

Perception and Evaluation of Changes across the Life Course: A Swiss - Argentinian comparison

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EVIE international research program:

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OUESTIONS

- What is the occurrence and the nature of perceived changes at different stages of the life course?
- What is the gain/loss dynamic across the life course when participants evaluate their changes?
- How are specific types of changes assessed in terms of gains/losses?
- What are the similarities and differences between two different socio-cultural environments (Switzerland and Argentina)?

METHOD

Data collected in Geneva (November 2003) and Buenos Aires (May-June 2004). In each country, people of five age-groups (20-24, 35-39, 50-54, 65-69, 80-84 years) answered the open-ended question presented below. N=622 in Switzerland, N=579 in Argentina.

Non-random sample, stratified by gender. Face-to-face interviews.

QUESTIONNAIRE

During the last year, did any significant change occur in your life?

- Yes?
- No ?

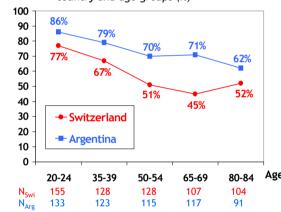
If yes, please describe briefly each change and evaluate it.

- Change 1

Gain?; Loss?; Both?; Neither?; Don't know? etc.

RESULTS 1: Occurrence of changes

Figure 1: People reporting at least one change by country and age-groups (%)



RESULTS 2: Type of perceived changes

Table 1: Perceived changes by country and domains (column % and rank)

		erland	Argentina		
Domain	%	Rank	%	Rank	
Family/couple (marriage, birth of child)	17	1	22	1	
Work (first job, layoff, retirement)	15	2	20	2	
Health (illness, surgery, hospitalization)	12	4	13	3	
Education (starting school, graduation)	11	5	10	4	
Residence (migration, nursing home)	15	2	6	7	
Death (death of a loved one)	6	7	8	6	
Finances (financial difficulty, purchase)	3	10	9	5	
Activities (hobby, sport, journey)	6	7	4	8	
Self (religious experience, identity crisis)	5	9	4	8	
Friendships (making new friend, quarrel)	3	10	2	10	
Miscellaneous	7	6	2	10	
Number of changes	770		11	1124	

Table 2: The five most frequently mentioned domains of change by country and age-groups (%)

Education	20	Family/c.	27	Work	31	Health	26	Health	41
Residence	19	Work	22	Family/c.	13	Family/c.	17	Residence	18
Family/c.	16	Residence	11	Residence	10	Work	15	Death	12
Work	10	Education	8	Death	8	Residence	13	Family/c.	10
Activities	9	Health	6	Self	7	Death	7	Activities	7
Others	26	Others	26	Others	31	Others	22	Others	12
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100
20-24		35-39		50-54		65-69		80-84	
Work	24	Work	23	Family/c.	25	Health	21	Health	28
Family/c.	22	Family/c.	21	Work	24	Family/c.	21	Family/c.	24
Education	19	Finances	12	Health	12	Work	16	Death	19
Residence	8	Education	11	Finances	11	Finances	12	Finances	6
Finances	5	Health	11	Education	8	Death	10	Activities	5
Others	22	Others	22	Others	20	Others	20	Others	18
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	Total	100
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RESULTS 3: Evaluation of perceived changes

Figures 2: Subjective evaluation of perceived changes by country and age-groups (%)

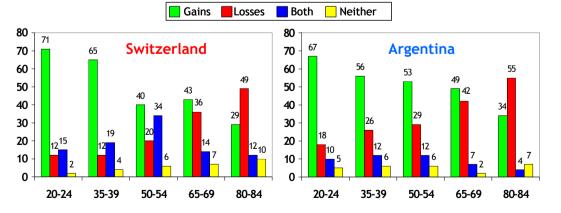


Table 3: Subjective evaluation of the seven most frequently mentioned domains of change by country

Domain		Gain	Loss	Both	Neit.	Total
Family/couple	Swi Arg	72 73	5 12	17 8	6 7	100 100
Work	Swi Arg	61 61	14 19	22 16	3	100 100
Health	Swi Arg	20 21	52 62	19 6	9 11	100 100
Education	Swi Arg	77 87	7 9	12 2	4 2	100 100
Residence	Swi Arg	51 47	14 25	30 24	5 4	100 100
Death	Swi Arg	7 0	76 98	17 2	0	100 100
Finances	Swi Arg	52 48	29 36	15 12	4 4	100 100

CONCLUSIONS

•More young persons than old people report at least one change. In Switzerland, the old-old mentioned more changes than the young-old.

•Age affects directly the nature of the reported changes. The distribution of changes by domains suggests that the life course pattern is quite similar in Switzerland and Argentina (however, economic changes are more frequent in the latter country).

•In both countries, gains (a) greatly outnumber losses in the first three age-groups, (b) are as frequent as losses among the young-old, and (c) are quite rare in very old age. Ambivalent ratings are used more often in Switzerland (especially among fifty-year old) than in Argentina.

 An original feature of this study is to ask participants for a subjective evaluation of their life changes.

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