying forever in Switzerland. The share rises slightly among the one-time migrants to 84%. Indeed, the country's quality of life is found among the highest in the world in many studies, as is its purchasing power. Is Switzerland the last stop for multiple migrants? For now, it is the last stop for those who have decided to stay, but for many individuals, the future of their migration trajectory remains unknown.

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