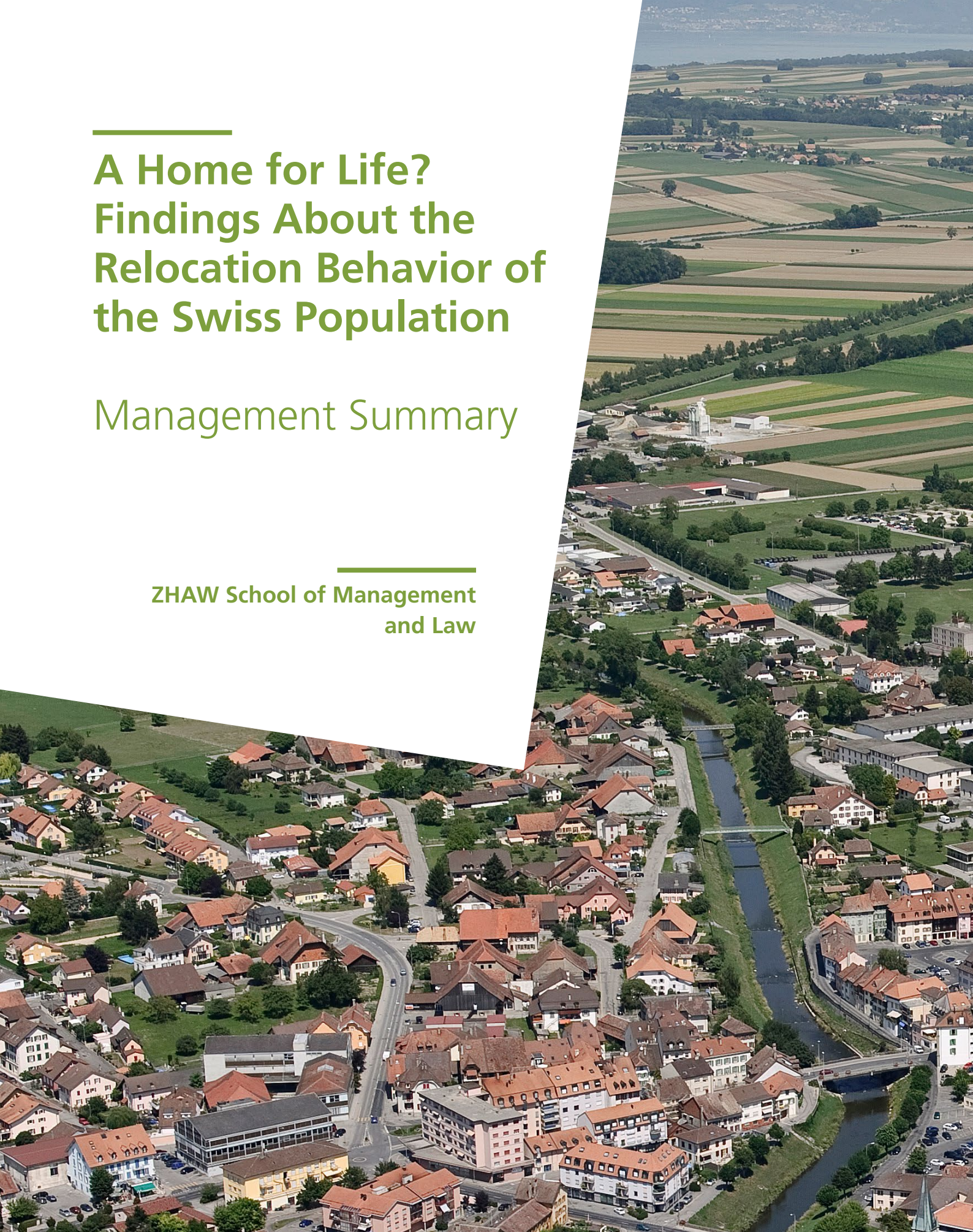

A Home for Life? Findings About the Relocation Behavior of the Swiss Population

Management Summary

ZHAW School of Management
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Note

This management summary and the summary of this report are available in German, French, Italian and English. The complete report is available in German.

The report reflects the views of the authors, which do not necessarily correspond to those of the commissioning parties.

Cover Image

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Management Summary

Readiness to Relocate

This study examines the relocation behavior of the Swiss population. According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, every 10th Swiss resident moves per year. The effective relocation rate is, therefore, around 10 percent. The population's willingness to move is higher: 45 percent of the 1,094 residents surveyed in this representative study¹ are planning to move. Why does around one in two Swiss people want to move, and why does the other half of the Swiss population hold on to their homes? This study is concerned with analyzing the motivators for a desire to move and the circumstances under which such motivation is absent.

Driving Motives for Relocation: More Living Space and Ownership

The housing path of a Swiss household can be divided into two stages: the expansion stage and the consolidation stage. The expansion stage often coincides with the (pre-)family stage, which plays a crucial role in relocation behavior. In other words, starting or expanding a family is the most important trigger for a move: Around half of all 18- to 29-year-olds with children or a desire to have children move because of this. This also reflects the needs of those willing to move who are often still at the beginning of their residential career. The following wishes were mentioned by those willing to move who are striving for «more»:

- **More living space:** 53 percent of those willing to move would like to increase the size of their home.
- **Desire to become a homeowner:** Currently, 75 percent of those willing to move are tenants. After moving, only 48 percent would like to continue renting. The younger a person willing to move is, the more likely they are to want a single-family home as their next housing option. The single-family home also appears to be the top property of the property ladder or people's housing path: Every second apartment owner who is willing to move aspires to a single-family home.

- **Desire to have a long-term home:** Nearly one in two people who are ready to move would like to stay in their new home for more than 10 years.
- **More support:** An increased demand for support services (e.g., concierge services) is emerging among individuals of all ages.

On the other hand, the consolidation stage («downsizing») seems to be significant only to a limited extent. Although the departure of children and retirement are cited as triggers for moving, the willingness to move decreases with increasing age. It is also evident that the step from home ownership to tenancy is taken by only 17 percent of the homeowners surveyed who are willing to move. Once a person owns a home, they would like to remain a homeowner. 90 percent of the homeowners surveyed cite the freedom to live (and design their home) as they like as an important reason for remaining in this form of housing.

Driving Motives for the More Sedentary: Retention & Giving up Nothing

In addition to the age factor, the willingness to move also decreases with increasing obligations and dependencies (children, home ownership). People who are unwilling to move seem to be one step further along their housing paths. This is reflected in the fact that they occupy more living space and that more of them are homeowners.

What keeps more sedentary people in their current homes is, in particular, the spatial and social environment: 88 percent of the people surveyed who are unwilling to move like their current location, and 73 percent value their good relationship with their neighbors. In addition, the respondents already reported a high level of satisfaction, which means there is more potential for loss, which may be another argument against relocation.

Little Pressure to Move

There is little pressure to move, both among those who are

¹ A total of 1,094 people from German- and French-speaking Switzerland took part in the survey. The survey is representative concerning age, gender, the home ownership/tenancy ratio, and the regions of Switzerland (Ticino was not taken into account).

willing and those who are not. The majority of those willing to move take more than two years to find a suitable home. In Switzerland, a move is an event that is considered carefully.

In general, housing satisfaction is high, with more sedentary individuals being more satisfied than those willing to move. Homeowners profess to have limited uncertainty about the market situation: Only 16 percent expect their home to lose in value.

Conclusion: Searching a Permanent Home

It becomes apparent that a new home is primarily chosen to have more space (for oneself or one's family) and be comfortable. Living within (one's own) four walls has an important place in everyday life, and the new home is chosen with particular care. From the point of view of the length of a residential situation, it is also a home for life. On average, the Swiss move 5.6 times in their lifetime and want a long-term home: 43 percent of all respondents would like to stay in their current or future home permanently. The fi-

nancial criteria are relevant here and seem to act as a filter: The financial factors determine whether the desire for a new home can be fulfilled.

Outlook: Dream vs. Reality

As the present study shows, relocation is complex and associated with change, which means uncertainty for a Swiss household. In the next study in this series², the following challenges, in particular, will be addressed more explicitly:

- **Intention-behavior gap:** What are important moments and events when planning and implementing the consolidation stage?
- **Downsizing:** What (added) values can be associated with the consolidation stage or with downsizing so that it becomes more attractive to the affected households?
- **Housing path:** How can a person's housing path be reevaluated and reimagined?

² See Study 1: [Homeownership in Switzerland: Why Owning a Home is a Dream of Potential Homeowners](#); the final Study 3 is scheduled for 2024.

