
Evaluation of the Swiss National Science Foundation's Doc.CH Funding Scheme

Final report

Janine Lüthi, Gwendolin Mäder, Michèle Amacker

Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies, University of Bern

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Management summary

The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) promotes researchers by means of different funding schemes. With Doc.CH, the SNSF fosters promising young researchers who plan to write a doctoral thesis on a topic of their own choice in the humanities and social sciences in Switzerland. Thus, doctoral students can apply for funding independently. The financial support includes the salary as well as additional cost related to the implementation of the project. Doc.CH was introduced in 2013 and is evaluated in the context of SNSF career funding scheme reforms.

The SNSF has mandated the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Bern with the evaluation of the Doc.CH. The main goal of the evaluation mandate was to study the impact of Doc.CH as well as the success of its recipients, and to evaluate its conception, attractiveness and evaluation procedure.

A mixed-method design was used for the evaluation, with a standardised online survey among the recipients of Doc.CH grants, and qualitative interviews with doctoral students, supervisors and experts. In order to study the success of the recipients and to determine the extent to which this success is attributable to Doc.CH, we constructed a control group out of data from the Graduate Survey of the Federal Statistical Office (FSO). The control group data allowed for comparisons of Doc.CH recipients and doctorate holders who had other kinds of funding (e.g. SNSF project funding, assistant positions, other grants). For the qualitative material, doctoral students with SNSF project funding served as a control group to the Doc.CH recipients. The supervisors and experts were interviewed in order to include assessments from different perspectives, as well as to expand and consolidate the quantitative findings of the survey. Note that the perspective of the applicants whose proposals were rejected could not be included in the design, which may cause a bias in certain results.

The results show that the funding scheme Doc.CH is a meaningful and useful means to **fill the funding gap** for doctoral students, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. It covers both a financial need and the need for opportunities for students to develop and implement a doctoral project independently, and for professors to supervise students, for example when they have no other doctoral position available. Doc.CH is thus a necessary **complementation** of the SNSF project funding, and the combination of the two is useful. In comparison with other funding options for a doctorate (e.g. assistant positions, other grants, cross-financing with part-time employment outside the university), Doc.CH also offers very good conditions, specifically with regard to the financial support, the duration of funding and the available time for research. Yet, while the doctorate itself is financially well-covered by Doc.CH, the time required to develop the research question and draw up the proposal is not. This can create precarious and risky situations for the applicants, especially given the high competition.

During and after the doctorate, the Doc.CH recipients have shown great **success**. On average, the few Doc.CH recipients who have already finished their doctorate finished considerably faster than the control group. Compared to doctorate holders with other funding, Doc.CH recipients are also more determined to continue an academic career. More than half of them aim for an academic career, among which almost half aspire to a professorship. Around three quarters of recipients are still employed in academia

after their doctorate, and have started a post-doc after the doctorate. The Doc.CH recipients believe that during their doctorate they gain useful experience for their future, for example experience in working independently, project management, and budget responsibility. The benefit of having been awarded this grant independently distinguishes them from other doctoral students.

The Doc.CH recipients greatly appreciate the financial **support** in general. It is especially valuable that the grant covers not only the salary but also costs for travel expenses and the implementation of the project. The enabling of an independent doctorate is functional as well, not least because particularly in the humanities and social sciences, doctorates are often independent anyway, irrespective of the funding source. The degree of **autonomy** rather depends on the individual doctoral students and supervisors, and the conditions at the work place. To counter a potential isolation and loneliness, a good integration and network as well as good supervision are essential.

The **conception** of Doc.CH is evaluated positively. The grant allows the recipients to spend a lot of time on their research, in fact much more than the control group. More than half of the Doc.CH recipients use some of their time for work not directly related to their doctorate, such as other research projects, writing articles or teaching. In addition, a few have one job or several jobs in addition to their Doc.CH, mostly in order to enhance their general profile, to gain teaching experience and to improve their financial situation. While spending much time on research is vital at the doctoral level, teaching experience and engagements in the faculty and department are very important as well, and not entailed in Doc.CH. This makes the possibility of requesting a reduction of the work time to 80 percent essential. The funding duration of up to four years is positive and important. The requirement that candidates need to apply within two years after their MA degree is viewed as adequate by some and as too short by other experts. With regard to the possibility of proposals at different stages of doctorate (at the beginning or up until two years into the doctorate), fair evaluation procedures taking into account the different levels of maturity of the proposals are vital. The mobility requirement is generally regarded as positive, and, in particular, the possibility of fulfilling this requirement during the doctorate (and not necessarily before) is highly appreciated. The requirement of co-supervision is in principle very welcome in order to strengthen the quality of supervision and to decrease the dependency of the doctoral students of one single professorship. In practice, the co-supervision may not occur to a great extent but can still help, for example, to build an international network. Doctoral programmes or Graduiertenkollegs may be another valuable means for diversifying supervision and providing a network. The idea of independence underlying Doc.CH is seen as very important. However, according to experts and supervisors, it should be stressed with regard to the (autonomous) implementation of the projects, rather than the (autonomous) coining of a new idea. Fostering independence and promoting the top people would actually be desirable in all research domains, and not just in the humanities and social sciences, to which Doc.CH is currently restricted. However, different disciplines have different research settings and ways of working, and consequently different needs. Research in natural sciences and medicine, for instance, are more collective in nature and may even have more financial means, which makes the need for funding of independent projects smaller. For an extension to other research domain, Doc.CH would need to be attractive enough in terms of success rate and financial support to compete with other

funding sources. Importantly, the experts stressed that an extension to other disciplines should not occur at the cost of the humanities and social sciences.

The overall setup of the current **evaluation procedure** is evaluated positively. The Doc.CH recipients are content with the quality of information and the support provided by the SNSF, but would wish for more transparency in the procedure and the actual decision, and for a shorter duration until the notification of the decision. The experts are divided on the benefits and efforts in the current two stages of the procedure, with some greatly appreciating the interviews, the two-stage model and/or the in-depth discussion of the interview phase, and others finding the procedure way too effortful in light of the comparatively small grants and the interviews rather redundant as they rarely lead to completely different assessments of the proposals. Similarly, while some find the composition and expertise of the commissions adequate, others criticize the local preselection and see a lack of expertise when a specific discipline is not represented. They would welcome a national selection and evaluation within the respective discipline.

Doc.CH is associated with a high **attractiveness**. It is viewed as a very attractive funding scheme, both in the national and international context, given its great conditions and enabling of independent doctoral projects. Disadvantages of the grant are the potential financial gap, high risk and insecurity for applicants before the grant, and the threat for doctoral students to be more on their own or even isolated, though this may not necessarily be only due to the nature of the grant. However, the grant is viewed as a sign of excellence. Having been rewarded with a Doc.CH and the gained experience in project management and responsibility is seen as helpful for the future career, in particular in academia.

Zusammenfassung

Der Schweizerische Nationalfonds (SNF) fördert Forscherinnen und Forscher durch verschiedene Förderinstrumente. Mit Doc.CH unterstützt der SNF vielversprechende junge Forschende, die in der Schweiz eine Dissertation zu einem Thema ihrer Wahl in den Geistes- oder Sozialwissenschaften schreiben möchten. Doktorierende können so unabhängig Fördermittel beantragen. Die finanzielle Unterstützung deckt das Salär sowie zusätzliche Kosten, die mit der Durchführung des Dissertationsprojekts verbunden sind. Doc.CH wurde 2013 eingeführt und wird im Rahmen der Reformen der SNF Karriereförderinstrumente evaluiert.

Der SNF hat das Interdisziplinäre Zentrum für Geschlechterforschung der Universität Bern mit der Evaluation von Doc.CH beauftragt. Das Hauptziel des Evaluationsauftrags war, den Einfluss von Doc.CH und den Erfolg der Beitragsempfängenden zu untersuchen, sowie die Konzeption, Attraktivität und das Evaluationsprozedere zu evaluieren.

Für die Evaluation wurde ein mixed-methods Ansatz verwendet, mit einer standardisierten Online-Umfrage unter den Doc.CH-Beitragsempfängenden und qualitativen Interviews mit Doktorierenden, Betreuungspersonen sowie Expertinnen und Experten. Um den Erfolg der Beitragsempfängenden und den Einfluss von Doc.CH auf diesen Erfolg messen zu können, wurde aus Daten der Hochschulabsolventenbefragung des Bundesamts für Statistik (BFS) eine Kontrollgruppe konstruiert. Der Kontrollgruppen-Datensatz erlaubt Vergleiche zwischen den Doc.CH-Beitragsempfängenden und Doktorierten mit anderen Finanzierungsquellen (z.B. SNF Projektförderung, Assistenz-Anstellungen, andere Stipendien). Für die qualitativen Informationen dienten zudem Doktorierende im Rahmen von SNF Projektförderung als Kontrollgruppe zu den Doc.CH-Beitragsempfängenden. Die Betreuungspersonen und Expert_innen wurden interviewt, um Einschätzungen aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven miteinzubeziehen und um quantitative Resultate zu erweitern und vertiefen. Die Perspektive der Bewerberinnen und Bewerber, deren Anträge nicht bewilligt wurden, konnte nicht im Evaluationsdesign miteinbezogen werden, was gewisse Ergebnisse verzerren kann.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass das Förderinstrument Doc.CH ein bedeutsames und sinnvolles Instrument ist, **um die Finanzierungslücke für Doktorierende zu füllen**, gerade in den Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften. Es deckt sowohl einen finanziellen Bedarf als auch das Bedürfnis der Doktorierenden, eigenständig ein Dissertationsprojekt zu entwickeln und durchzuführen, und das Bedürfnis der Betreuungspersonen, Doktorierende zu betreuen, gerade auch wenn keine anderen Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten vorhanden sind. Doc.CH ist daher eine notwendige **Ergänzung** zur SNF Projektförderung, und die Kombination der beiden ist sinnvoll. Im Vergleich mit anderen Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten für eine Dissertation (z.B. Assistenz-Anstellungen, anderen Stipendien, Querfinanzierung durch Teilzeitarbeit ausserhalb der Universität), bietet Doc.CH sehr gute Bedingungen, insbesondere was die finanzielle Unterstützung, die Dauer der Förderung und die verfügbare Forschungszeit betrifft. Während Doc.CH die Doktoratszeit selbst finanziell gut unterstützt, ist die Zeit der Vorbereitung und des Antragsschreibens davor nicht gedeckt. Dies kann für die Bewerberinnen und Bewerber zu prekären und riskanten Situationen führen, gerade auch wegen der hohen Konkurrenz.

Sowohl während als auch nach der Dissertation weisen die Doc.CH-Beitragsempfängenden grossen **Erfolg** vor. Die wenigen Beitragsempfängenden, die ihre Dissertation bereits abgeschlossen haben, haben diese durchschnittlich wesentlich schneller fertig gestellt als die Kontrollgruppe. Im Vergleich mit Doktorierten mit anderen Finanzierungsquellen sind die Doc.CH-Beitragsempfängenden auch entschlossener, einer akademischen Karriere nachzugehen. Mehr als die Hälfte strebt eine akademische Karriere an. Davon wünscht sich wiederum knapp die Hälfte eine Professur. Ungefähr drei Viertel der ehemaligen Beitragsempfängenden sind nach der Dissertation nach wie vor in der Wissenschaft tätig und haben ein Postdoc begonnen. Die Doc.CH-Beitragsempfängenden sind der Meinung, dass sie während dem Doktorat nützliche Erfahrungen für ihre Zukunft gewinnen, zum Beispiel selbständiges Arbeiten, Projektmanagement und Budgetverantwortung. Was die Doc.CH-Beitragsempfängenden in dieser Hinsicht speziell von den Doktorierenden mit anderen Finanzierungsquellen unterscheidet, ist der Vorteil einen solchen Beitrag erfolgreich eigenständig eingeworben zu haben.

Die Beitragsempfängenden schätzen die finanzielle Unterstützung generell sehr. Besonders nützlich ist, dass der Beitrag nicht nur das Salär, sondern auch Reisekosten und zusätzliche Kosten im Zusammenhang mit dem Projekt deckt. Auch die **Ermöglichung einer eigenständigen Dissertation** ist funktional, nicht zuletzt, weil Dissertationen in den Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften ohnehin eigenständig sind, unabhängig von der Finanzierungsart. Das Mass an Selbständigkeit hängt dabei eher von den Doktorierenden selbst und ihren Betreuenden ab, sowie von den Bedingungen am Arbeitsplatz. Um einer potenziellen Isolation und Einsamkeit entgegenzuwirken, sind eine gute Einbindung, ein gutes Netzwerk sowie eine gute Betreuung unerlässlich.

Die **Konzeption** von Doc.CH wird positiv evaluiert. Der Beitrag ermöglicht den Empfängenden, viel Zeit für ihre Forschung zu nutzen, und zwar viel mehr Zeit als die Kontrollgruppe. Mehr als die Hälfte der Doc.CH-Beitragsempfängenden brauchen aber auch einen Teil der Zeit für Arbeit, die nicht direkt mit ihrer Dissertation zu tun hat, zum Beispiel andere Forschungsprojekte, Verfassen von Artikeln oder Lehre. Einige haben zudem einen oder mehrerer Jobs zusätzlich zu ihrem Doc.CH-Beitrag, meistens um ihr Profil generell zu verbessern, um Lehrerfahrung zu machen oder um ihre finanzielle Situation zu verbessern. So ist es zwar unbedingt notwendig, viel Zeit in die eigene Forschung zu investieren, doch Lehrerfahrung und Engagement in der Fakultät oder am Institut ist auch sehr wichtig und per se nicht in Doc.CH enthalten. Daher ist auch die Möglichkeit, eine Reduktion des Arbeitspensums auf ein 80 Prozent zu beantragen, notwendig. Die Dauer der Förderung von bis zu vier Jahren ist auch positiv und wichtig. Die Bedingung, dass die Bewerbung für Doc.CH innerhalb von zwei Jahren nach dem Masterabschluss erfolgen muss, bewerten manche Expertinnen und Experten als angemessen, andere wiederum als zu kurz. Hinsichtlich der Möglichkeit für die Bewerbung in verschiedenen Phasen des Doktorats (am Anfang oder bis zu zwei Jahre im Doktorat) ist zudem ein faires Evaluationsvorgehen, das unterschiedliche Reifegrade der Anträge mitberücksichtigt, unabdingbar. Die Bedingung der Mobilität wird generell auch positiv bewertet. Vor allem geschätzt wird die Möglichkeit, diese Bedingung während dem Doktorat erfüllen zu können (und nicht notwendigerweise vorher). Die Bedingung der Co-Betreuung ist prinzipiell

erwünscht, um die Qualität der Betreuung zu stärken und die Abhängigkeit der Doktorierenden von einem einzelnen Lehrstuhl zu verringern. Die Zweitbetreuung mag in der Praxis zwar vielleicht nicht in hohem Mass stattfinden, kann aber trotzdem hilfreich sein, zum Beispiel beim Aufbau eines internationalen Netzwerks. Weiter können Doktoratsprogramme oder Graduiertenkollegs nützlich sein, um Betreuung zu diversifizieren und Netzwerke zu schaffen. Die Idee der Unabhängigkeit, die Doc.CH zugrunde liegt, wird als wichtig beurteilt. Allerdings sollte laut den interviewten Expertinnen, Experten und Betreuungspersonen Unabhängigkeit stärker im Zusammenhang mit der autonomen Umsetzung des Projekts betont werden und weniger im Zusammenhang mit der eigenständigen, neuen Ideenfindung. Die Förderung von Unabhängigkeit und die Unterstützung der besten Leute sind prinzipiell in allen Forschungsrichtungen wünschenswert, und nicht lediglich in den Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften, auf die Doc.CH zurzeit beschränkt ist. Doch unterschiedliche Disziplinen haben unterschiedlichen Forschungskontexte und Arbeitsweisen, und daher unterschiedliche Bedürfnisse. Forschung in den Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin funktioniert beispielsweise eher kollektiv und hat möglicherweise mehr finanzielle Mittel zur Verfügung, was den Bedarf an Finanzierung für unabhängige Projekte verringert. Für eine Ausweitung auf andere Forschungsrichtungen müsste Doc.CH genügend attraktiv sein hinsichtlich Erfolgchancen und finanzieller Unterstützung, um mit anderen Finanzierungsformen konkurrieren zu können. Laut den Expertinnen und Experten ist zudem wichtig, dass eine Ausweitung auf andere Disziplinen nicht auf Kosten der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften gehen sollte.

Das **Evaluationsverfahren** im Allgemeinen wird positiv evaluiert. Die Doc.CH-Beitragsempfängerinnen sind zufrieden mit der Qualität der Informationen und der Unterstützung durch den SNF, würden sich jedoch mehr Transparenz im Prozedere und der Entscheidung wünschen, sowie eine kürzere Dauer bis zur Bekanntgabe der Entscheidung. Die Expertinnen und Experten sind sich uneinig bezüglich der Vorteile und des Aufwands in den aktuellen zwei Stufen des Verfahrens. Einige schätzen die Interviews, das zweistufige Model und die vertieften Diskussionen in der Interviewphase sehr, andere hingegen finden das zweistufige Verfahren viel zu aufwändig für die vergleichsweise kleinen Beiträge und halten die Interviews eher für überflüssig, da sie selten zu völlig unterschiedlichen Bewertungen der Anträge führen. Weiter finden einige die Zusammensetzung und die Expertise der Kommissionen passend, während andere die lokale Vorselektion kritisieren und die Expertise als mangelhaft beurteilen, wenn eine spezifische Disziplin nicht vertreten ist. Letztere sind für eine nationale Selektion und eine Evaluation innerhalb der jeweiligen Disziplin.

Doc.CH wird mit einer hohen **Attraktivität** assoziiert. Es wird als sehr attraktives Förderinstrument wahrgenommen, sowohl im nationalen wie auch im internationalen Kontext, aufgrund der sehr guten Bedingungen und der Ermöglichung eines eigenständigen Dissertationsprojekts. Nachteile des Doc.CH-Beitrags betreffen die potenzielle finanzielle Lücke, das hohe Risiko und die Unsicherheit für die Bewerberinnen und Bewerber vor dem Beitrag, und die Gefahr für Doktorierende mehr auf sich allein gestellt oder sogar isoliert zu sein, wobei dies nicht zwingend nur Doc.CH zuzuschreiben ist. Nichtsdestotrotz wird Doc.CH als ein Zeichen von Exzellenz wahrgenommen. Die erfolgreiche Einwerbung eines Doc.CH-Beitrages und die Erfahrung in Projektmanagement und Verantwortung sind hilfreich für die weitere Karriere, vor allem in der Wissenschaft.

Résumé

Le Fonds national suisse de la recherche scientifique (FNS) soutient les chercheurs et chercheuses à travers différents instruments d'encouragement. Doc.CH s'adresse à de jeunes chercheuses et chercheurs prometteurs qui souhaitent effectuer en Suisse une thèse de doctorat sur un sujet de leur choix dans le domaine des sciences humaines et sociales. Ainsi, les doctorant·es peuvent déposer leur requête en toute indépendance. Le subside couvre leur rémunération ainsi que les frais supplémentaires liés à la réalisation du projet. Lancé en 2013, Doc.CH a fait l'objet d'une évaluation dans le cadre des réformes des instruments d'encouragement de carrières du FNS.

Le FNS a chargé le Centre interdisciplinaire pour la recherche en études de genre de l'Université de Berne de réaliser cette évaluation. Le principal objectif du mandat d'évaluation est d'analyser l'impact de Doc.CH ainsi que le succès de ses bénéficiaires, mais aussi d'examiner sa conception, son attractivité et sa procédure de sélection.

L'évaluation de l'instrument repose sur un concept de méthodologies croisées : une enquête standardisée en ligne auprès des bénéficiaires des subsides Doc.CH ainsi que des entretiens qualitatifs avec des doctorant·es, des responsables de la supervision et des expert·es. Pour analyser le taux de réussite des bénéficiaires et déterminer dans quelle mesure il peut être attribué à l'instrument Doc.CH, un groupe témoin a été constitué à partir des données issues de l'enquête menée par l'Office fédéral de la statistique (OFS) auprès des personnes diplômées des hautes écoles. Les données du groupe témoin ont ainsi permis d'établir des comparaisons entre les bénéficiaires de subsides Doc.CH et les titulaires de doctorat ayant fait appel à d'autres types de financement (par ex. encouragement de projets du FNS, poste d'assistant·e, autres subsides). En ce qui concerne l'aspect qualitatif, les doctorant·es bénéficiaires d'un subside de projet FNS ont servi de groupe témoin par rapport aux bénéficiaires de subside Doc.CH. Des entretiens ont été réalisés avec les directrices et directeurs de thèse et des expert·es afin d'intégrer différentes perspectives, mais aussi d'élargir et d'étayer les résultats quantitatifs de l'enquête. Il importe de préciser qu'il n'était pas possible de prendre en compte le point de vue des requérant·es dont les propositions n'ont pas été acceptées, ce qui peut affecter certains résultats.

Les résultats obtenus montrent que l'instrument d'encouragement Doc.CH constitue une manière pertinente et utile de **combler les lacunes existant en matière de financement** accessible aux étudiant·es en doctorat, tout particulièrement dans le domaine des sciences humaines et sociales. Doc.CH répond aux besoins des doctorant·es à bien des égards : soutien financier, occasion d'élaborer et de réaliser un projet de doctorat en toute indépendance et encadrement des étudiant·es par les professeur·es, notamment lorsqu'ils ne disposent d'aucun autre poste doctoral à pourvoir. Par conséquent, Doc.CH est un **complément** à l'encouragement de projets du FNS qui s'avère nécessaire de par l'utilité qui résulte de l'association de ces deux sources de financement. Lorsqu'on le compare à d'autres options de financement pour doctorant·es (p. ex. postes d'assistant·e, autres subsides, financement croisé avec emploi à temps partiel en dehors de l'université), Doc.CH offre également d'excellentes conditions, surtout en ce qui concerne le soutien financier, la durée du subside et le temps disponible pour la recherche. Il est toutefois à noter que, si Doc.CH couvre bien le doctorat lui-même d'un point de vue financier, il n'inclut pas le temps nécessaire au

développement de la problématique de recherche et à la mise au point de la demande de subside. Ceci peut entraîner des situations précaires et risquées pour les requérant·es, surtout compte tenu de la forte concurrence.

Pendant et après le doctorat, les bénéficiaires du subside Doc.CH présentent un excellent taux de **réussite**. En moyenne, les quelques bénéficiaires Doc.CH ayant déjà terminé leur doctorat y sont parvenus bien plus rapidement que ceux du groupe témoin. Par rapport aux titulaires de doctorat ayant reçu d'autres aides financières, les bénéficiaires Doc.CH sont aussi plus déterminés à continuer une carrière académique. En effet, plus de 50 % d'entre eux visent une carrière académique et sur ce nombre, près de la moitié aspirent au professorat. Près des trois quarts des bénéficiaires restent employés dans le secteur académique après leur thèse et ont entamé un cursus postdoctoral. Les bénéficiaires du subside Doc.CH estiment qu'ils ont acquis une expérience utile à leur avenir durant leur doctorat et développé notamment leur capacité à travailler de façon indépendante, à diriger un projet et à gérer un budget. Le fait d'avoir reçu ce subside en toute indépendance les distingue des autres doctorant·es.

De manière générale, les bénéficiaires de subside Doc.CH apprécient beaucoup le **soutien** financier qui leur est apporté. Il leur est particulièrement utile que le subside couvre non seulement la rémunération, mais aussi les frais liés aux déplacements et à la réalisation du projet. Il est d'ailleurs judicieux que Doc.CH leur permette de mener à bien leur thèse en toute autonomie puisque les doctorats s'effectuent souvent de manière indépendante, quelle que soit la source de financement, a fortiori en sciences humaines et sociales. Le degré d'**autonomie** varie toutefois en fonction des étudiant·es et des professeur·es qui les encadrent, mais aussi des conditions de travail rencontrées sur place. Une bonne intégration, un bon réseau et un bon accompagnement sont essentiels afin d'éviter tout sentiment d'isolement ou de solitude.

L'évaluation de la **conception** de l'instrument Doc.CH est positive. Le subside permet aux bénéficiaires de passer beaucoup de temps sur leurs recherches, bien plus que dans le groupe témoin. Plus de la moitié des bénéficiaires Doc.CH ont consacré une partie de ce temps à des travaux n'étant pas directement liés à leur doctorat, par exemple à d'autres projets de recherche, à la rédaction d'articles ou à une activité d'enseignement. En outre, certains poursuivent un ou plusieurs emplois parallèles, généralement dans l'optique d'enrichir leur profil professionnel, d'acquérir de l'expérience dans l'enseignement ou d'améliorer leur situation financière. Si consacrer beaucoup de temps à la recherche représente un aspect crucial au niveau doctoral, recueillir de l'expérience dans l'enseignement et s'engager dans la vie de l'université et du département sont également des activités très importantes, et qui ne sont pas prises en compte par l'instrument Doc.CH. La possibilité de demander une réduction du temps de travail à 80 % revêt à cet égard une importance essentielle. Atteignant jusqu'à quatre ans, la durée du subside constitue également un aspect positif de taille. Si certain·es expert·es considèrent comme adéquate la condition prévoyant que les candidat·es soumettent leur requête dans les deux années suivant leur master universitaire, d'autres estiment que ce délai est trop court. En ce qui concerne la possibilité de présenter son projet à différents stades de la thèse (au début ou jusqu'à deux ans de doctorat), il est essentiel que des procédures d'évaluation justes prennent en compte les différents niveaux de maturité des propositions. De manière générale, la condition relative à la mobilité a reçu une évaluation favorable, la possibilité de

répondre à ce critère pendant le doctorat (et pas forcément avant) étant particulièrement appréciée. En théorie, la condition liée à la co-supervision est bienvenue afin d'améliorer la qualité de l'encadrement et d'éviter que les doctorant·es dépendent d'un·e seul·e professeur·e. En pratique, elle n'est pas toujours largement appliquée, mais elle peut notamment aider à tisser un réseau international. Les programmes doctoraux ou « Graduiertenkollegs » peuvent constituer d'autres moyens pertinents pour diversifier l'encadrement et établir un réseau. L'idée d'indépendance sur laquelle repose l'instrument Doc.CH est considérée comme très importante. Les expert·es et les responsables de la supervision estiment néanmoins que cette notion devrait plutôt être mise en exergue en ce qui concerne la réalisation (autonome) de projets que la formulation (autonome) d'une nouvelle idée. Il serait souhaitable de favoriser l'indépendance et de promouvoir les personnes compétentes dans tous les domaines de recherche, et pas seulement dans les disciplines des sciences humaines et sociales auxquelles se limite Doc.CH. Cependant, les contextes de recherche et les méthodes varient en fonction des disciplines et induisent par conséquent des besoins différents. Ainsi, la recherche en sciences naturelles et en médecine est de nature plus collective et peut même bénéficier de moyens financiers supérieurs, ce qui réduit la nécessité d'encourager des projets indépendants. Pour être élargi à d'autres domaines de recherche, il faudrait que Doc.CH soit suffisamment attractif en matière de taux de réussite et de soutien financier pour pouvoir concurrencer d'autres sources d'encouragement. Comme souligné par les expert·es, il importe qu'une extension à d'autres disciplines ne se fasse pas au détriment des sciences humaines et sociales.

Le modèle général de l'actuelle **procédure de sélection** a reçu une évaluation positive. Les bénéficiaires de subsides Doc.CH sont satisfaits de la qualité de l'information et de l'assistance fournie par le FNS, mais souhaiteraient une transparence accrue dans la procédure et la décision en elle-même, ainsi qu'un délai réduit pour la notification de la décision. Les expert·es sont partagés quant aux avantages et aux efforts inhérents aux deux phases actuelles de la procédure. Certains apprécient grandement les entretiens, le modèle à deux phases et/ou la discussion approfondie de la phase d'entretien, alors que d'autres trouvent la procédure trop laborieuse compte tenu du montant relativement restreint des subsides et considèrent les entretiens comme superflus puisqu'ils mènent rarement à une évaluation radicalement différente. De même, certains estiment que la composition et l'expertise des commissions sont adéquates, alors que d'autres critiquent la présélection locale et jugent que le fait qu'une discipline ne soit pas représentée constitue un manque d'expertise. Les seconds appellent donc de leurs vœux une sélection nationale et une évaluation dans le cadre de la discipline concernée.

L'**attractivité** de Doc.CH est indéniable. Il est perçu comme un instrument d'encouragement très attractif, aussi bien dans le contexte national qu'au plan international, du fait des excellentes conditions et de l'indépendance qu'il offre aux projets de thèse. Les inconvénients relevés sont le potentiel écart financier par rapport à d'autres programmes, l'insécurité et la précarité touchant les requérant·es avant le subside, mais aussi le risque d'isolement et de solitude auquel sont confrontés les doctorant·es, bien que cet aspect ne soit pas forcément seulement inhérent à la nature du subside. Néanmoins, l'obtention d'un tel subside est vue comme un signe d'excellence. L'obtention d'un subside Doc.CH et l'expérience ainsi acquise en matière de gestion de projet et de responsabilité sont considérées comme précieuses pour la future carrière des bénéficiaires, en particulier dans le domaine académique.

Riassunto

Il Fondo nazionale svizzero per la ricerca scientifica (FNS) sostiene le ricercatrici e i ricercatori con diversi programmi di finanziamento. Con Doc.CH, il FNS promuove i giovani ricercatori promettenti che intendono scrivere una tesi di dottorato su un tema di loro scelta nel campo delle scienze umane e sociali in Svizzera. In questo modo, i dottorandi possono richiedere in maniera indipendente un sostegno finanziario che comprende lo stipendio e i costi aggiuntivi legati all'attuazione del progetto. Doc.CH è stato introdotto nel 2013 e viene valutato nell'ambito delle riforme del FNS in materia di finanziamento delle carriere.

Il FNS ha incaricato il Centro interdisciplinare per gli studi di genere dell'Università di Berna di valutare Doc.CH. L'obiettivo principale del mandato di valutazione era studiare l'impatto di Doc.CH e il successo dei suoi beneficiari, nonché valutarne la concezione, l'attrattiva e la procedura di valutazione.

Per la valutazione si è ricorso a un metodo misto, basato su un sondaggio online standardizzato tra i beneficiari delle borse di studio Doc.CH e interviste qualitative con dottorandi, supervisor ed esperti. Per studiare il successo dei beneficiari e stabilire in quale misura tale successo è attribuibile a Doc.CH, è stato creato un gruppo di controllo a partire dai dati dell'indagine presso le persone con diploma di scuola universitaria dell'Ufficio federale di statistica (UST). I dati del gruppo di controllo hanno permesso di confrontare i beneficiari di Doc.CH e i titolari di un dottorato che hanno ricevuto altri tipi di finanziamento (ad es. finanziamento di progetti del FNS, posti di assistente, altre borse di studio). Per quanto riguarda il materiale qualitativo, i dottorandi finanziati dal FNS hanno avuto il ruolo di gruppo di controllo per i beneficiari di Doc.CH. I supervisor e gli esperti sono stati intervistati per includere valutazioni provenienti da diversi punti di vista, nonché per ampliare e consolidare i risultati quantitativi dell'indagine. Si sottolinea che l'opinione dei candidati le cui proposte sono state respinte non ha potuto essere inclusa nel progetto e questo potrebbe causare una distorsione di alcuni risultati.

Dai risultati emerge che lo schema di finanziamento di Doc.CH è uno strumento rilevante e utile per **colmare le lacune finanziarie** per i dottorandi, in particolare nelle scienze umane e sociali. Esso copre per gli studenti sia le esigenze finanziarie, sia il bisogno di opportunità per sviluppare e implementare un progetto di dottorato in modo indipendente e, per i professori, la necessità di supervisionare gli studenti, ad esempio quando non hanno un altro posto di dottorato disponibile. Doc.CH è quindi un **complemento** necessario al finanziamento di progetti del FNS, e la combinazione dei due si è rivelata utile. Rispetto ad altre possibilità di finanziamento di un dottorato (ad es. posti di assistente, altre borse di studio, finanziamento incrociato con un impiego a tempo parziale al di fuori dell'università), Doc.CH offre anche ottime condizioni, in particolare per quanto riguarda il sostegno finanziario, la durata del finanziamento e il tempo disponibile per la ricerca. Tuttavia, mentre il dottorato vero e proprio è coperto finanziariamente da Doc.CH, il tempo richiesto per sviluppare la tesi della ricerca e redigere il progetto non lo è. Ciò può creare situazioni precarie e rischiose per i candidati, soprattutto in considerazione dell'elevata concorrenza.

Durante e dopo il dottorato, i beneficiari di Doc.CH hanno dimostrato un grande **successo**. In media, i pochi destinatari di Doc.CH che hanno già terminato il dottorato

di ricerca lo hanno concluso molto più rapidamente del gruppo di controllo. Rispetto ai titolari di un dottorato che hanno ricevuto altri finanziamenti, i beneficiari di Doc.CH sono più determinati a proseguire la carriera accademica. Più della metà di loro ambisce a una carriera accademica e di questi quasi la metà aspira a una cattedra. Dopo il dottorato, circa tre quarti dei beneficiari hanno ancora un impiego accademico e hanno iniziato un post-dottorato. I beneficiari di Doc.CH ritengono di aver acquisito, durante il dottorato, esperienze utili per il loro futuro, ad esempio esperienze nel lavoro autonomo, nella gestione di progetti e nella responsabilità del budget. Il vantaggio di aver ricevuto questa borsa di studio in maniera indipendente li distingue dagli altri dottorandi.

I beneficiari di Doc.CH apprezzano molto il **sostegno** finanziario in generale. È particolarmente importante che la borsa di studio copra non solo lo stipendio, ma anche le spese di viaggio e l'attuazione del progetto. Anche l'abilitazione a svolgere un dottorato indipendente è valutata positivamente, non da ultimo perché, soprattutto nelle scienze umane e sociali, i dottorati sono spesso indipendenti, a prescindere dalla fonte di finanziamento. Il grado di **autonomia** dipende parecchio dai singoli dottorandi e supervisor e dalle condizioni del posto di lavoro. Per contrastare un potenziale isolamento e la solitudine, sono essenziali una buona integrazione e una buona rete sociale, come anche una buona supervisione.

La **concezione** di Doc.CH è valutata positivamente. La borsa di studio permette ai beneficiari di dedicare molto tempo alla ricerca, di fatto molto più del gruppo di controllo. Più della metà dei beneficiari di Doc.CH impiega parte del proprio tempo per lavori non direttamente legati al proprio dottorato, come ad esempio altri progetti di ricerca, la redazione di articoli o l'insegnamento. Inoltre, alcuni di loro hanno uno o più lavori in aggiunta al loro Doc.CH, in particolare per arricchire il loro curriculum generale, per acquisire esperienza nell'insegnamento e per migliorare la loro situazione finanziaria. Se dedicare molto tempo alla ricerca è vitale a livello di dottorato, anche l'esperienza nell'insegnamento e il lavoro nella facoltà e nel dipartimento sono molto importanti, ma non previsti da Doc.CH. Ciò rende essenziale la possibilità di richiedere una riduzione del tempo di lavoro all'80 per cento. La durata del finanziamento fino a quattro anni è positiva e importante. Il requisito secondo cui i candidati devono presentare domanda entro due anni dal master è giudicato adeguato da alcuni e troppo breve da altri esperti. Per quanto riguarda la possibilità di presentare proposte in diverse fasi del dottorato (all'inizio o fino a due anni di lavoro alla tesi), sono essenziali procedure di valutazione eque che tengano conto dei diversi livelli di maturità delle proposte. Il requisito della mobilità è generalmente valutato positivamente e in particolare la possibilità di soddisfare tale requisito durante il dottorato (e non necessariamente prima) è molto apprezzata. Il requisito della co-sorveglianza è in linea di principio molto apprezzato per rafforzare la qualità della supervisione e ridurre la dipendenza dei dottorandi da un'unica cattedra. Nella pratica, la co-sorveglianza non avverrà necessariamente in larga misura, ma può comunque aiutare, ad esempio, a costruire una rete di conoscenze internazionale. I programmi di dottorato o i «Graduiertenkollegs» (scuole di dottorato) possono essere un altro strumento prezioso per diversificare la supervisione e creare una rete di conoscenze. L'idea di indipendenza che sta alla base di Doc.CH è considerata molto importante. Tuttavia, secondo gli esperti e i supervisor, sarebbe opportuno mettere in risalto l'attuazione (autonoma) dei progetti piuttosto che la creazione (autonoma) di una nuova idea. Promuovere l'indipendenza e le persone di alto livello sarebbe auspicabile in tutti i

campi di ricerca, e non solo nelle scienze umane e sociali a cui Doc.CH si limita attualmente. Tuttavia, le varie discipline hanno impostazioni di ricerca e metodi di lavoro diversi e, di conseguenza, esigenze diverse. La ricerca nel campo delle scienze naturali e della medicina, ad esempio, è di natura più collettiva e può anche avere maggiori mezzi finanziari, che riducono la necessità di finanziare progetti indipendenti. Per un'estensione ad altri settori di ricerca, Doc.CH dovrebbe essere sufficientemente attraente in termini di tasso di successo e di sostegno finanziario per competere con altre fonti di finanziamento. È importante sottolineare che l'estensione ad altre discipline non dovrebbe avvenire a spese delle scienze umane e sociali.

L'impostazione generale dell'attuale **procedura di valutazione** è giudicata positivamente. I beneficiari di Doc.CH sono soddisfatti della qualità delle informazioni e del sostegno del FNS, ma auspicano una maggiore trasparenza nella procedura e nella decisione vera e propria e tempi più brevi per la notifica della decisione. I pareri degli esperti sui vantaggi e sugli sforzi nelle due fasi attuali della procedura sono divisi: alcuni apprezzano molto le interviste, il modello in due fasi e/o la discussione approfondita della fase del colloquio, mentre altri trovano la procedura troppo impegnativa alla luce delle sovvenzioni relativamente modeste e delle interviste piuttosto ridondanti, dato che raramente conducono a valutazioni completamente diverse delle proposte. Analogamente, mentre alcuni ritengono adeguata la composizione e la competenza delle commissioni, altri criticano la preselezione locale e vedono una mancanza di competenza quando una specifica disciplina non è rappresentata. Accoglierebbero con favore una selezione e una valutazione nazionale nell'ambito della rispettiva disciplina.

Doc.CH viene associato a un'elevata **attrattiva**. È considerato uno schema di finanziamento molto interessante, sia nel contesto nazionale che internazionale, date le sue ottime condizioni e la possibilità di svolgere progetti di dottorato indipendenti. Gli svantaggi della borsa di studio sono il potenziale divario finanziario, l'elevato rischio e l'incertezza per i candidati prima di ricevere la borsa di studio, come anche la minaccia che i dottorandi siano più soli o addirittura isolati, anche se ciò non è necessariamente dovuto unicamente alla natura della borsa di studio. La borsa di studio è comunque considerata un segno di eccellenza. Il fatto di essere stati premiati con un Doc.CH e l'esperienza acquisita nella gestione dei progetti e nella responsabilità sono considerati utili per la carriera futura, in particolare nel mondo accademico.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the evaluation

Based on a government mandate, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) supports research in all disciplines and promotes researchers by means of different funding schemes. With Doc.CH, the SNSF has introduced a career funding scheme that allows young researchers to apply for funding independently at an early stage of their career. Doc.CH aims at promising researchers who plan to write a doctoral thesis in Switzerland and on a topic of their own choice. In addition to the salary, the doctoral students may apply for a contribution to cover costs directly related to the project implementation. The grant is currently restricted to the humanities and social sciences. Doc.CH was open for applications for the first time in 2013 and has been open for applications bi-annually ever since. By the start of this evaluation in September 2018, 893 Doc.CH proposals were submitted, of which 259 have been granted. After a runtime of five years, the SNSF has invited tenders for an evaluation of the instrument. The SNSF commissioned the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Bern with the mandate. The main goal of the evaluation mandate was to study the impact of Doc.CH as well as the success of its recipients, and to evaluate its conception, attractiveness and evaluation procedure.

1.2 The funding scheme Doc.CH

Doc.CH targets promising young researchers who aim to write a doctoral thesis on a topic of their own choice in the humanities and social sciences in Switzerland. The grant covers the salary of the doctoral students and may include a contribution towards costs directly related to the implementation of the project. Applicants are required to hold a degree (master or equivalent) from a Swiss higher education institution with an excellent grade. Holders of a foreign degree may submit an application if their nationality is Swiss. Applications must be submitted up to two years after obtaining the degree (at the time of the submission deadline). Exceptions with regard to the academic age are possible in justified cases (e.g. maternity, illness or accident, care duties, etc.). The applicants must have changed the higher education institution at least once between the bachelor studies and the start of the doctorate or should plan a stay abroad of at least one semester during the doctorate. Exceptions are possible with regard to the academic age and/or the required mobility in justified cases. The applicants are required to have two persons supervising the doctoral thesis: a supervisor at the host university in Switzerland and a co-supervisor at another higher education institution in Switzerland or abroad.

The current evaluation procedure for Doc.CH applications consists of two phases. In the first phase, the SNSF Research Commissions at the universities select the best applications and recommend them to the National Research Council of the SNSF for the second phase. In this second phase, the persons whose applications were selected in the first phase are invited to a personal interview with the National Research Council of the SNSF in Bern, where they present their research project and career plan. This two-stage procedure is about to be replaced in 2021. There will no longer be a local pre-selection but a national selection instead.

When introduced, Doc.CH was limited to the social sciences and humanities, because of limited financial resources and because the need for such funding was found to be the biggest in these research fields (Goastellec et al. 2010). In the context of the reforms of the SNSF career schemes during the 2017-2020 period, it was planned that so-called Doc.Grants for all disciplines would replace Doc.CH. However, the Doc.Grants could not yet be implemented for financial reasons. With regard to the 2021-2024 period, the extension to all disciplines and specific aspects of the evaluation procedure should be evaluated, and are therefore considered in this evaluation as well.

1.3 Acknowledgments

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1.4 Structure of the report

This report presents the procedure and results of the evaluation. Chapter 2 introduces the main goals of the evaluation and the corresponding evaluation questions. Chapter 3 discusses the design and methods for data collection and analysis used for the evaluation, as well as the scope of the design and the quality of the data. The results are presented in Chapter 4. This chapter contains one subchapter that describes characteristics and one subchapter per evaluation question. The report concludes with a discussion of the results in the context of the evaluation goals.

2. Objectives and evaluation questions

The primary goal of this evaluation is to evaluate the impact of Doc.CH and the success of the grant recipients. Secondary goals are the evaluation of the conception, the evaluation procedure and the attractiveness of the funding scheme. The primary and secondary goals are specified in seven evaluation questions:

Primary goals

1. Does Doc.CH reasonably fill the funding gap for students in the humanities and social sciences?
2. Does Doc.CH usefully complement other funding options?
3. How successful are/were the recipients of Doc.CH during their doctorate and on their further career path and to what extent is this success attributable to Doc.CH?
4. How functional is the financial support and the enabling of an independent dissertation?

Secondary goals

5. How do doctoral students, supervisors, and experts assess the conception of Doc.CH?

6. How do doctoral students, supervisors, and experts assess the evaluation procedure of Doc.CH?
7. How do doctoral students, supervisors, and experts assess the attractiveness of Doc.CH?

The evaluation design and methods used to answer these questions are reported in the following chapters.

3. Methodology

3.1 Evaluation design

We used a mixed method evaluation design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Firstly, we conducted a standardised online survey among all recipients of Doc.CH, in order to gain quantitative information as well as some qualitative data (by means of a few open questions, cf. Appendix I & II). Evaluating the success of the recipients and the impact of the grant on their success requires a control group for comparison, which consists of (former) doctoral students with other sources of funding. Given our limited resources and the great expense of setting up and surveying a control group in addition to the target group, we had to forgo this option. Instead, we constructed a quantitative control group data set out of data from the Graduate Survey of the Federal Statistical Office (FSO). This data was used for comparisons between Doc.CH recipients and recipients of other funding. Secondly, we conducted interviews with different target groups in the wider context of Doc.CH to expand and consolidate the findings of the survey. Specifically, we interviewed Doc.CH recipients, doctoral students with SNSF project funding (as qualitative control group), their supervisors, as well as experts from research services and evaluation boards. The interviews served to obtain information from different perspectives. Next, we first describe how we operationalised the evaluations questions, before we present the survey and interview methods.

3.2 Operationalisation of evaluation questions

The evaluation questions were operationalised by means of specific indicators in the survey, and thematic aspects and dimensions in the interviews (henceforth, we use the term indicators as including thematic aspects and dimensions as well). In the following, we discuss this operationalisation and indicate which method (survey, interview, comparisons with control group) we used to examine the indicators.

1. **Does Doc.CH reasonably fill the funding gap for students in the humanities and social sciences?**

This question is based on the assumption that there is a high demand for funding to conduct an independent research project at this early level, in particular in the humanities and social science. The following indicators were used to study this aspect, both in the survey and in the interviews (mainly with doctoral students and experts):

- *Motivation and reasons for application:* One question is whether the recipients have applied to Doc.CH in order to finish their project or to finance a full project from the beginning. To that purpose, we surveyed whether the recipients have worked on their doctorate before and if yes, under which circumstances they worked on it before. The importance of various factors for the application for Doc.CH also

implies whether Doc.CH is a suitable and reasonable solution to fill a funding gap. These factors are the opportunity to plan and conduct a research project independently and to a topic of one's own choice; the duration of the grant and opportunity to work full-time on the doctorate; the opportunity of going to another research institution (abroad); the salary and possibility to cover additional costs; the reputation of Doc.CH and SNSF in general.

- *Priorities and alternatives in terms of funding:* Whether Doc.CH was the recipients' first choice and whether they would even have had alternatives or not, and how realistic and suitable these alternatives were, also indicate the necessity and suitability of Doc.CH. This also includes the question whether the recipients have already applied to Doc.CH before.

2. Does Doc.CH usefully complement other funding options?

The investigation of this question relies heavily on the views of the experts and supervisors. In particular, we asked about the following comparisons:

- *Doc.CH vs. SNSF project funding:* We inquired how Doc.CH is viewed in comparison and especially in complementation to SNSF project funding, in terms of a parallel of career and project funding.
- *Doc.CH vs. other funding:* Doc.CH must also be discussed in comparison with other funding options for a doctorate, such as assistant positions or grants and project funding from sources other than the SNSF.

3. How successful are/were the recipients of Doc.CH during their doctorate and on their further career path and to what extent is this success attributable to Doc.CH?

To evaluate the success and, in particular to evaluate the impact of Doc.CH on this success, we compared quantitative data of the Doc.CH survey and the Graduate Survey by the FSO. Aspects of career development were also part of the interviews. It is important to note, that "success" and "career" can both mean very different things. For the purpose of this study, we interpret success related to the doctorate and the subsequent career in line with the conception of the Doc.CH funding scheme. We used the following indicators to study this question:

- *Duration:* Given that Doc.CH allows doctoral students to work full time on their research and that they get up to four years of funding, the grant is expected to enable a shorter duration of the doctorate compared to positions with other funding. We compared the actual duration of the doctorate of Doc.CH recipients and the control group. This includes the question whether the Doc.CH graduates were able to finish their dissertation within their grant time, and the prospective duration assessment of the current doctoral students with a Doc.CH grant.
- *Grade:* The grade that the grant recipients received for their dissertation (given they are graded and not merely evaluated on pass/fail basis), is a further indicator of success, albeit a certain arbitrariness and bias.
- *Career prospects & development:* We inquired whether the Doc.CH recipients aim to follow an academic career in the future and, if yes, what position they would aspire to most in the future. Their career aims are compared to those of the control group. Moreover, we analysed the actual career development, by looking at the employment situation of the doctorate holders, whether they work in or outside academia, and whether they have started a post-doc or habilitation. The career prospects were also discussed in the interviews with the doctoral students.
- *Preparation for future/impact Doc.CH:* The survey participants were asked to what extent Doc.CH has a positive effect on the career development, both inside and outside academia. In the interviews, both the doctoral students and their supervisors were asked, in what way Doc.CH prepares the students for their future.

- *Output:* The production of articles, book chapters, reports and other outputs is a general indicator of success in academia. The list of possible answer categories in the survey has been adapted to the humanities and social sciences as well as possible. The output of the Doc.CH recipients who have already finished their dissertation was compared to the output of the control group.

4. **How functional is the financial support and the enabling of an independent dissertation?**

Doc.CH covers the salary of the recipients and may include a contribution towards costs directly related to project implementation. It is aimed at doctoral students who wish to write a dissertation independently, based on their own research idea. The independence of the doctoral students also relates to the supervision they get, and the network they build up and rely on. There may also be differences related to these aspects for different phases of the doctorate (beginning, middle and end phase). We examine the following indicators, both by means of survey items and interview questions.

- *Financial resources:* The recipients were asked in the survey and the interviews how they assess the financial support and whether it should be increased.
- *Independence:* We studied the autonomy of the recipients from developing the proposal to conducting the actual project. This includes whether the recipients have developed their research question based on their own or the supervisor's idea, whether the topic lies within the research interests of the supervisor, whether they have written the project proposal independently and, finally, how they deal with their autonomy during the project. In the survey, the recipients assessed the level of independence. The interviews served to gain a better understanding of the doctoral students' experiences with autonomy, also from the perspective of the supervisors and in terms of potential differences by the kind of funding.
- *Supervision:* Both the survey and the interviews asked from whom the recipients actually get supervision, to what extent they are supervised, and how satisfied they are with the supervision. The interviews with the supervisor shed further light on the understanding of supervision and potential differences in supervision by funding or individuals.
- *Network:* The survey and the interviews inquired to what extent the doctoral students are integrated in a team or in the institute, and to what extent they have been able to build a network. It is also surveyed whether they take part in a structured programme.

5. **How do doctoral students, supervisors and experts assess the conception of Doc.CH?**

The conception of Doc.CH includes the scope of the funding scheme and specific requirements that the candidates need to fulfil. Some indicators related to the conception were assessed in the survey among the recipients. Most information however stems from the interviews with all target groups. The following indicators were examined:

- *Time of submission:* We inquired how the rule, that the application needs to be submitted within two years after obtaining the MA (or equivalent) degree, is evaluated.
- *Supervision requirements:* Doc.CH requires a supervisor at the host institution and a second supervisor from a different institution. We analysed to what degree this co-supervision is possible and useful in practice.
- *Mobility:* The requirement for a change of institution either before or during the doctorate is discussed in the interviews, and assessed by the recipients in the survey.

- *Duration of grant:* We analysed the different groups' assessment of the grant duration.
- *Time resources:* Doc.CH provides that the doctoral students can use 100 percent of their work time for their research. We compared this percentage to the available time for doctoral students with other funding. Furthermore, we asked the recipient whether they actually use some of their time (and if yes how much) for work not directly related to the doctorate and whether (and if yes why) they have other jobs in addition to their Doc.CH grant.
- *Research domains:* We asked the supervisors and experts about arguments for and against restricting the grant to humanities and social sciences versus opening it up to all disciplines.

6. **How do doctoral students, supervisors and experts assess the evaluation procedure of Doc.CH?**

The current evaluation procedure was assessed by the recipients in the survey, by means of a rating question. Most data used to evaluate the procedure however stems from the interviews, in particular with the experts who are part of the local Research Commissions or the Doc.CH Evaluation Commissions at the SNSF. We analysed the following indicators:

- *Documentation and support by SNSF:* The survey contained a rating question with the following items on the quality of information and support, transparency, and duration until notification.
- *Overall setup of the evaluation procedure:* The experts rated the overall setup, also – if feasible – in comparison with other funding schemes. This also includes an assessment of the periodicity and the effort of the commission members.
- *The two-stage procedure of the evaluation:* The experts discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the two stages, and particularly the use of the interviews in the second stage.
- *Composition/expertise of the commissions:* The composition and competence of both the local Research Commissions and the Doc.CH Evaluation Commissions was rated by the Doc.CH recipients and the experts.
- *Future evaluation procedure:* In light of the imminent changes to the evaluation procedure, the experts were asked to outline ideas, solutions, or important things to consider in this regard.

7. **How do doctoral students, supervisors and experts assess the attractiveness of Doc.CH?**

The general attractiveness of Doc.CH follows from its advantages and particularly from the comparison of Doc.CH with other funding options. The attractiveness was rated in the survey and discussed in the interviews, by means of the following indicators:

- *Advantages and disadvantages:* The Doc.CH recipients and the supervisors were asked to indicate positive and negative aspects of Doc.CH.
- *Attractiveness:* The experts commented on the attractiveness of Doc.CH, also in comparison with SNSF project funding and other funding options in Switzerland. The recipients rated the general attractiveness of the funding scheme.
- *International context:* If feasible, the experts compared Doc.CH in the international context.

3.3 Survey among recipients of Doc.CH

3.3.1 Target group

The survey was designed to target all the recipients of Doc.CH grants (full census), including those who have already finished their grant and those who are currently on or just about to start their grant. That includes all the successful applicants from the first call with submission deadline on 10 March 2013 until the eleventh call with submission deadline on 10 March 2018. The target group thus comprises 259 recipients. 60 percent of the Doc.CH recipients are female and 40 percent are male. The mean age of the recipients at the time of application is 27 (median = 27). 61 percent of the recipients' projects are in the humanities and 39 percent in the social sciences. On average, the recipients are initially granted 38 months for their Doc.CH (median = 36). The actual duration of the grant amounts to an average of 39 months (median = 37).

3.3.2 Control group

The control group was constructed out of data from the Graduate Survey of the FSO. This is a full census survey with panel design. It surveys BA and MA graduates as well as doctorate holders one year and five years after the year of their graduation. New panels start every two years. For the purposes of this evaluation, we used data from the survey among doctorate holders of 2017, that is people who finished their doctorate in 2016. This was the latest data set available at the time of this evaluation. We chose to use the latest data for reasons of comparability. Furthermore, we made sure to avoid potential duplicates in the Graduate Survey data and the data from the Doc.CH survey, that is we needed to avoid participants taking part in both surveys. To that purpose, we transmitted a list containing the Doc.CH recipients' surname, last name and birth date to the FSO, which then checked for duplicates in the Graduate Survey data. The FSO identified five cases and removed the respective data from the data set before the delivery to us. We then further reduced the data set to doctorate holders from the humanities and social sciences only. Since legal sciences and economics are separate domains in the FSO classification, we also included these in the data set. The data set then contained information on 539 doctorate holders. The 2017 FSO survey had a response rate of 52 percent among the doctorate holders.

3.3.3 Development of the survey

The questionnaire was developed in alignment with the questionnaire of the Graduate Survey (FSO, 2018), in order to guarantee comparability of the results for the relevant indicators. Whenever suitable and necessary, items were copied from this questionnaire and simply adapted to Doc.CH in terms of wording. In addition, we checked other evaluations of funding instruments and surveys among graduates for contents and items. Specifically, we adapted some items from the base questionnaire of the Career Tracker Cohorts study (Jann et al., forthcoming), the Survey on the Quality of Graduate Studies in the Graduiertenkollegs (DFG, 2001) and the first wave questionnaire of Monitoring ERC's Implementation of Excellence (IFQ, n.d.; Huber, Wegner & Neufel, 2015). The SNSF working group screened the questionnaire and gave feedback and suggestions for changes, based on the questionnaire was adapted. The questionnaire finally contained ten sections on the following topics:

- *Doctorate in general*: status of grant, status of dissertation, start/end date of doctorate, host institution, participation in structured programme, degree requirements, output, etc.
- *Time use*: hours per week spent on doctorate and other work, additional jobs and reasons, etc.
- *Supervision*: relation to supervisor, degree of and satisfaction with supervision.
- *MA information*: year of completion, grade, relation of the MA thesis topic and topic of doctorate, development of the project plan.
- *Application to Doc.CH*: reasons for application, previous applications, alternatives to Doc.CH before application and in case of rejection, assessment of specific Doc.CH features, etc.
- *Evaluation*: rating of various evaluation aspects (quality, setup, transparency, etc.).
- *Conception*: rating of various conception aspects (duration, time use, regulations, autonomy, impact, success, etc.).
- *Career prospects and aspirations*: rating of various career aspects (part-time, place, security, salary, etc.), aim of following an academic career path, post-doc, most aspired position, etc.
- *Current professional situation*: employment, in or outside academia, function, work percentage, contract, etc.
- *Personal life situation*: living situation, children, care responsibilities.

As for the structure of the survey, the sections and in some cases single questions were filtered by the status of the grant and/or the doctorate on the main level (cf. Appendix I for a version of the questionnaire with filter details and sources, and Appendix II for the layout of the programmed survey). For example, only those who have already finished their Doc.CH grant got the questions on the current professional situation.

The questionnaire was pretested in paper version in cognitive think-aloud pretests. We conducted five pretests with current or former doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences. These tests took place between 4 and 11 September 2018 and were conducted face-to-face with the participants. During the cognitive pretests, we documented the participants' comments and completed the notes taken during the pretest in more detail afterwards. Then we adapted the questionnaire based on the results of these pretests.

3.3.4 Implementation of the survey

The survey was programmed with the online software *umfrageonline*. The survey is in English, but participants were allowed to answer open questions in German or French as well. Before the field phase, the survey was tested among four university assistants and post-docs. Where necessary, we made technical adjustments and improved the structure and wording (especially instructions) of the survey.

The field phase started on 18 September 2018. We sent an invitation email including the survey link to all the recipients of Doc.CH. After 13 days, 42 percent had already started (but not necessarily finished) the survey. We administered a first reminder on 1 October 2018 to all those who had not yet started and/or finished the survey. Following this email, the response rate rose to 60 percent. A second reminder was sent out by the SNSF on 4 October 2018, in order to further enhance the response rate.

This email, which also contained a thank you from the SNSF, was sent to all the participants including the ones who had already participated. This message increased the response rate to 74 percent. On 10 October 2018, we sent out the last reminder with information of the closing date to all the remaining non-participants. The survey closed on 16 October 2018 and had reached a response rate of 83 percent (215 participants out of 259 recipients).

3.3.5 Data preparation and analysis

The output of the survey software was saved as an Excel file and prepared for the purpose of the analysis. First, we checked and added missing value indications in line with the following conventions: Items that the participants did not answer although they could have were coded as non response; items that the participants did not actually receive due to filtering were coded as system missing. For multiple-choice questions, the answer categories that were not ticked by the participant were coded as 0. Second, we did consistency and plausibility checks and corrections where necessary. For example, we adjusted the format of the participants entered month and year in case it did not conform with the required format (e.g. 09 instead of 9 or Sept.), or we checked whether the entries for work percentage are within a reasonable range.

For the specific purpose of this evaluation, we then linked the survey data with part of the administrative data of the applicants from the SNSF. These administrative data provide additional information which was not collected in the survey, namely gender, birth year, discipline and information about the grant. For data protection reasons, the file containing this information is securely saved and only available to the project team. The SNSF has neither access to data with personal information nor information about the participation of individual Doc.CH recipients.

For the analyses, we did descriptive statistics only, given the small number of observations.

3.4 Interviews

3.4.1 Target groups

We formed five groups of interviewees, in order to obtain the required information to expand and deepen the results from the online survey. The five groups are:

- Doctoral students with a Doc.CH grant (n = 10)
- Doctoral students with SNSF project funding (n = 6)
- Supervisors (n = 6)
- Experts: members of the Research Commissions at the universities and the Doc.CH Evaluation Commissions at the SNSF (n = 8); grants advisors, research service etc. (n = 5)

We conducted ten interviews with recipients of Doc.CH grants to gain a better understanding of their experiences with the grant. As a qualitative control group, we further interviewed six (former) doctoral students with SNSF project funding. Moreover, we conducted interviews with six supervisors. The aim was to build six supervision constellations consisting of both a Doc.CH recipient and a doctoral student with project funding as well as the person supervising both these students (cf.

Figure 1). We interviewed four additional Doc.CH recipients irrespective of constellations to take greater account of the primary target group (n = 10).

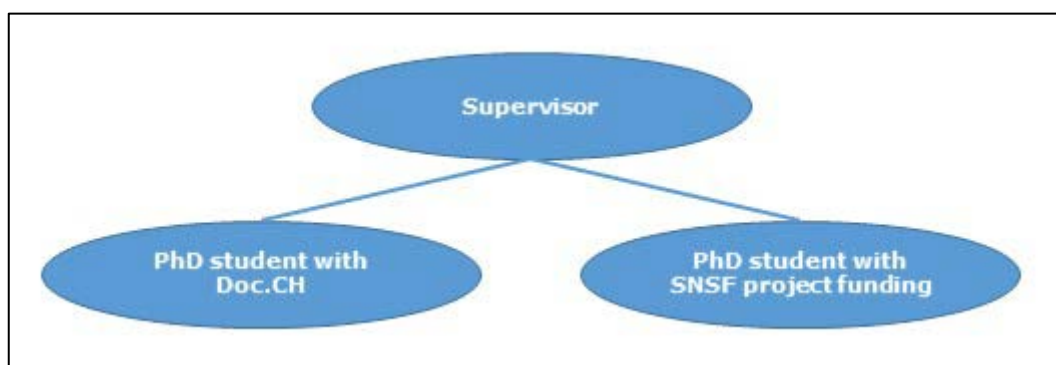


Figure 1. Supervision constellation of interviewees

The SNSF provided a list of supervision constellations containing 28 supervisors, 34 Doc.CH recipients and 43 persons with SNSF project funding (the numbers vary because some supervisors may supervise more than one student with project funding or with Doc.CH funding). This list covered seven universities or research institutions, and included only doctoral students who had started their doctorate after 2014 and who was granted at least two years of funding from the SNSF. Using this list, we made a selection of constellations based on the following criteria: a) gender, b) site, c) discipline (humanities and social sciences in equal parts, and different disciplines within these research domains). The conducted interviews cover these criteria as follows:

- Gender: 4 male and 2 female supervisors, 5 male and 5 female Doc.CH recipients, 1 male and 5 female Doctoral students with SNSF project funding;
- Sites: University of Bern, University of Basel, University of Fribourg, ETH Zurich, University of Zurich, University of St. Gallen;
- Disciplines: research domain of humanities: English languages and literature, general history, legal sciences, religious studies, philosophy; research domain of social sciences: political science, ethnology, psychology, economics, educational science.

In addition to the doctoral students and supervisors, we conducted interviews with four (former) presidents of the Research Commissions at the universities and four interviews with members of the Doc.CH Evaluation Commissions. For this group we again aimed at an equal gender distribution and at covering different sites and disciplines (half humanities and half social sciences, with one discipline outside these two domains). Some of the interviewees are or have been members of both commissions. We conducted interviews with the following individuals:

- Prof. Ann van Ackere, University of Lausanne, economics
- Prof. Martin Baumann, University of Lucerne, religious studies
- Prof. Tanja Domej, University of Zurich, legal science
- Prof. Alessandro Monsutti, University of Geneva, sociology
- Prof. Andreas Papassotiropoulos, University of Basel, psychology
- Prof. Gabriele Rippl, University of Bern, English literature
- Prof. Kay Severin, EPFL, Chemistry
- Prof. Martin Wallmeier, University of Fribourg, economics

Moreover, we interviewed five experts from grants offices or research services at different universities and institutions:

- Luzia Budmiger, M.A., University of Zurich, team member research, innovation and academic career development (responsible for Doc.CH)
- Dr. Matthias Hirt, University of Bern, head of coordination office for the promotion of early career researchers
- Prof. Walter Leimgruber (dean faculty of humanities) & Prof. Susanne Bickel (research dean), University of Basel
- Prof. Benedetto Lepori, Università della Svizzera italiana, research service
- Dr. Laure Ognois, University of Geneva, research service

3.4.2 Development of guidelines

For the structured interviews, we developed a separate interview guideline for each target group (cf. Appendix III & IV). The guidelines cover the same or similar topics, but are adapted to the specific groups and their perspectives. We designed the guidelines based on the evaluation questions and on the information gained from the survey data. The guidelines for the supervision constellation groups take up again and ask in more detail some of the questions from the survey in order to get a better understanding of these issues (e.g. motivation, time use, supervision, autonomy, and benefits for the future). The guideline for the experts focuses more on the conception of Doc.CH, including questions on the complementation of funding options and the expansion of the grant to other disciplines. In addition to that, the guideline for the members of the Research Commissions and/or Doc.CH Evaluation Commissions include several questions on the evaluation procedure. The SNSF working group read and commented the guidelines. We made some amendments based on their feedback before the implementation.

3.4.3 Implementation of interviews

The interviews took place between 13 November 2018 and 4 February 2019. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or – for reasons of practicality in cases of long distances or reduced capabilities – on the phone. Most of the face-to-face interviews took place at the work place of the interviewees. The interviews took between 7 and 50 minutes. All the interviewees were asked for permission to record the interview. Two experts preferred to answer the interview questions in written format.

3.4.4 Data preparation and analysis

We transcribed the interview recordings by means of a rough transcription in formal written style. Given the limited time available, we refrained from detailed coding. Instead, we conducted workshops with the project team, during which we did a synthesis of the data in line with the topics of the interview guidelines, which cover the topics of the evaluation questions. In this way, all the relevant information to answer the evaluation questions could be collected and condensed.

For data protection reasons, we do not cite individual responses and persons in this report, but paraphrase and generalise the statements.

3.5 Scope and limitations of the evaluation design

Firstly, this evaluation design allows to collect data from the whole population (full census) by means of the standardised online survey. In comparison with the control group data from the FSO Graduate Survey, these results allow for a data-based, quantitative assessment of the impact of Doc.CH on the development of the doctorate and career after the doctorate. Secondly, the criteria-based interviews (and partially also the open questions of the survey) permit to gain a better understanding of Doc.CH by means of more detailed reports and to include different perspectives. Thus, the interviews are a valuable complement to the survey.

The evaluation design may also have had an influence on the data quality. The fact that the survey was administered to all successful applicants of Doc.CH, may have caused a stronger commitment and obligation to participate. The high response rate (83%, cf. Chapter 3.3.4) supports this assumption, and provides for high explanatory power. Also, almost all doctoral students that we contacted for the interviews were content to give an interview. Similarly, the experts were interested and eager to share their thoughts and knowledge. The selection of the interview partners based on pre-defined criteria proved useful, as the information was exhaustive after a certain number of conducted interviews. The data of both the survey and the interviews are rich and substantial.

The main disadvantage of the evaluation design is the bias caused by the fact that only the successful applicants are surveyed and interviewed for the evaluation. For reasons of high effort and low resources, we had to refrain from including the non-successful candidates as a control group. This bias needs to be taken into account in the interpretation of the results. Some further limitations of this evaluation were given from the start, given that the number of Doc.CH recipients (259), and especially the number of recipients who have already finished their Doc.CH (65 out of 215 survey participants; 30.2%) and those have already finished their doctorate (43 out of 215 survey participants; 20%) remains very small. Therefore, the validity of the results – in particular as far as results in relation to the finished grants are concerned – is limited. Also, comparisons between the doctorate holders with Doc.CH and the doctorate holders who had other funding (FSO data) have to be interpreted with caution, as there is a big difference in population size.

As far as the comparison of the target and control group is concerned, we further needed to put up with some limitations of the survey instrument. To increase comparability, we had to adopt certain items one-to-one. Consequently, in some cases we needed to adopt predefined items that we would have had designed differently otherwise (i.e. designed specifically for the Doc.CH survey). All these difficulties and limitations are taken into account in the analysis and discussion in this evaluation report.

4. Results

4.1 Sample characteristics

The average age of the survey participants is 27 at the time of their application to Doc.CH. Of the 215 survey participants, 127 are female (59%) and 88 are male (41%). This ratio corresponds to the gender ratio of the total population of Doc.CH recipients (60% vs. 40%). Looking at the separate calls, there have always been more female recipients except in the fifth call of Doc.CH (cf. Figure 2).

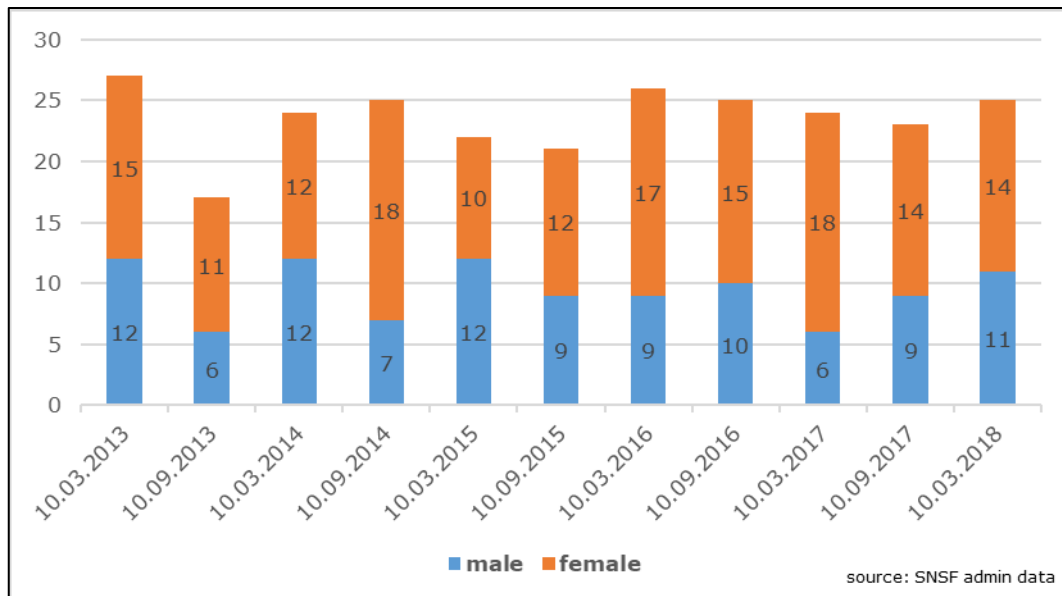


Figure 2. Number of granted projects by gender and call

Similarly, the distribution of humanities and social sciences among the survey participants (humanities: 60%, social sciences: 40%) roughly corresponds to the distribution among the total population (humanities: 61%, social sciences: 39%).

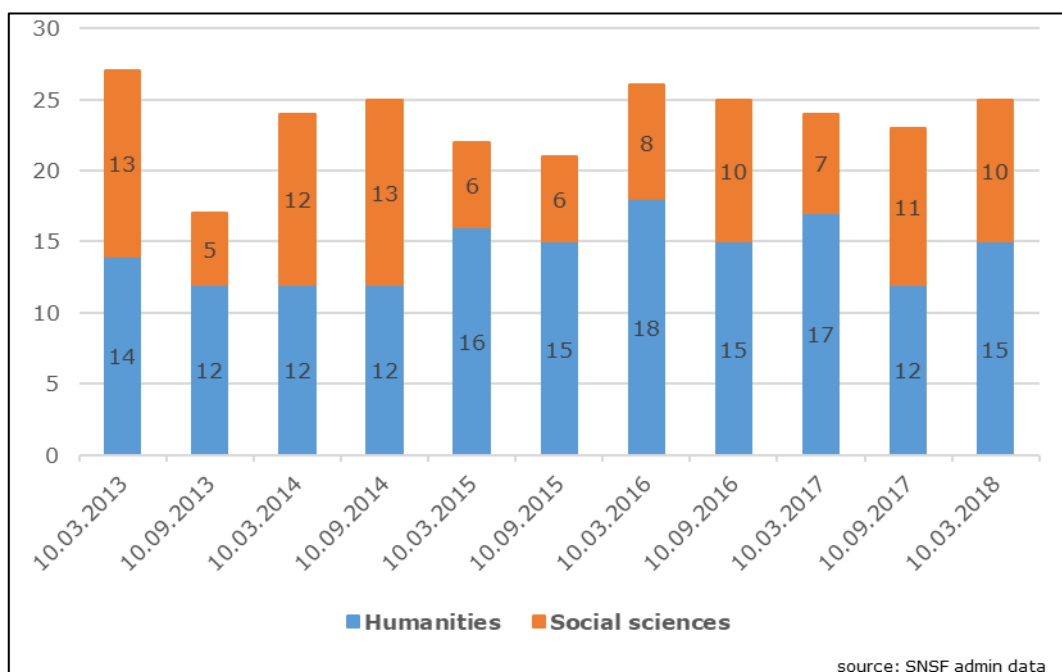


Figure 3. Number of granted projects by research domain and call

The ratio of granted projects in the humanities and social sciences varies for each call. Figure 3 shows that there was rarely an equal ratio. Most often, there were more grants in the humanities. The biggest difference occurred for the fifth call, with 73 percent projects in the humanities versus 27 percent projects in social sciences. Importantly, the distribution across research domains reflects the distribution of proposals in the two domains, that is, when there are more projects in the humanities it is because there were also more proposals in the humanities and vice versa. With regard to the distribution of gender and research domain, the survey population nicely corresponds with the total population of Doc.CH recipients.

Almost two-thirds (140) of the survey participants are currently on their Doc.CH grant. Almost one third (65) have finished their grant and a few (7) have been granted but not yet started their grant (cf. Figure 4). One person has broken off the grant because of personal/familial reasons. Two persons have not taken up their grant for reasons of alternative job offers, namely a teaching position and another research position. In one case, the person had to make a decision just before he/she received the notification by the SNSF and decided for the other job and against taking the risk of waiting and possibly not getting any position.

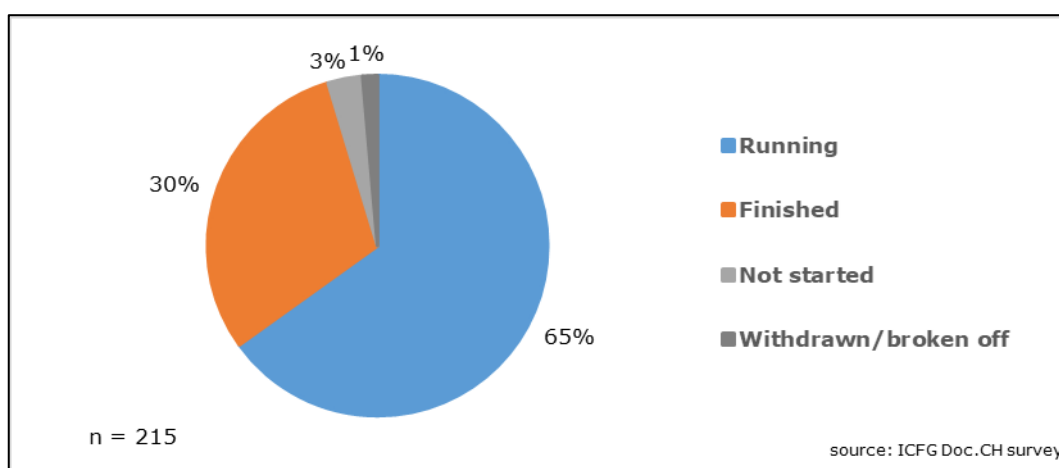


Figure 4. Grant status of Doc.CH survey participants

The small number of finished Doc.CH grants (65) among the survey participants reduces the validity of the results from this particular group, especially in comparison to the 539 doctorates in the control group. Table 1 shows an overview of the two groups by gender and research domain.

Table 1. Target group and control group by gender and research domain

		Doc.CH survey participants	Control group
Gender	Male	88 (41%)	241 (45%)
	Female	127 (59%)	298 (55%)
Research domain	Humanities	129 (60%)	229 (42%)
	Social Sciences	86 (40%)	310 (58%)

4.2 Filling the funding gap in the humanities and social sciences

This chapter reports the results to the question whether Doc.CH reasonably fills the funding gap in the humanities and social sciences. The results reported in this chapter stem from the online survey and interviews with the constellations and experts.

Survey results

The need for funding is reflected by the answers of the Doc.CH recipients in the survey. In fact, 107 (51%) out of 209¹ survey participants had already **worked on their doctorate before** the application to Doc.CH. 29 percent of them, had worked full-time on their doctorate. As Figure 5 shows, they had various other kinds of funding available (multiple answers possible).

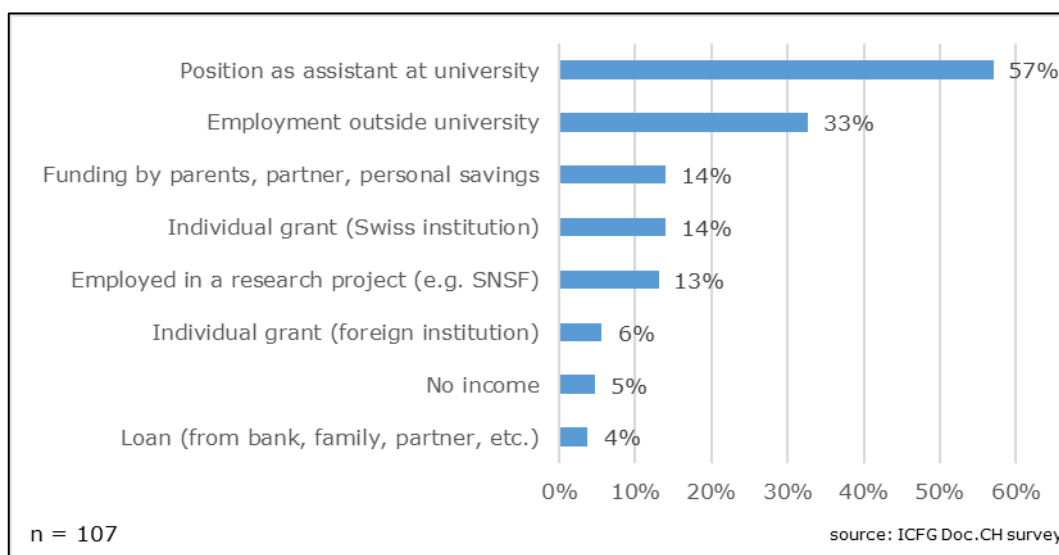


Figure 5. Sources of income to work on doctorate before Doc.CH

Most often, people were (research) assistants (57%) and/or were employed outside the university (33%). Only a few had another grant or an employment in a research project, or relied on savings or support by the family, partner or friends. We assume that these former positions, and especially the grants (which are often shorter) often expired. In some cases, they may also explicitly serve to develop an idea and prepare for an application. Yet in other cases, people search for another option because they are not happy with the funding (cf. interview results below).

The specific **reasons for applying** for Doc.CH – as either a follow-up funding or main funding – also vary from case to case. In the survey, when asked about the reasons for applying for Doc.CH (multiple answers possible), 77 percent indicate that Doc.CH was their first priority, which implies not only a high attractiveness of the grant but also a high suitability of the grant for this specific group (cf. Figure 6). 25 percent indicate that no alternative funding opportunities were available to them. For 18 percent, other funding options were either not suitable and/or not realistic.

¹ Note that here and in subsequent figures, the number of observations varies, either because of survey filters and/or because not all survey participants have answered each question. The respective number of observations (n) is indicated in the text and figures.

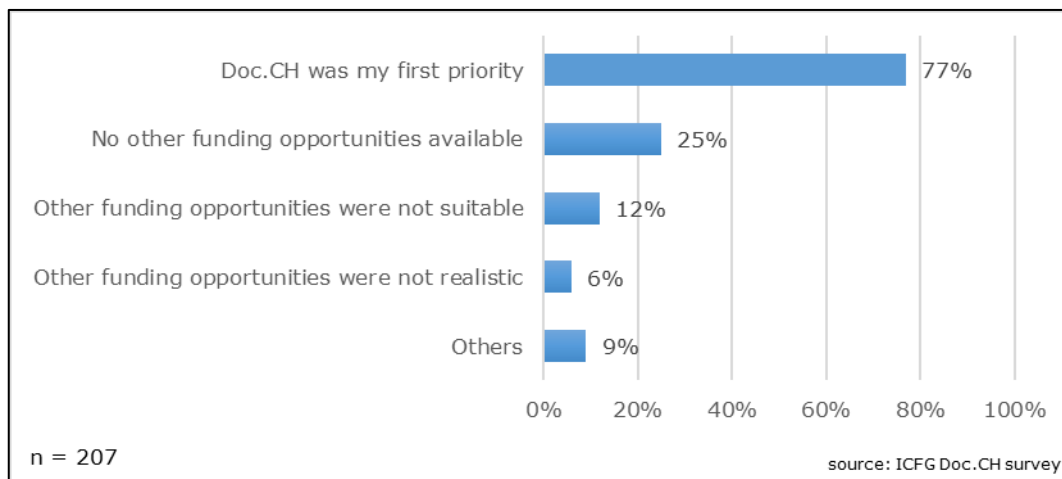


Figure 6. Reasons for applying to Doc.CH

In another question, we asked the participants to rate the importance of specific factors for their application to Doc.CH on a scale from one to five (cf. Figure 7). In fact, the opportunity to propose and develop one's own research project with a supervisor and host institution of one's own choice, and to work independently and full-time on one's doctorate for up to four years were rated as the most important aspects. Reputational and financial aspects, as well as the option of going abroad and/or to another research institution were rated somewhat less important. Consider that these results could be biased, because only the successful applicants were surveyed.

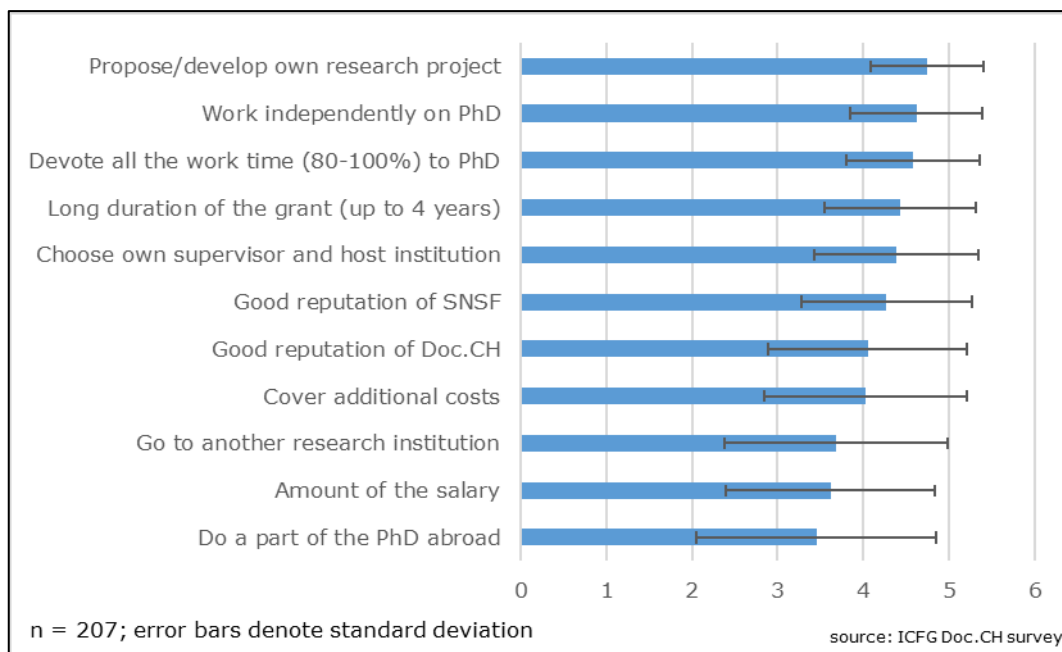


Figure 7. Importance of Doc.CH features for application

37 out of 208 survey participants (18%) had already applied for Doc.CH before. Furthermore, 94 (45%) had **tried other options** to fund their doctorate (cf. Figure 8). Most of them had tried to get an assistant position or applied for another grant or programme to promote young researchers (granted by a Swiss institution). Employments outside of the university were even more often an option than being a candidate of a research project.

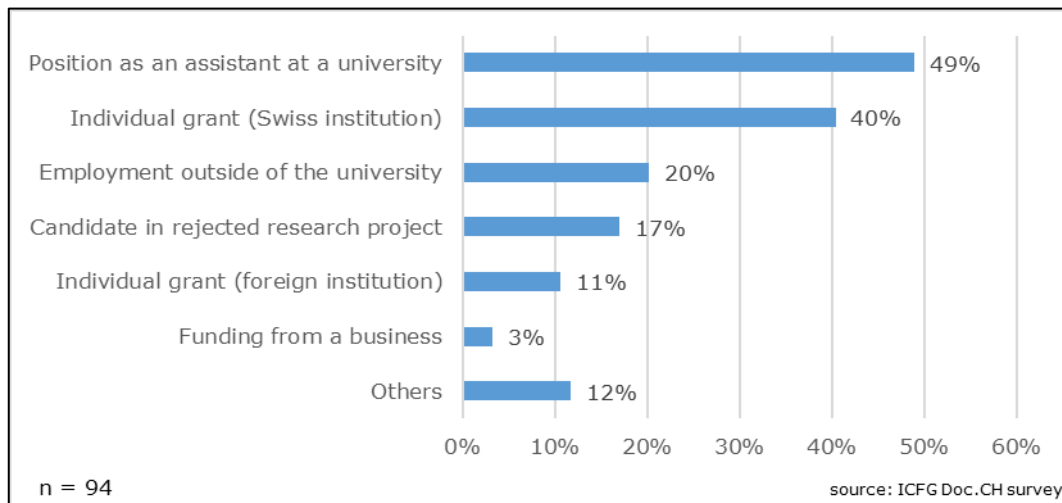


Figure 8. Alternatives tried before Doc.CH

In case of rejection of their application, 36 percent mentioned that they would have had no **alternatives** or would not have tried to fund their doctorate otherwise. 64 percent indicated that they would (rather) have tried to get other funding or would even have had another option. Some of them explained their ideas and options in an open question in the survey. The strategies vary greatly, and often people listed several options. By far the most (45) of those people who answered the open question explained that they would have tried to get a position as teaching assistant or research assistant at the university or a research institute. However, several of these persons also explained that they would have had to wait (often longer than one year) until a position at their department would become available again. The second most common answer (though not necessarily the second priority) was to find a part-time job outside academia and work on the doctorate in the spare time (31). Again, some participants mentioned that this option would have led to a much more precarious situation and a considerably longer duration of the doctorate. People also described that they would try to get grants from other institutions or university grants (28), or specifically look for a position abroad (11). Of the 15 persons who would (sometimes among other option) have tried to get a position in the research group or in a project, a few pointed out that this would have meant they would need to change the topic of their doctorate. One person could have relied on funding from their parents and a part-time job, and a few said they would have looked for doctoral positions with any kind of funding. 24 participants who answered this open question had a secured second plan if their Doc.CH proposal had been rejected. 15 of them were research or teaching assistants already, and could have kept their position, though in some cases not for long, which is why they would have had to look for other funding afterwards. Five persons already had one or several grants from other institutions (sometimes combined with a part-time job), but these were only smaller grants, which is why the persons rejected them once they got the Doc.CH grant. Three persons could have continued their position in an SNSF project and one could have kept a part-time job outside university.

Interview results: doctoral students and supervisors

The interviews with the ten Doc.CH recipients showed clearly how different individual cases can be in terms of how it came about that they decided to do a doctorate and how they got their funding. Some had already known they wanted to pursue a doctorate early on during their MA studies, others were asked and motivated by their

MA supervisors. Each of the interviewed Doc.CH recipients experienced some sort of a “gap” in terms of funding for their doctorate, either because they needed funding to start their doctorate in the first place or because they were looking for a “better” solution to either start or continue their doctorate under more suitable conditions. In the former cases, the recipients were often confronted with the situation that their chosen supervisor had no position available. In these cases, it was usually the supervisor who suggested Doc.CH as a funding option. In the latter cases, the motivation of the individuals is interesting. Some had actually been offered either assistant positions or positions in a research project, but declined the offer because they were not quite happy with the topic and preferred to write their own proposal on a topic of their own choice. Interestingly, one person explained that he/she only took the risk of applying to Doc.CH because another position would have been available as a second plan, in case the proposal was rejected. Another interviewed person kept options open, by applying for a Doc.CH that was based on her ideas from a seminar paper and for an SNSF project based on the ideas of two professors, at the same time. The candidate then chose Doc.CH because he/she favoured the individual funding. Two persons reported that they already had an assistant position but did not find enough time to work on the doctorate, and therefore looked for alternatives. Thus, the motivation of the interviewees stems either from the fact that they needed funding in the first place or that they wished for “better” funding to improve the conditions to work on the doctorate. For some, working on a topic of their own choice and having enough time for research was crucial for their choice of funding. As far as the writing of the proposal is concerned, only a few interviewees actually mentioned that they had funding for this phase, for example a mini assistant position or seed money from the university.

As for the doctoral students with SNSF project funding, the descriptions of how they got their positions are just as diverse. A few had also known their supervisors from their MA studies and were either offered an already existing project position or helped to write a proposal. In the former case, the big contrast to Doc.CH proposals is that the candidates did not have to do as much work or no work at all, and did not bear as much risk; they simply had to wait for the decision. In the latter case, however, the candidates expended big efforts as well. Two of the six interviewees, actually wrote the project proposal themselves, in one case because the candidate already had a concrete idea and in the other case because the supervisors wanted the candidate to identify with the project as much as possible. In sum, the interviews with the doctoral students showed how different the individual stories are within both groups and yet, how similar they can be between the groups and thus independent of the kind of funding (Doc.CH or SNSF) project funding.

The supervisors also differed in terms of how to find their doctoral students and how they advise the students on funding. In general, the interviewed professors do not actively recruit doctoral students – the students rather get in touch with them – except when they need to fill a project position and advertise the position. The strategies of how they assign different positions is also different in each case. For example, one supervisor explicitly stated that he/she recommends Doc.CH only to those students who really wish to pursue an academic career. One supervisor referred to the one-person-one-grant rule by the SNSF, which became effective in October 2016. This rule restricts the number of SNSF projects to one (or two, if the projects are clearly thematically different) per applicant. One supervisor referred to the rule introduced by

the SNSF in 2016, according to which a person can be applicant or grant recipient for a maximum of two current projects (before, the number was not limited). The second project is allowed if the research topic is clearly different. Because of this rule, the supervisor has started to actually propose projects based on his/her ideas and to find doctoral students to fill the positions in the project. This strategy is somewhat riskier, in the eyes of this supervisor, because the project ideas need to suit the candidate. Yet another professor explained, that the first priority for financing new doctoral students are always assistant positions, followed by project funding if the interest of the student fits the research interest of the professor, and Doc.CH if the interests are not so much related. Finally, one supervisor has come up with the strategy to give the prospective doctoral students some lead time by means of an assistant position, with the specific aim to prepare the Doc.CH proposal. The idea here is to give the students a paid position to write the proposal and to give the next student a chance once the former one has successfully acquired funding.

Interview results: experts

In the expert interviews, with regard to the question whether Doc.CH fills the funding gap in the humanities and social sciences in a good way, some experts mentioned that it is difficult to assess this gap in the first place. However, it became clear that a funding option like Doc.CH is necessary, as universities and other foundations alone cannot meet the need. In this respect, it also became apparent that there are rather big differences between the cantons in terms of funding from outside the university. Some experts mentioned that there may be more (private) foundations in some cantons than in others. There are also differences between the universities, with some universities potentially having bigger funds for the doctorate level than others.

The majority of experts believe that Doc.CH fills the funding gap, or that it is at least well-placed in this gap. It covers both a financial and a content-related need, in that it enables good quality projects, which could possibly not have been carried out – or not to the same extent and quality – otherwise. Some even wish for Doc.CH to be expanded. Not having Doc.CH would be problematic, both for financial and quality reasons, according to the experts.

Several experts also pointed out problematic aspects. While Doc.CH fills a gap in terms of funding a doctorate, the (financial) gap before the actual work on the doctorate (the time needed to prepare the proposal and wait for the decision) is not filled. In contrast, other doctoral students, for example with project funding or with assistant positions at the department, are able to develop their projects within their (paid) position. In this view, the funding gap is therefore filled at the expense of the doctoral students, because in order to get it, they need to find some other way and some other funding to bridge the gap until they can start their doctorate – provided the proposal is approved. The insecurity given the very competitive nature of the grant makes this situation even more critical, as the prospective doctoral students take the full risk. Here, some kind of starting grants or initiator grants could be a good solution.

Moreover, some experts drew a comparison of Doc.CH with Graduiertenkollegs and the former ProDoc and regret that there is no such option today. One of the experts describes a sort of contradiction in that there has been a demand to pull doctoral students of the humanities and social sciences “out of the ivory tower” and at the same

time, the ProDoc, which had embedded the doctoral projects in a wider, interdisciplinary context were abandoned, and instead a funding scheme was developed that may even put the doctoral students in an isolated position. Graduiertenkollegs and ProDoc are also regarded useful, because they imply sufficient funding and a reasonable duration, and they embed the doctoral students in a less professorship-dependent and more inclusive context.

4.3 Complement of other funding options

This chapter discusses the complementation of Doc.CH to SNSF project funding and other options to fund a doctorate. The results reported here rely mostly on the interviews with the experts and supervisors.

Most of the experts regard the combination and complementation of Doc.CH and SNSF project funding as useful and necessary. In this context, Doc.CH was often described as an additional possibility for funding after the introduction of the rule restricting the number of concurrent projects to two per person. The professors pointed out that Doc.CH is a good possibility to foster and supervise doctoral students, if they have no available positions in projects or as assistants. Some doctoral students also reported in the interviews that their supervisor recommended them to apply for Doc.CH because they had no other position available for them. One supervisor also pointed out that the two options are useful to foster different types of young researcher. Whereas Doc.CH is more suitable for students who are already able to come up with a research plan on their own, a position in an SNSF project may be more suitable for persons who are not quite there yet or persons who had worked outside academia between their MA and doctorate.

According to the experts and supervisors, the rule that a person may only have two projects at a time has already helped to decrease the problem of supervisors submitting projects of PhD students in their own name in project funding (i.e. proposals for SNSF projects, which have been developed mostly by the doctoral students). Nevertheless, it might potentially still be the case sometimes, as is the other way around (i.e. proposals that base on ideas of supervisors cf. Chapter 4.5). Still, this rule and Doc.CH itself have led to less exploitation of doctoral students and less “hidden Doc.CH proposals”.

The complementation of Doc.CH and project funding was also discussed in terms of the preparation for the future. In this regard, project funding is described to focus on a more project related promotion of young researchers and to foster employability whereas Doc.CH is associated with a more direct career entry or springboard and fosters more self-responsibility in research.

Moreover, the experts discussed the combination of the two funding options in the particular context of the humanities and social sciences. For one thing, they pointed out that Doc.CH fulfils certain requirements that are exemplary for the humanities, but also the social sciences, where there is a lot of “bottom-up”, innovation-driven research, driven by the doctoral students, alongside the more “top-down” projects. In this regard, Doc.CH nicely complements project funding, as it gives the doctoral students the opportunity to develop a research idea and carry out their research project on their own. On the other hand, the practical realities of Doc.CH and project

funding may also overlap and not be easy to distinguish. For example, doctoral students in project funding in the humanities and social sciences are often also highly independent from their supervisors (cf. Chapter 4.5).

As far as other funding sources are concerned, Doc.CH was discussed rather as a better alternative than merely a complementing funding option. In principle, the starting point of Doc.CH is the same as the one of a free doctorate. In both cases, doctoral students develop and carry out a project largely independently and based on their own ideas. The big difference, of course, is that a doctorate with Doc.CH is paid and a free doctorate needs cross-financing, which automatically results in less time and possibly more pressure and a longer duration. The conditions are also the big difference between Doc.CH and assistant positions or other grants. Employments as an assistant often entail a big amount of work not related to the doctorate. Grants from other institutions bear the disadvantage that the duration is often short, which causes low security and more pressure. In that sense, Doc.CH is a useful addition to the other funding options.

4.4 Success of the Doc.CH recipients

This chapter discusses the success of the Doc.CH recipients both during their doctorate and – although not so many recipients have actually finished yet – on their career development after the graduation. In order to assess these aspects, results of the survey are compared to the control group of the FSO Graduate Survey, and consolidated with interview results.

Survey results

One indicator of the success of the Doc.CH recipients is the **duration of the doctorate**. Of the 65 persons who have already finished their Doc.CH, 60 percent were actually able to finish their dissertation within the grant time. Thus, a relatively big group of recipients still needs time to finish their dissertation after the grant has expired. Of those who are currently on their grant, roughly 70 percent (102 out of 145) believe that it is realistic for them to finish their doctorate before the end of their grant. The remaining 30 percent (42 out of 145) estimate that they will need another nine months on average after the grant to finish their doctorate.

On average, the survey participants who have already finished their doctorate (42 out of 43 have answered this question) have taken 4 years and 4 months to finish. This includes the whole period from developing the topic until submitting the dissertation and (if required) passing exams or a defence. Women (n = 22, 4 years and 2 months) were slightly faster on average than men (n = 20, 4 years and 7 months), and people in the social sciences (n = 26, 4 years and 2 months) were faster than people in the humanities (n = 16, 4 years and 8 months).

The average duration of the doctorate with Doc.CH funding is shorter than with other funding. Doctoral students in the control group took 5 years and 6 months on average, with differences by source of income (cf. Table 2).

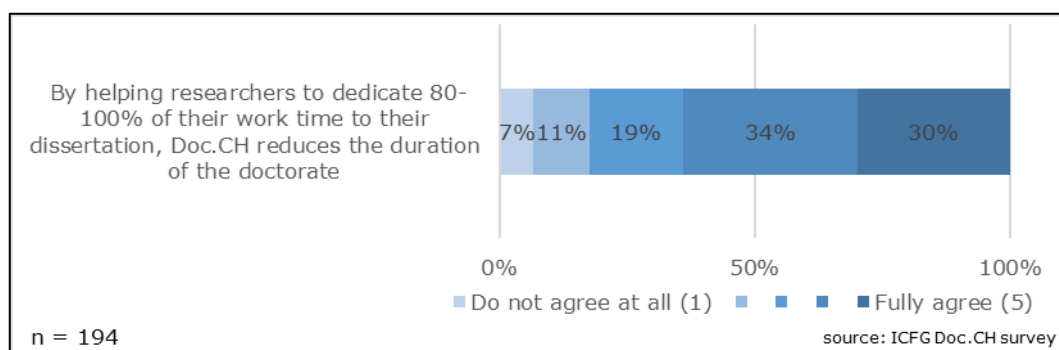
Table 2. Duration of doctorate by source of income

Source of income*	Mean duration
Doc.CH (n = 42)	4 years 4 months
Position as a (research) assistant (n = 331)	5 years 5 months
Employed in a research project (e.g. SNSF project) (n = 169)	4 years 11 months
Individual grant/programme by a Swiss institution (n = 104)	5 years 7 months
Individual grant/programme by a foreign institution (n = 20)	5 years 11 months*
Employment outside of the university (n = 204)	5 years 8 months
Funding by parents, partner, personal savings (n = 115)	5 years 9 months
Unemployment benefit, welfare etc. (n = 27)	6 years 8 months

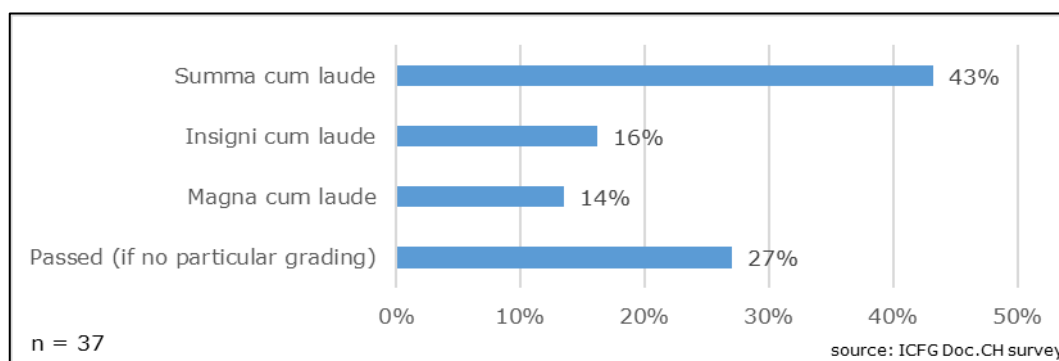
*the calculation of this mean is based on 20 observations only

Note that some of the Doc.CH recipients may have had other sources of funding before Doc.CH. Similarly, the persons in the control group often indicated several sources of funding in the survey. This table does not take into account the durations of each funding source nor the combinations of options, but gives the total of all individuals who had a particular source of funding at some point during their doctorate.

When asked about their opinion on the impact of Doc.CH on the duration of the doctorate, 64 percent of the survey participants rather or fully agree that Doc.CH reduces the duration of the doctorate by helping researchers to dedicate 80 to 100 percent of their work time to their dissertation (mean = 3.7 on a scale from 1-5, cf. Figure 9).

**Figure 9. Rating of Doc.CH impact on duration**

The former Doc.CH recipients were also successful in terms of **grades for the doctorate** (cf. Figure 10). Of the 27 persons who actually got a grade (instead of pass), 16 received summa cum laude, 6 received insigni cum laude and 5 were graded with magna cum laude.

**Figure 10. Grade for doctorate of Doc.CH survey participants**

Thus, the Doc.CH recipients performed very well – though a certain arbitrariness of grades needs to be taken into account as well as the fact that good grades are a requirement for the application (i.e. only the best ones receive a Doc.CH grant in the first place).

Further indicators of success are the career prospects and the actual career development of the recipients. In the following, results from the Doc.CH survey are contrasted with results of the FSO Graduate Survey. For the interpretation of the subsequent results, the different time points of the two surveys need to be taken into account. The Graduate Survey took place in the year after the year of graduation. In contrast, some of the Doc.CH recipients may already have finished their doctorate more than one year before the survey, given the onetime taking of the survey. Therefore, some former Doc.CH recipients may be further ahead in their careers.

Almost half of the survey participants who are currently working on their dissertation indicate that they **aim for an academic career** (cf. Figure 11). 12 percent do not aim to continue a career in academia and 39 percent are undecided. Interestingly, the proportion of those who aim for an academic career is even bigger among those who have already finished their dissertation – although this comparison needs to be treated with caution given the small number of the latter group. Among the doctorate holders who had a Doc.CH, 56 percent aim for an academic career and 10 percent do not.

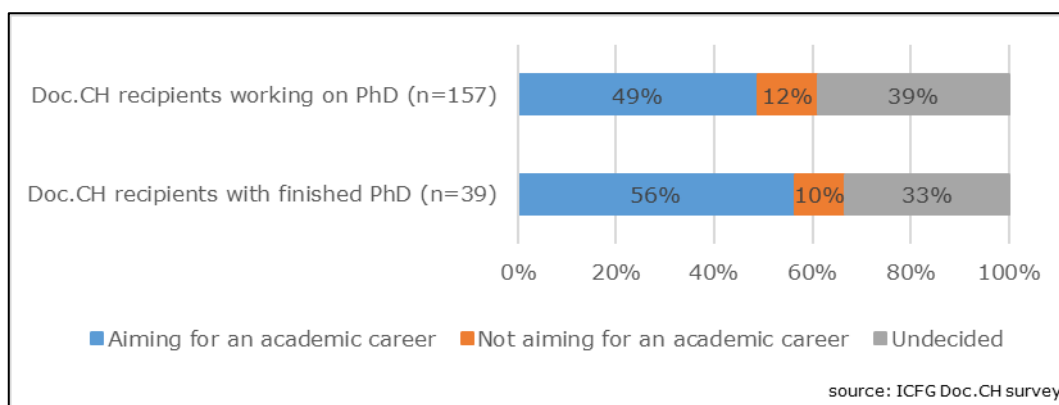


Figure 11. Career aims of Doc.CH recipients

Across all the survey participants, there is no noteworthy difference in terms of aiming for an academic career for the humanities and social sciences. However, there are differences by gender. While the proportion of those who aim for an academic career is about the same for women and men (50% of women and 50% of men), more women (17 out of 121, 14%) are not aiming for an academic career than men (6 out of 82, 7%). Correspondingly, men are more often undecided (25 out of 82, 43%) than women (43 out of 121, 36%).

Compared to the control group (who has already finished their doctorate), the few Doc.CH recipients who have finished their doctorate more often aim for an academic career (56% vs. 37%; cf. **Figure 12. Career aims of Doc.CH recipients and control group** Figure 12). The proportion of the yet undecided doctorate holders is the same in the two groups. In the control group – like in the target group – the proportion of those aiming for an academic career is the same for men and women (37% of women and 37% of men). In contrast to the target group, in the control the percentage of men not aiming for an academic career is bigger (82 out of 241, 34%) than the percentage of

women not aiming for an academic career (80 out of 295, 27%). Accordingly, more women (107 out of 295, 36%) than men (69 out of 241, 29%) are undecided.

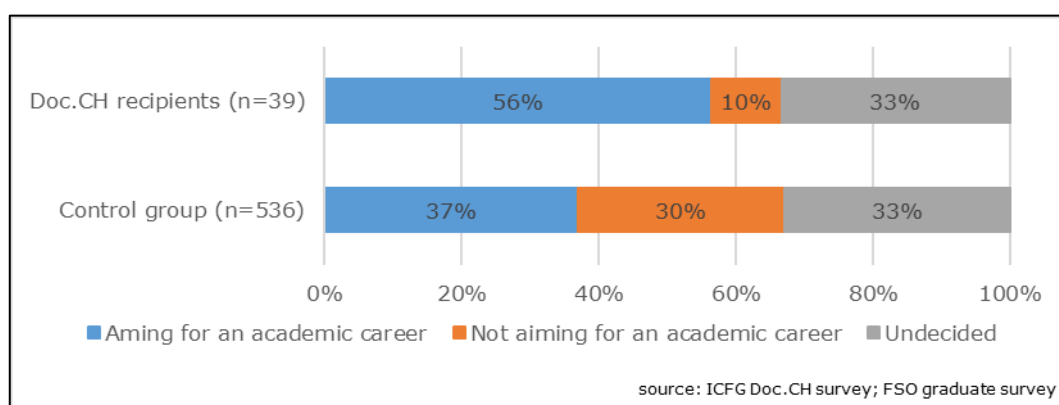


Figure 12. Career aims of Doc.CH recipients and control group

The survey participants also indicated what **position they aspire to most** in the future (cf. Figure 13). A professorship at a university is the position most aspired to (46%), followed by a scientific post at a university or research institute (25%). Those who chose other positions mentioned specified combinations of a position in academia and a position outside academia, diplomacy, a high school teaching position or a position in the non-profit sector as their most favoured position.

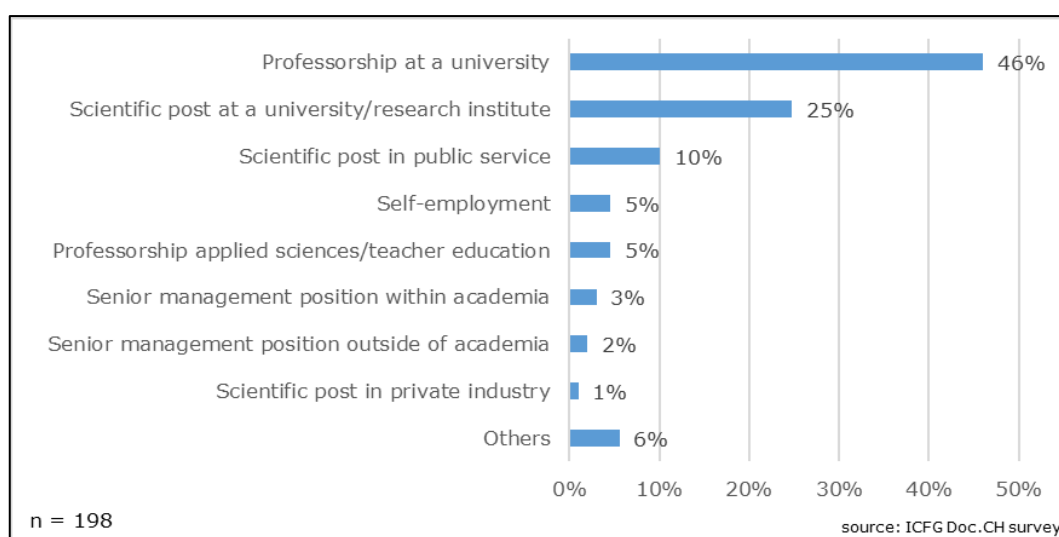


Figure 13. Positions aspired to by Doc.CH recipients

Among the survey participants, we observed differences for gender and research domain. While 56 percent (44 out of 79) of the male participants aspire to a professorship, only 39 percent (47 out of 119) of the female participants aspire to this position. In contrast, a scientific position at a university or research institution is aspired to by 28 percent (33 out of 119) of women and 20 percent (16 out of 79) of men. In the humanities, scientific posts at a university or research institution are favoured more often (34 out of 120, 28%) than in the social sciences (15 out of 78, 19%). By contrast, in the social sciences there is a bigger proportion of people who aspire to a scientific post in public service (12% vs. 8% in humanities); a professorship at a university of applied sciences or teacher education (6% vs. 1% in the humanities); and a senior management position outside academia (5% vs. 0% in the humanities).

The current **employment situation** of the doctorate holders also shows differences between the Doc.CH recipients and the control group. Out of 39 Doc.CH recipients who have already finished their doctorate, 77 percent are gainfully employed and 13 percent are not employed and looking for a job at the time of the survey. In the year after their graduation, 90 percent of the control group (n = 539) are gainfully employed, and 3 percent are looking for employment. Thus, the employment rate is bigger in the control group (but note the different number of observations and the different survey time points). In both groups, only few people are not employed but have a firm job offer (Doc.CH: 3%; control group: 1%), are not employed because they are pursuing an education (Doc.CH: 5%, control group: 2%) or because they run the household or look after children (Doc.CH: 0%; control group: 2%).

Table 3. Employment situation of Doc.CH survey participants

Employment situation	Men (n = 18)	Women (n = 21)	Humanities (n = 16)	Social sc. (n = 23)
Gainfully employed	14	16	11	19
No employment & looking for a job	2	3	3	2
No employment but firm job offer	1	0	0	1
No employment because of education/training	1	1	2	0
No employment for other reasons	0	1	0	1

Among the doctorate holders who had a Doc.CH grant, there are only marginal differences by gender and research domain, which should be treated with caution given the small number of observations (cf. Table 3). Very few more women than men are looking for a job. The employment rate is somewhat higher in the social sciences than in the humanities (83% vs. 69%).

At the time of the survey, 84 percent (26 out of 31) of the survey participants who have finished their doctorate are employed in Switzerland, and 16 percent (5 out of 31) abroad. There are no differences by gender or research domain in this regard.

Further differences between the Doc.CH recipients and the control group can be found in terms of whether the doctorate holders **work in or outside academia** (cf. Figure 14). 23 of 30 (77%) doctorate holders who had a Doc.CH are employed at an institution of higher education or similar at the time of the survey.

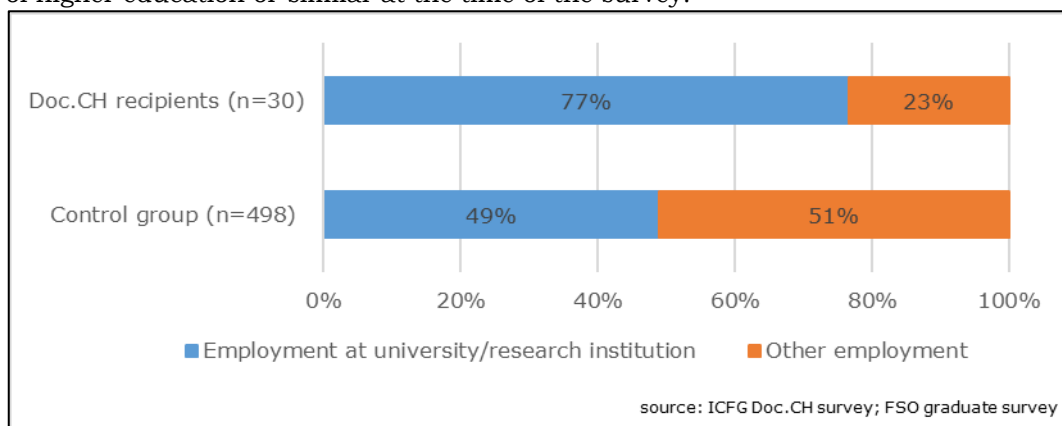


Figure 14. Employment in or outside academia

There are small differences by gender and research domain, although, again the small number of observation needs to be taken into account. Men are slightly more often employed at a university or research institution than women (86% vs. 69%) and people in humanities are more often further employed in academia than people in the social sciences (82% vs. 74%). In contrast to the Doc.CH recipients, 49 percent of the doctorate holders with other funding are employed in academia one year after their graduation.

In these employments at a university or research institution, the vast majority of the doctorate holders who had a Doc.CH is employed as a researcher (78%, 18 out of 23). 40 percent indicate that they are (sometimes in addition to a research employment) employed as a lecturer. In the control group, 72 percent are employed as a researcher (172 out of 240) and 70 percent as a lecturer (167 out of 240) and 21 percent (51 out of 240) are employed in an administrative position.

More specifically, about half of the doctorate holders work as research assistants requiring a PhD (Doc.CH: 52%; control group: 50%) and some have other lecturing and research positions (Doc.CH: 26%; control group: 56%). In the control group, 21 out of 240 who have continued the academic career are professor; of 23 Doc.CH recipients who have finished their doctorate, one has become professor so far.

In total, the former Doc.CH recipients have more often started a post-doc than the control group (69% vs. 19%; cf. Figure 15). Among the survey participants, a few more men (78%, 14 out of 18) than women (62%, 13 out of 21) have started a post-doc. In addition, slightly more people in the social sciences (74%, 17 out of 23) have started a post-doc than people in the humanities (63%, 10 out of 16).

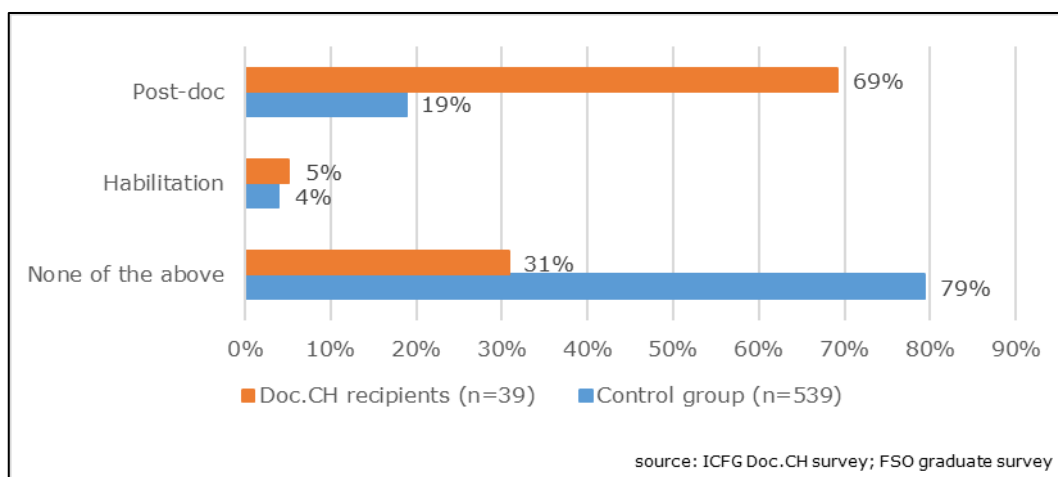


Figure 15. Further career steps

As far as the **scientific output** of the doctorate holders is concerned, comparisons between the target group and the control group are again difficult given the number of observations and the different time points of the surveys. Nevertheless, Figure 16 shows what kind of output the participants have produced as either author or co-author. On average, 76 percent of the Doc.CH survey participants have already published one or more articles or essays in peer-reviewed scientific journals (mean = 3.4, median = 3). 39 percent have published newspaper articles, book reviews or similar (mean = 2.8, median = 1). 32 percent have already published articles in edited volumes (mean = 2.8, median = 2) and articles or essays in non peer-reviewed scientific

journals (mean = 1.8, median 1). Reports (mean = 4.5, median = 2) and monographs (mean = 1.7, median = 1) were published by 20 percent of the participants. Only 12 percent indicate that they have not published (yet). There are only slight differences between Doc.CH recipients in the humanities and Doc.CH recipients in the social sciences, and between the Doc.CH recipients and the control group (cf. Figure 16).

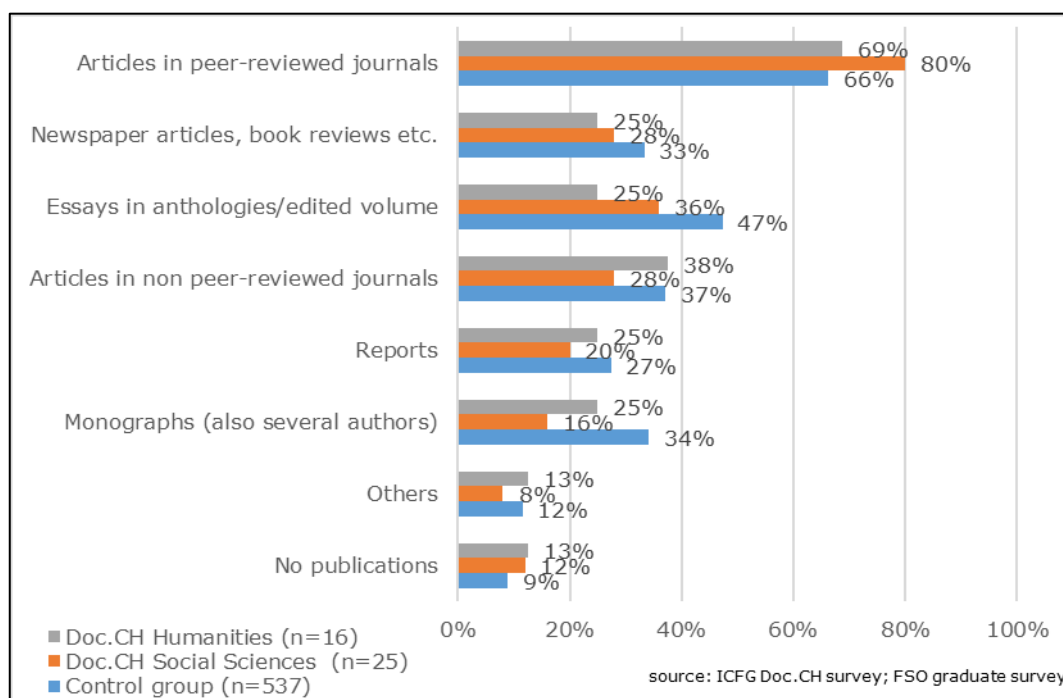


Figure 16. Output of doctorate holders

Finally, the survey participants were asked to rate statements on the **career impact** of Doc.CH on a scale from one to five (cf. Figure 17).

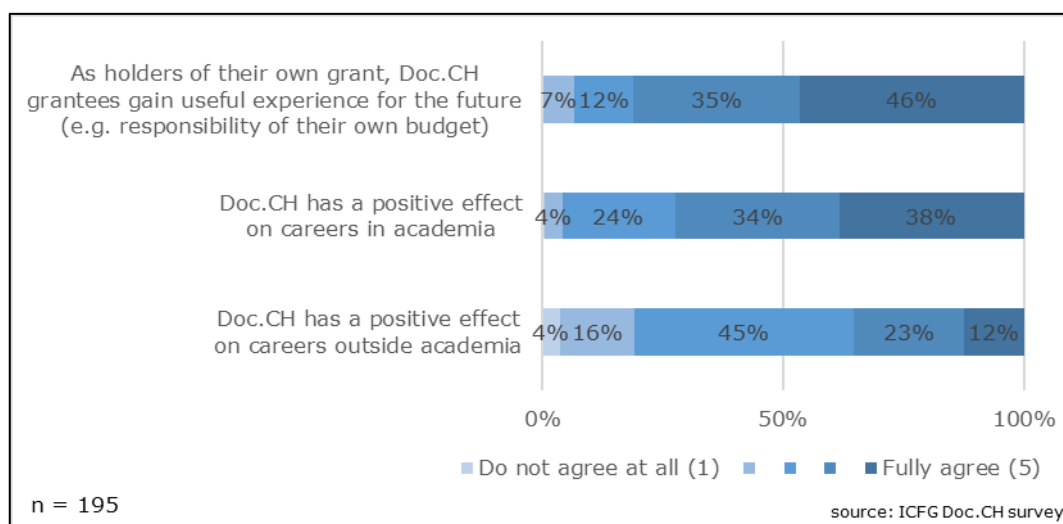


Figure 17. Effect of Doc.CH on career

81 percent of the survey participants rather or fully agree that recipients of Doc.CH gain useful experience for their future (mean = 4.2). The positive effect is rated as bigger for careers in academia (mean = 4.1) than outside academia (mean = 3.3).

Interview results: doctoral students and supervisors

The interviews with the doctoral students (Doc.CH and project funding) showed that their thoughts on their future career are very diverse. The professions and positions that the interviewed Doc.CH recipients mentioned as their goal, included any kind of post-doc position, Postdoc.Mobility fellowship, Ambizione grant, further clinical education, a bar examination in the short term; and professor, high-school teacher, third space employee, diplomat, consultant or administration employee in the long term.

Interestingly, it was also mentioned that – towards the SNSF – the Doc.CH recipients officially state that becoming a professor was their career goal (because they say what they believe the SNSF wants to hear), although this may not necessarily be the case, and especially although this is not a very realistic option since even the good research positions after the doctorate are rare. The actual career plan of the recipients often corresponds with the awareness of the various difficulties and burdens (competition, required mobility etc.) that come with a career in academia. For this reason, some of the interviewees have come up with several ideas and a prioritisation of these ideas. In this context, the interviewees explained that Doc.CH actually gives them the time to plan their future and, importantly, to network. In fact, some interviewees have only had the chance to do a doctorate and, especially, to go abroad, go to conferences and build a network, thanks to the time and money offered by Doc.CH. Some mentioned that the research visits have led to a bigger network. In this respect, Doc.CH has been a benefit for their future because it has made a doctorate of such a large scale possible in the first place.

A great benefit of Doc.CH – for both an academic career and a career outside academia – is the experience with project management, according to the interviewed Doc.CH recipients. The interviewees agree upon the fact, that it looks good on the CV, mainly because it means that the person has been successful in planning and conducting a project independently. They have already proven themselves in a competitive procedure. The successful application is viewed as an advantage for future applications to other funding schemes. The experience of having managed a project independently is also an advantage because it already gives an idea of what a post-doc could look like and prepares well for this phase. Experience with project management and budget responsibility are helpful for a career outside the university, too. Moreover, the prestige of Doc.CH was mentioned as a plus – though probably mostly for an academic career.

Doubts regarding the benefit of Doc.CH for the future career relate to the missing teaching experience, in the view of Doc.CH recipients. Thus, some interviewees wondered whether a doctoral position that includes teaching might be better to build an academic career on. Furthermore, for a job outside academia, Doc.CH may be a disadvantage compared to project positions, in that the candidates may bring less practice- and project-related experience.

The doctoral students with project funding named very similar benefits for their career, which – apart from the Dr. title in the first place – base on the kind of funding they received. Like the Doc.CH recipients, the persons with project funding explained, that this kind of funding allowed them to do a lot of good quality research in a short time,

which is helpful. The experience of writing a proposal and managing a project was also mentioned, which shows that doctoral students with SNSF project funding can be as autonomous and as much responsible for their projects as Doc.CH recipients (cf. Chapter 4.5).

Comparing project funding with Doc.CH, the doctoral students with project funding do not see a big difference between the two. Some believe the content of the work to be more important than the kind of funding. However, they mentioned a difference between assistant positions and SNSF funding. A doctorate financed by the SNSF – be it a Doc.CH grant or a project – needs to be communicated well and presented well in order to be funded, whereas a project conducted by an assistant “only” needs approval of the supervisor. These acquired communication skills (and basically proposal skills) are a benefit for the career, according to an interviewee.

The supervisors of the doctoral students have different opinions. On the one hand, good results and good publications are seen as important for the future career, which depends on the performance of the individuals and not on their funding instrument. However, several supervisors agree that Doc.CH recipients have a special benefit in that they have proven independence and responsibility with their doctorate – although again, independence is not dependent on the funding scheme, since doctoral students with other funding can be highly independent in their research as well. The fact that the Doc.CH recipients bear the full responsibility and do the whole management distinguishes them from doctoral students with project funding. Also, having acquired prestigious funding looks good in the CV, according to the supervisors. Having been part of an SNSF project also looks good on a CV, especially in terms of being part of team, but possibly not as prestigious as raising funds. Furthermore, two supervisors compared assistant positions to SNSF funding in terms of the benefits for the career. Assistant positions may not be as privileged in terms of time and tasks, but they have the advantage of a good integration and connection to the professorship, which may lead to more publications (as co-author), a stronger visibility and more concrete support and career promotion. In contrast, Doc.CH – while creating more independent researchers – runs the risk of producing more free-floating researchers, potentially with a weaker connection to the professorship and less promotion. Finally, especially in the international comparison, the Doc.CH recipients often lack teaching experience, which is a disadvantage for the academic career, in the view of the supervisors.

4.5 Functionality of the support and autonomy of the recipients

This chapter reports the results on how functional the financial support of the Doc.CH recipients is and how functional the facilitation of an independent doctoral project is. The functionality is also studied with regard to different phases of the doctorate. In the context of independence, we also examine the supervision situation and network of the Doc.CH recipients. The results in this chapter stem from the Doc.CH survey, the control group data and the interviews.

Survey results

In the survey, the participants rated three items relating to **financial aspects**. The first item is concerned with the financial status of the Doc.CH recipients. On a scale from one to five, the survey participants indicated to which extent they agree with the

statement “Doc.CH grantees are financially well-off” (cf. Figure 18). On average, the participants rather find that the recipients are properly funded compared to doctoral students with other funding (mean = 3.3). Recipients at the beginning of their PhD agree slightly less with this statement (mean = 3.1, n = 34) than those in the middle (mean = 3.3, n = 65) and those who are in the end phase (mean = 3.4, n = 55) or who have finished their PhD (mean = 3.4, n = 39).

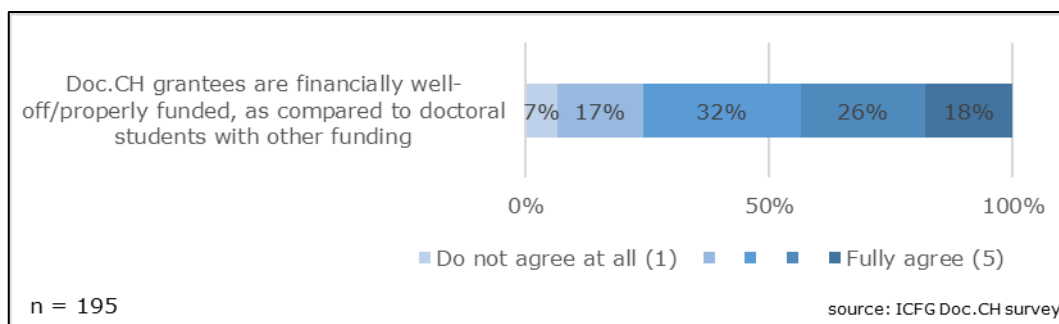


Figure 18. Rating of financial support

Furthermore, the participants rated how important changes were with regard to financial aspects. On a scale from one to five, they rated how important it was to increase the salary and the contribution to cover additional costs, such as travel expenses (cf. Figure 19). Overall, they appear to be rather content with their financial situation as changes to the salary and the additional contributions are not very important to them, on average. Increasing the salary is rated as slightly more important (mean = 3.4) than increasing the amount to cover additional costs (mean = 3).

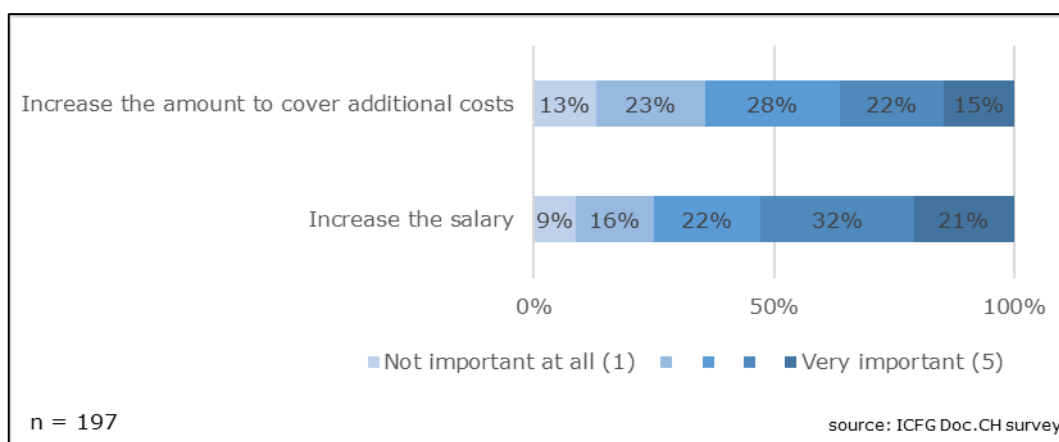


Figure 19. Rating of salary and contribution of additional costs

Corresponding with the results in Figure 18, the doctoral students in the start phase (mean = 3.5, n = 37) and in the middle phase (mean = 3.5, n = 63) rate increasing the salary as somewhat more important than those doctoral students who are in the end phase (mean = 3.2, n = 56) and those who have finished their doctorate (mean = 3.2, n = 36). These (small) differences may be a coincidence, or they may reflect that students are actually more troubled with their financial resources at the beginning of their project.

The functionality of facilitating the recipients’ independence is first looked at in terms of the **development of the project idea** (cf. Figure 20). 69 percent of the survey

participants indicated that they developed their project idea and research question mostly on their own and based on their own idea. For 30 percent, the project idea was partly predefined, and only 3 out of 207 participants indicated that their project idea was mostly predefined.

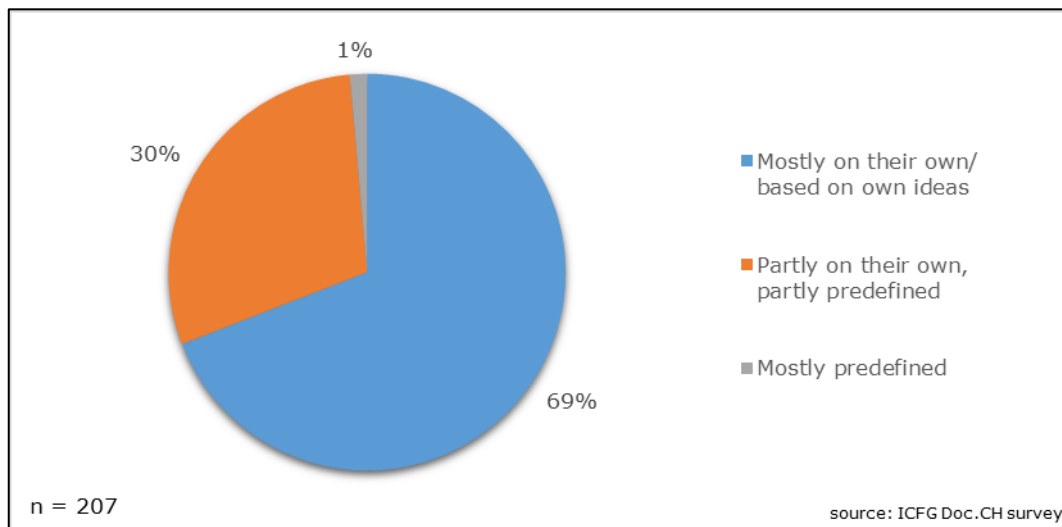


Figure 20. Development of project idea for doctorate

This relates to how close their project ideas are related to their MA thesis on the one side and to the research topics of their supervisor on the other side. The overall **relation to the MA thesis** is moderate (mean = 3.2; cf. Figure 21). Only 18 percent indicated that the research idea is not at all related to the topic of their MA thesis. For over 80 percent of all doctoral projects, there is some relation to the MA thesis. In 24 percent of all cases, the topics are even very closely related. The **relation to the research field of the supervisor** is higher, in general (mean = 3.8; cf. Figure 21). 21 percent indicated that the topic of their doctorate is very closely related to the research field of their supervisor. Still, 14 percent indicated a very low relatedness. Nobody has a topic that is not related to the supervisor's research field at all.

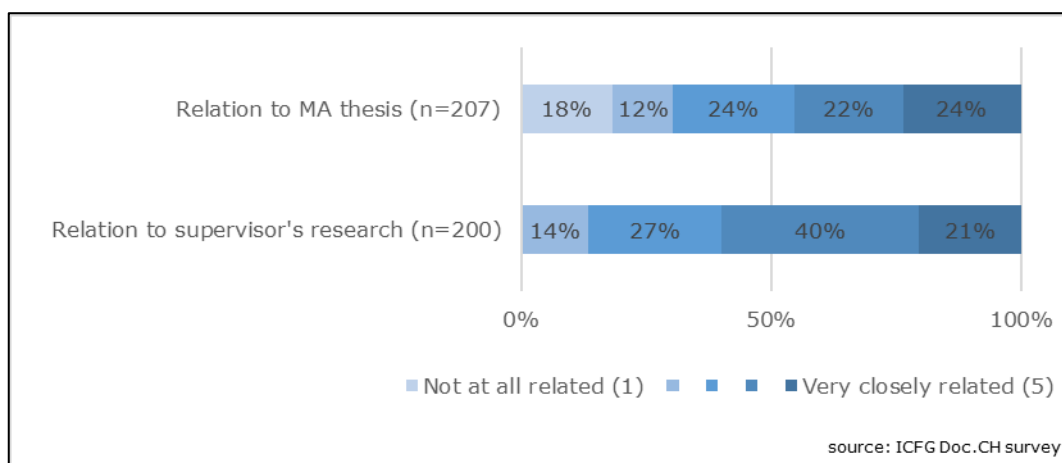


Figure 21. Relation of doctorate topic to MA and supervisor's research

Very often, the doctoral students with Doc.CH **know the supervisor** from their MA thesis (cf. Figure 22, multiple answers possible). In fact, in 47 percent the supervisor had also supervised the MA thesis. Moreover, 35 percent of the participants had been employed at the institute of their supervisors before Doc.CH. A quarter of the

participants got recommendations for the supervisor by their scientific mentors or colleagues. A few had known their supervisor from personal contacts and stays.

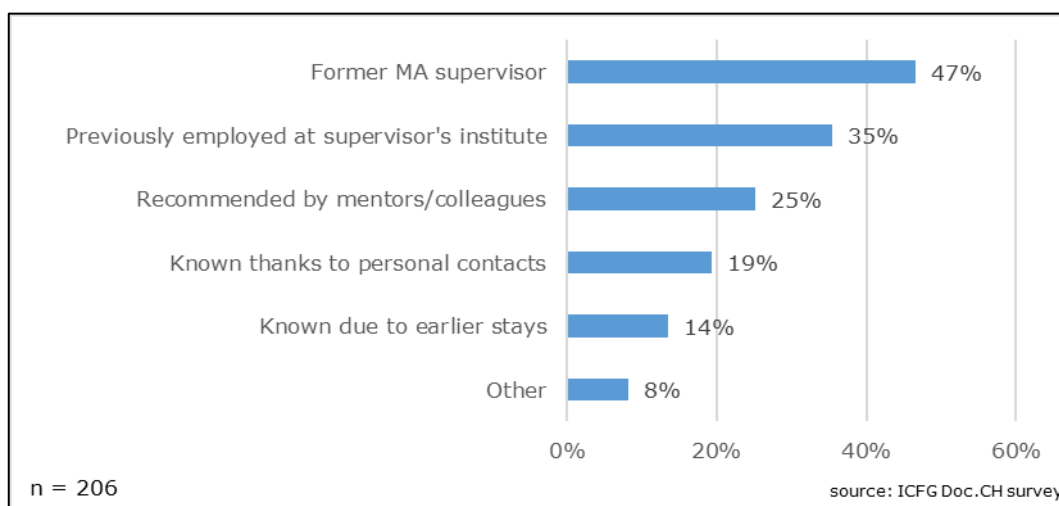


Figure 22. Finding of supervisor

When asked about the **actual supervision** (i.e. not necessarily merely some kind of support but by whom they are actually supervised during their doctorate), 93 percent indicated that they get supervision from their first supervisor (cf. Figure 23). Interestingly, only 63 percent reported that they get supervision by their second supervisor. Note in this context, that it is a formal requirement of Doc.CH that the second supervisor at another university or abroad. Furthermore, roughly a third gets supervision from other scientists or even other doctoral students. Relatively few indicate (11%) that they get actual supervision from other professors who are engaged in the structured programme (e.g. graduate school). Note that 66 percent (134 out of 202) of the survey participants take part in such a programme.

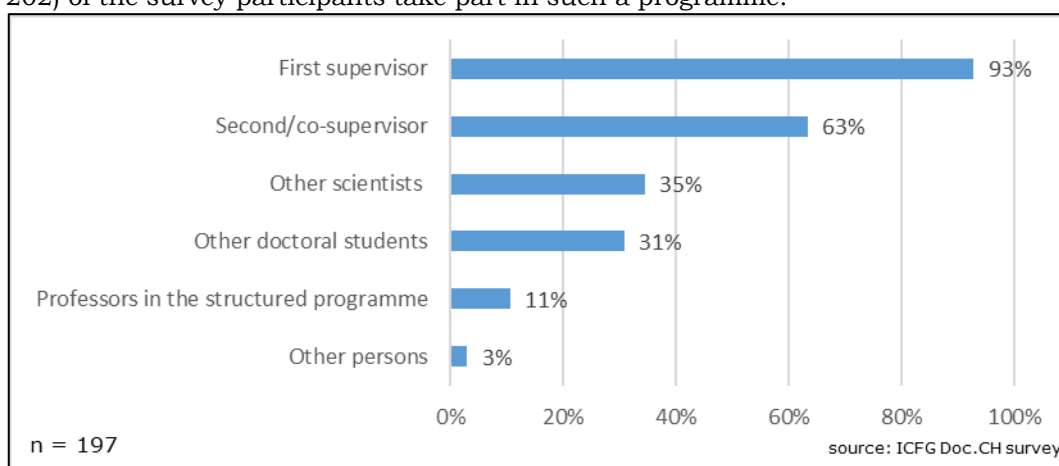


Figure 23. Actual supervision

Similarly, in the control group with former doctoral students with funding sources other than Doc.CH, 95 percent reported that they actually received supervision from their official supervisor, 36 percent received supervision from other professors, 29 percent from other scientists, and 34 percent reported they got supervision from other doctoral students.

The **extent of supervision** for the Doc.CH recipients varies from case to case. Figure 24 shows to what degree the survey participants are supervised by those persons, from

whom they actually get some sort of supervision (note that the figure does not show lacking supervision). Those who actually get supervision from the first supervisor, are supervised to a (rather) great extent (mean = 3.0). The same applies for the supervision by other scientists (mean = 3.0) and doctoral students (mean = 2.9). The extent of supervision is the smallest for the professors engaged in the structural programmes (mean = 2.2). The extent of supervision from the second supervisors (mean = 2.7) is clearly rated smaller than that of the first supervisor.

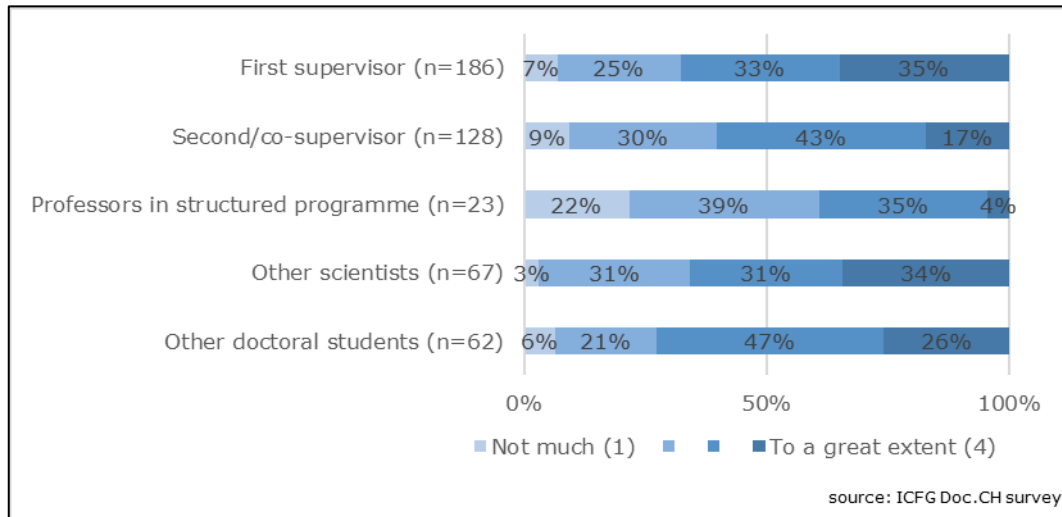


Figure 24. Extent of actual supervision

The survey further inquired the participants' **satisfaction with the supervision** (cf. Figure 25). In general, the survey participants are (rather) satisfied with the supervision from their supervisor (mean = 3.9) and with the amount of feedback they get (mean = 3.7).

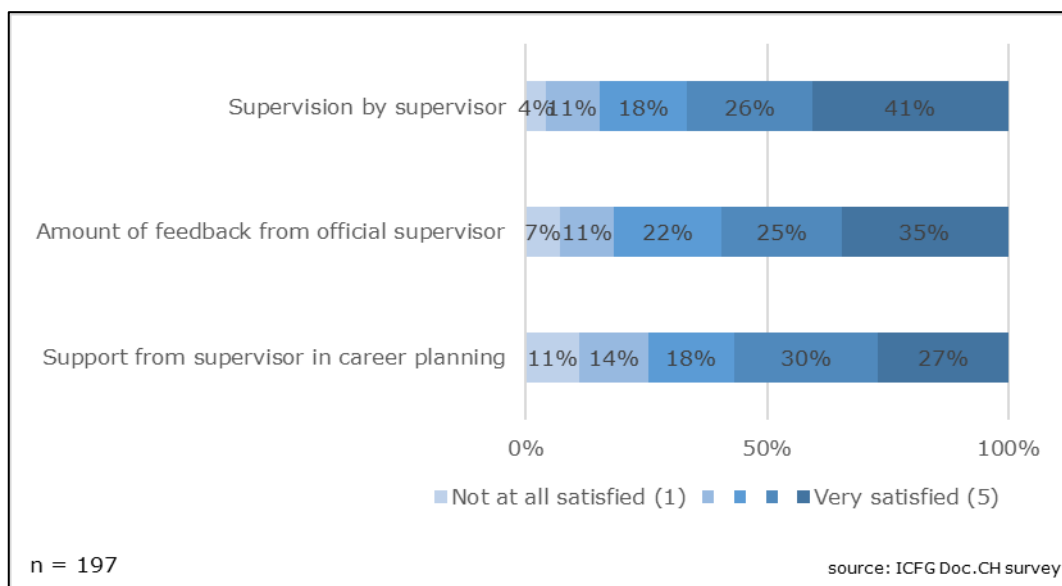


Figure 25. Satisfaction with supervision

They are somewhat less satisfied with the received support in planning their career (mean = 3.5). Interestingly, the satisfaction with supervision slightly decreases in the course of the doctorate. Doctoral students in the start phase are bit more satisfied (mean = 4.2, n = 34) than those in the middle phase (mean = 4, n = 65) and those in

the end phase (mean = 3.6, n = 57). The same applies for the satisfaction with the amount of feedback, which is higher at the beginning (mean = 3.9, n = 34) than in the middle (mean = 3.7, n = 65) and in the end (mean = 3.6, n = 57). Again, these findings may be a coincidence, or, they may reflect the bigger need for support at the beginning of the doctorate and that this need is fulfilled, at least at the beginning. Note that, nevertheless, 15 and 18 percent respectively are rather not or not at all satisfied with their supervision and the amount of feedback.

In addition to the supervision situation, the survey inquired to what degree the Doc.CH recipients have been able to establish a **network with other scientists** (cf. Figure 26). On average, the survey participants have established contact to scientists in their immediate work surroundings to a rather large extent (mean = 4.1). The international network (mean = 3.8) seems to be even a bit stronger than the national network (mean = 3.3). Finally, they were able to establish contacts with scientists in their particular field of study (mean = 3.8) to a greater extent than with scientist outside their field (mean = 3).

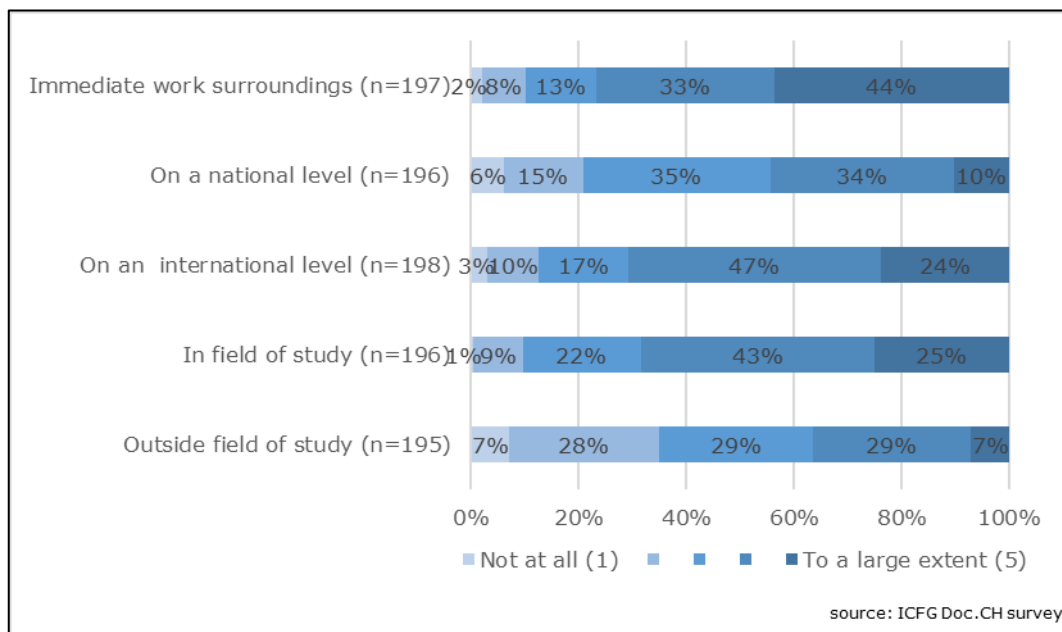


Figure 26. Network with other scientists

The participants are quite satisfied with the exchange they have or had with peers on their level (mean = 3.9, cf. Figure 27), their integration in the team or institute (mean = 3.9), and their status in the team or institute (mean = 3.8).

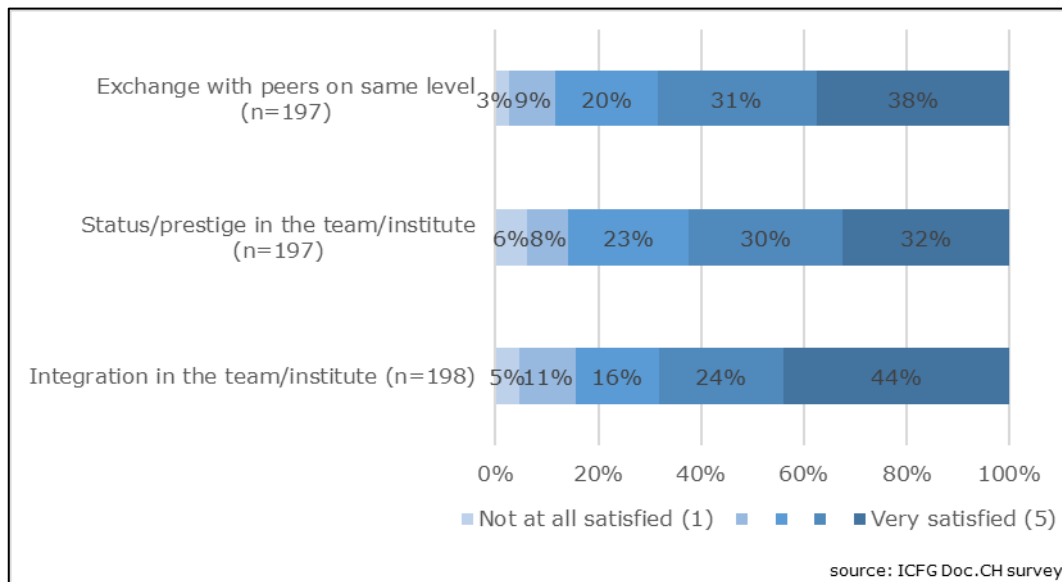


Figure 27. Satisfaction with exchange and integration

Finally, the enabling of an independent research project possibly attracts or even requires a specific, **independent type of researcher**. In three items of the survey, the participants rated how much they agreed with statements relating to their autonomy on a scale from one to five (cf. Figure 28). Roughly 80 percent agreed either much or fully to the statements “I have/had no difficulties working independently in my project” and “I very much like working on my own”. These results support the idea that Doc.CH attracts and selects largely autonomous or autonomy-favouring young researchers. However, when it comes to feeling alone with problems, 41 percent fully or much agreed with the statements “I often feel/felt on my own with problem related to my PhD”. 39 percent seem to have no or little issues in this regard.

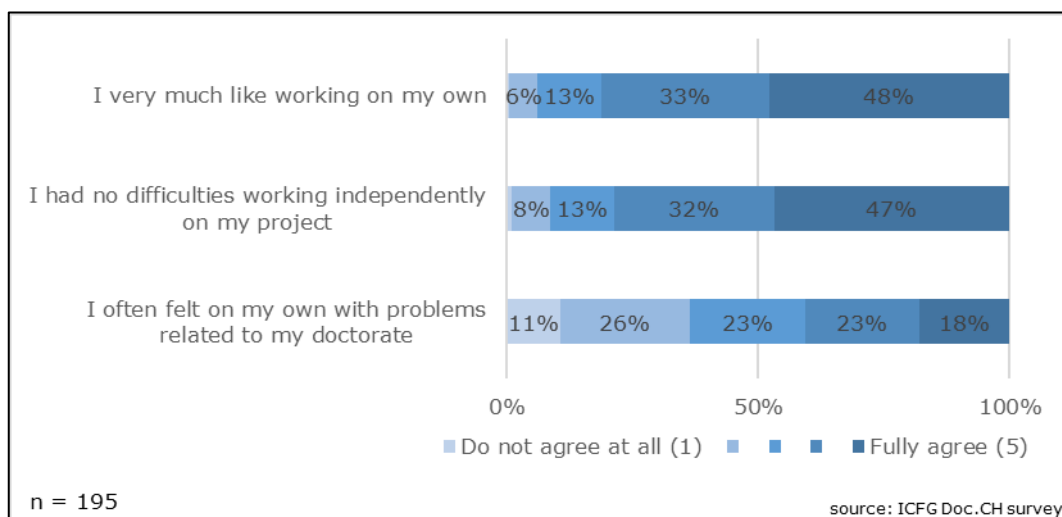


Figure 28. Experience with independence

In addition to the rating of these aspects for the individual situation, the survey participants also rated items on these aspects for the group of Doc.CH recipients in general (cf. Figure 29). The results of this rating reflect the findings displayed in Figure 28 above.

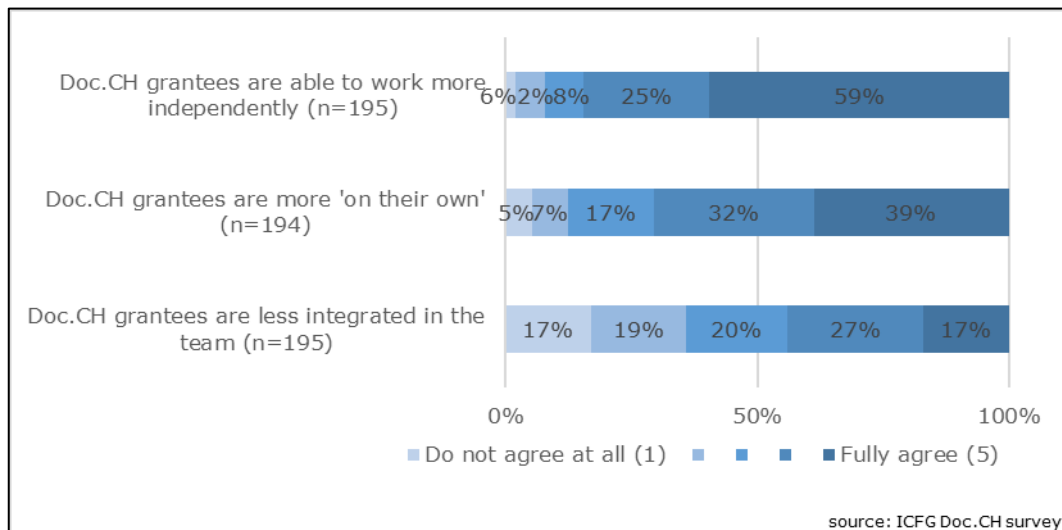


Figure 29. Rating of independence and integration

In fact, 84 percent rather or fully agree that recipients of Doc.CH grants are able to work more independently (mean = 4.3). However, 71 percent also believe that the recipients are more on their own in their doctorate (mean = 3.9). The integration in the team is considered as slightly less critical but still not that high on average (mean = 3.1).

Interview results: doctoral students and supervisors

The interviewed Doc.CH recipients highly value the **financial support**, especially the paid additional costs related to the research and the stays abroad to visit their second supervisors, to do field work and archival work abroad, which might not have been possible or at least not as easy in other positions. Some of the interviewees mentioned they felt privileged with their grant, especially in comparison with doctoral students with other funding. In comparison with colleagues who left the university, however, the salary is a disadvantage, according to one interviewee. For students with responsibilities for other persons, the financial resources can also be scarce, though potentially still better than with other funding options.

They also pointed out that it was worth doing the budget in detail at the beginning, because knowing that the financial resources were planned in detail and granted for the next few years was valuable and assuring for the doctoral students. This is a general advantage over other, mostly shorter grants and employments. Some explained, however, that they had great difficulties in planning the budget, and did not think of everything from the beginning, which was a problem. Thanks to the support of the administration at their institute and thanks to further financial support from the university they could still acquire the required funds (with exceptions).

The doctoral students with SNSF project funding reported similar impressions, except they did not necessarily need to draw up the budget themselves. They are content with what the budget of the project covers, in particular conference costs.

As far as **independence** is concerned, the interviews with the Doc.CH recipients further showed that they mostly feel very much at ease with the concept of independence. Autonomy fits them well, is important to them and is a welcome way of

working. They view the possibility of operating on their own as a big advantage and are ready to deal with potential consequences. For some, however, the independence comes with pressure. One interviewee explained how self-imposed pressure can be a problem in this context. Precisely because the students are autonomous and responsible for their own project, they may put even more pressure to succeed on themselves. This may lead as far as the students struggle with demanding support, because they feel they should be able to deal with problem themselves. Autonomy may also be a bigger challenge and pressure for Doc.CH at the beginning of the projects, when they first need to find their role.

Comparing Doc.CH and SNSF project funding, the autonomy of doctoral students appears to depend very much on the individuals, and on the supervisor and his or her understanding of the supervision role. This becomes clear when comparing the accounts of the individuals in each constellation. The descriptions of the doctoral students and their supervisors match in terms of how they work. The autonomy that is granted – both by the doctoral students and supervisors – depends mostly on the individuals and the professorship, and not so much on the kind of funding.

The level of independence must be looked at for the proposal phase and the actual project phase. Doctoral students with project funding have in many cases not had any influence on the proposals. Thus, the frame of their projects is given from the start, which can either be a disadvantage (when interests cannot be implemented in a satisfying way) or helpful (for people who are grateful to be given a framework). In those cases where the doctoral students contributed to the project proposal or even came up with it on their own, they have taken a similarly independent role as the Doc.CH recipients. The big difference here is that Doc.CH runs under the students' own name, which is a big advantage for the students and formally accurate. In any case, when it comes to the implementation of the projects, however, they can work highly independent and have an influence on potential changes to the project plan. Hence, in terms of autonomous working, funding does not necessarily make a difference, but the individual characters do.

Eventually, the difference is who bears the responsibility. Thus, doctoral students may have less freedom in terms of outlining their projects and making decisions, but they are – in the end – also not responsible for the projects.

Finally, the supervisors highlighted the importance of fostering the autonomy of doctoral students, as independence is essential for good quality research, in particular in the humanities and social sciences. At the same time, however, it is also clear that the independence granted by Doc.CH is only that great when it fits the student.

The independence of the students may also correlate with the **supervision situation**. In the interviews with the constellation of doctoral students (with Doc.CH or project funding) and the supervisors, it became clear, that the kind of supervision and the extent of supervision, does not so much depend on the kind of funding of the doctoral students. Rather, it depends on the customs and practices of the supervisor on the one hand, and on the needs of the individual doctoral students on the other hand.

Some have regular personal meetings or colloquia with the whole group (which includes both the students with Doc.CH and project funding). Others exchange

irregularly and, often, by request of the doctoral students. The starting point however, is the same for the doctoral students. In the interviews, the majority of them pointed out that they see no difference between themselves and their colleagues in terms of the supervision they get and the interest of the supervisor for their project. One doctoral student however mentioned he/she feels that the colleague with a Doc.CH grant may sometimes get even more support because of the reporting for the SNSF, for which the Doc.CH recipient needs help. Two of the six supervisors explained that they make no difference in supervising different students but that their own role may still be different. They may be more involved and engaged in the SNSF projects, because they are eventually responsible for the success of the projects.

As for the **network and exchange**, the interview result again show few differences attributable to the kind of funding of the doctoral students. As the supervisors point out, going abroad for research visits and to conferences is essential for establishing a network with other scientists. Here, a specific advantage of the Doc.CH recipients is that the costs for such visits are already entailed in the budget – provided the candidates have thought of all the costs in the application process. By contrast, doctoral students with other funding often have to apply for additional funding to go to conferences in the course of their doctorate.

As far as the network at the host institution is concerned, the Doc.CH recipients appear to be well-integrated, according to the interview partners. They reported to be part of a team with regular exchange, either formal or informal. Often, they are integrated well in the team and the department, partially also because they have already been around and potentially even been part of the team as a student assistant before their doctorate. Of course, the network also depends on the characters of the doctoral students. Some are more active and show more initiative than others do. Nevertheless, a few of the interviewed Doc.CH recipients talked about the feeling of being alone, especially with regard to the topic or project. For example, one of the interviewees felt very much alone with the topic because only a handful of researchers deal with this topic worldwide. Another person explained that he/she felt alone with the doctorate despite being part of a team at the office and despite colloquia, because there was no actual teamwork in the doctoral project.

From the point of view of the supervisors, the local network and exchanges of the doctoral students also does not depend on the funding so much, but on the size and vibe of the department and the personality of the individual students. Of course, the SNSF projects may provide for more exchange because of the project nature in the first place. At the same time, however, a Doc.CH recipient – despite being alone in his or her project – can still be part of a (research) group, provided other doctoral projects and students are around. In comparison to people doing a free doctorate with an employment outside the department, Doc.CH recipients are also better connected, simply because they have a work place at the department.

Interview results: experts

The experts pointed out that the **enabling of an independent doctorate** bears the danger, that students work on their project in an isolated position. They stress that, while strengthening autonomy is important, exchange and the “critical mass” are just

as important and necessary to produce good quality research. Importantly, however, autonomy does not preclude exchange.

As far as the issue of project ideas based on the MA topic is concerned, the experts are divided. Some argue that these project ideas should not automatically be viewed as problematic in the context of independence. Firstly, there is often simply not enough time for the students to come up with and develop completely new ideas and projects between the end of their MA studies and the start of the doctorate, or especially not enough paid time to do so. Secondly, in particular in the humanities and social sciences, MA theses are often already largely independent projects of the students, which is why a further development of the idea for an autonomous Doc.CH project should not be problematic. Others, however, refer to MA theses where the topic was either predefined by the supervisor or developed more or less incidentally. In those cases, the experts argue, a further development of these ideas for a Doc.CH is not appropriate for Doc.CH because the choice of the topic was not autonomous (enough).

The interviews show that autonomy and independence are understood differently and applied to different phases. In this regard, some experts argued that independence should not be the core criterion for the choice of a topic or the research idea itself. They argued that it should not matter whether they got the idea from someone else or based on another (possibly previous) project, as this is usually the case. The important thing is autonomy and independence in the implementation. Thus, the independent development, planning and implementation of the project by the doctoral students should be in the foreground, irrespective of whether it was completely their own new idea (which is not very realistic in the first place) or not.

4.6 Conception of Doc.CH

This chapter reports the results concerning the participation requirements (time of submission, mobility and co-supervision), as well as the grant duration and time resources and, finally, the restriction to humanities and social sciences. The former indicators were examined in the survey, mainly by means of rating questions. The restriction to certain research domains was inquired in the expert interviews in particular.

Survey results

The survey contained a block of items on the **participation requirements**, which the participants rated in terms of how important they find changes to these requirements (cf. Figure 30). According to 56 percent of the participants, it would be rather or very important to relax regulations regarding the maximum of two years between the MA degree and the application to Doc.CH (mean = 3.5, on a scale from 1 to 5). 34 percent find it rather or very important to relax the mobility requirement (mean = 3). On average, the participants are indifferent in terms of regulations concerning the MA degree (mean = 2.4) and the co-supervision (mean = 2.5).

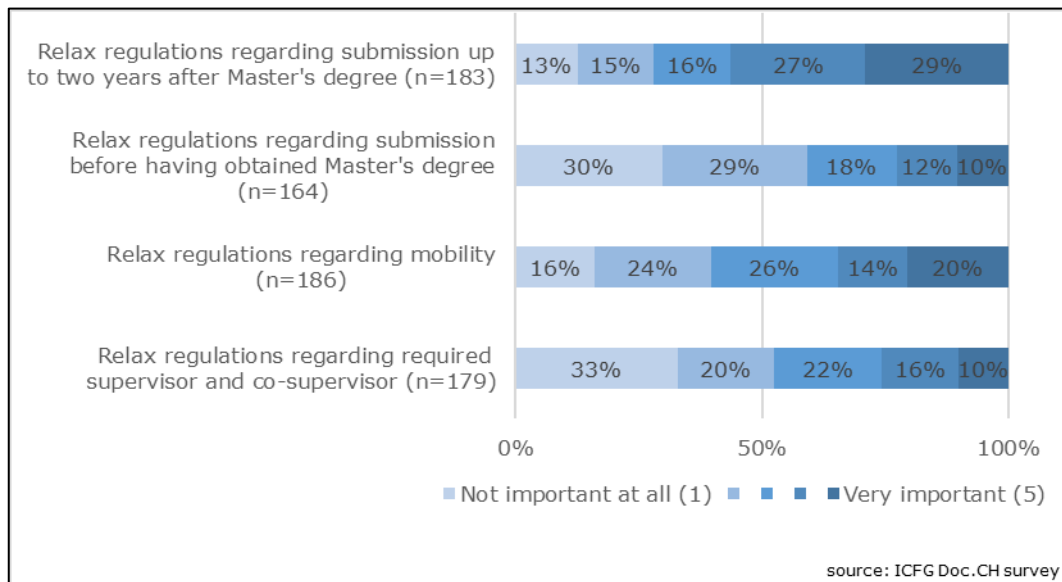


Figure 30. Rating of changes to requirements

In addition, the survey contained questions on the **time resources** of the participants. In theory, Doc.CH recipients should be able to work full-time on their doctorate. On average, the survey participants who have already finished their doctorate indicated that they worked 43 hours per week on their dissertation (n = 37). This is much more time than the control group was able to spend on their doctorate. On average, they spent 31 hours per week on their doctorate. Similarly, they had only 24 hours on average stipulated for their doctorate in their contract – provided they had a contract for working on their doctorate.

This difference is also perceived by the Doc.CH recipients. When asked, how much they agree with the statement “Doc.CH grantees are able to spend more time on their research, as compared to doctoral students with other funding”, 88 percent of the survey participants rather or fully agreed (cf. Figure 31; mean = 4.4).

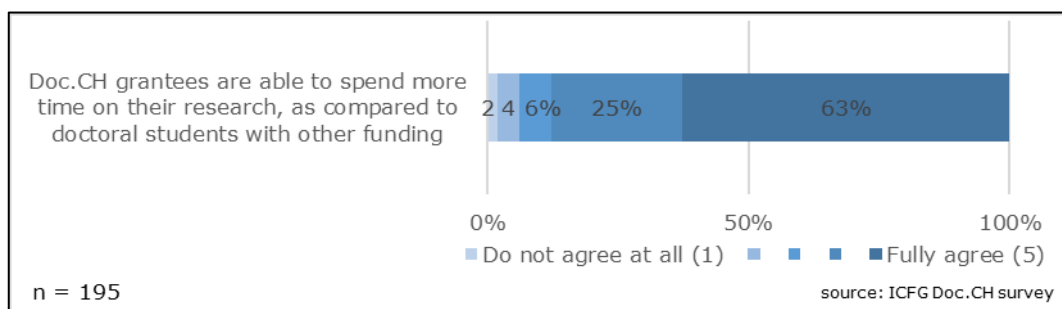


Figure 31. Time use for doctorate

Nevertheless, 56 percent of the survey participants indicated that they use some of their Doc.CH **time for work not directly related to the doctorate**. They use most of this time for other research projects, writing articles not related to their doctorate and for teaching and supervising students (cf. Figure 32). Administrative duties and work in support of the team or supervisor take up comparatively little time.

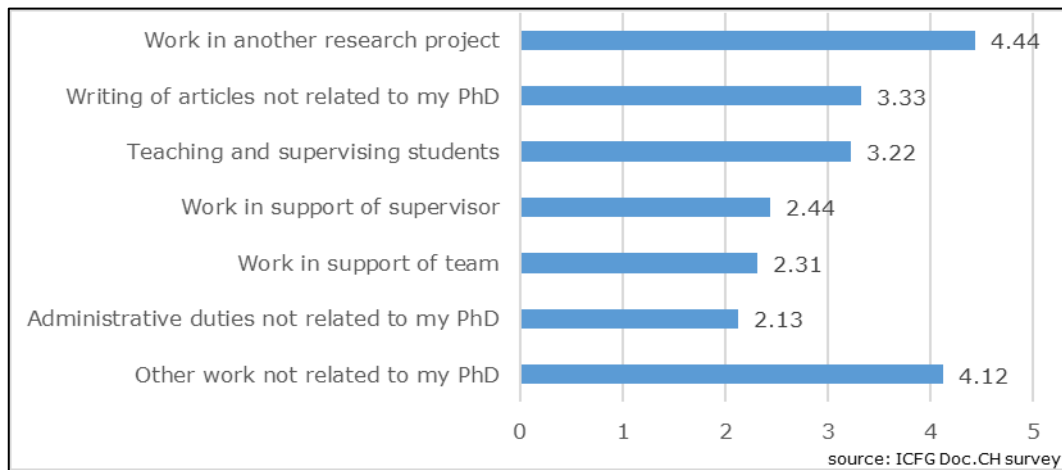


Figure 32. Work not directly related to doctorate in hours

Doc.CH recipients are enabled and supposed to work 100 percent on their doctorate. They can make a written request to reduce their work time percentage to minimally 80 percent, for instance in order to pursue additional jobs. In fact, 29 percent of the survey participants reported that they have one or more jobs in addition to their Doc.CH grant. 60% of these are at a university or research institution. The reasons are manifold (cf. Figure 33, multiple answers possible).

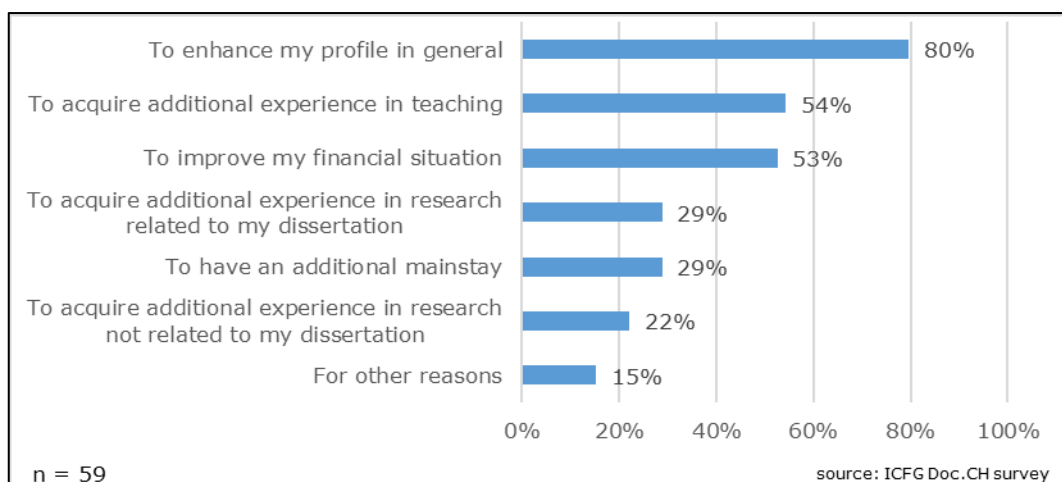


Figure 33. Reasons for additional job(s)

80 percent of the participants indicated that they have another job in order to enhance their profile in general. Acquiring teaching experience was a reason for 54 percent. 53 percent have an additional job to improve their financial situation. Gaining additional research experience and further mainstays were mentioned less often.

Interview results: doctoral students and supervisors

In the interviews with the Doc.CH recipients, when it comes to **time use**, most of them reported that they actually use more or less the full work time for their doctorate. Some reported that they use little time here and there to support their supervisor, to prepare a lecture, or correct exams. These appear to be smaller exceptions. Some also use part of their Doc.CH purposefully for other tasks, for example for teaching and writing papers, because they like to do it and because they view it necessary for their further career. One interviewee explained that he/she lacks time to do a further education parallel to Doc.CH, which he/she would need in order to pursue his/her career plan

after the doctorate. By contrast, one person described that he/she reduced her work percentage to 80 percent for a while in order to do a CAS.

The Doc.CH recipients very much value the fact, that they are completely free in terms of how they organize and divide their work. At the same time, structuring a work day can also be challenging, as the Doc.CH recipients report.

In general, the interviewed recipients are very happy with their time resources and feel privileged to be able to spend 100% on their research, particularly compared to doctoral students with assistant positions, who are allegedly under much more time pressure and stress. They do not see any big differences to doctoral students with project funding in this regard. One person criticized the time concept, in that he/she mentioned that spending 100 percent on a doctoral project for four years is nice in theory, but that especially in the humanities, the doctorate is a temporal process, requiring as much time as is necessary. According to this view, the 100 percent concept would not necessarily be conducive to the quality of the research.

The interviews with the doctoral students with SNSF project funding revealed somewhat more confusion with the time resources. Firstly, it appears to be unclear to some of them to what percentage they are officially employed for the project or the doctorate respectively. They have contracts of 50, 60, 75 or 80 percent, but are expected to work 100 percent for the project. Secondly, some have made agreements as to how much time they use for the project and how much for their own dissertation. In practice however, these arrangements do not seem to work out all the time. In this regard, one interviewee also reported difficulties in distinguishing the roles of being a project employee and a doctoral student in the same context. Those who reported that they did additional jobs or tasks not related to their doctorate further described difficulties in prioritizing tasks and projects – because the short-term deadlines are often more pressing than long-term projects such as the doctorate. Nevertheless, several interviewees stated that they are satisfied with their time resources, both with regard to the duration and the work time percentage. They also draw the comparison with assistant positions, who have allegedly worse time boundaries.

With regard to the **co-supervision**, there are differences in terms of how easy it was for the Doc.CH recipients to find suitable supervisors. It is striking that almost all the interviewed recipients had already known their first supervisor either because the supervisor had already supervised their MA thesis or taught courses of their BA or MA studies. A few doctoral students had also been student assistants of their supervisors. In few cases, the doctoral students had worked outside of the university or at a different university and then sought contact with their first supervisor based on their preferred research topics. Yet, some of the Doc.CH recipients reported great difficulties in even finding a second supervisor. In those cases, they often relied on help by their first supervisor. As the results reported in Chapter 4.5 have shown, the co-supervision may be more appropriate on paper than in practice, given that almost 40 percent reported to get no sort of supervision by their second supervisor.

Interview results: experts

In general, the experts evaluate the conception and participation requirements rather positively. The latter are viewed as rather strict, but at the same time appropriate or

even necessary given that the evaluation procedure is very effortful and the grant is very competitive. Still, the requirements are flexible enough for exceptions, according to the experts.

The **mobility requirement** is allegedly often criticized by the researchers, but viewed as necessary by the experts. In the practice it is highly appreciated, that the change of institution is not necessary required before the doctorate but that it can also take place during the doctorate.

The experts highly value the requirement of **co-supervision**, especially as it is still not very common in the humanities and social sciences. They argued, that co-supervision not only enhances the quality of the supervision but also strengthens the autonomy of the students. It forms a corrective in cases of contrarities and disparities. They are aware however that often co-supervision sounds good in theory but is not sufficiently implemented in reality. Doctoral programmes or Graduiertenkollegs could be another way of strengthening the support and the inclusion of the doctoral students, and to diversify their supervision situation.

The **target group** is viewed as coherent and suitable, although two experts criticized that the grant excludes people from abroad and people who did their MA abroad. For the specified target group, however, the grant meets the diverse needs. Without Doc.CH, independent projects would hardly be possible in the humanities and social sciences. Thus, it has had a big impact in these research domains.

While some find that the **success rate** of roughly 30% is okay, other experts find it way too low. The experts further pointed out that it is good, that **re-submissions** of unsuccessful proposals are possible, because the competition is high and because re-submissions can show a very good quality, provided that applicants are able to work in the critique and improve their proposal.

The financial support is adequate, according to the experts, and the grant's **duration** of up to four years is regarded as very important. The experts find it positive that the calculation of the duration of the doctorate now starts with the actual start of the doctorate and no longer with the date of the matriculation. One problem mentioned by the experts in terms of the granted time is that proposals can be submitted in different phases of the doctorate (i.e. both people who have not started their doctorate yet and people who have already spent up to two years working on their doctorate can apply). The concern here is that the proposals of the more advanced applicants are much more mature and therefore may have better chances of being accepted. Thus, there is a potential for unfairness which needs to be taken serious in the evaluation process.

The emphasis on the **origin of research ideas** was also discussed critically by the experts. The requirement of having an "own idea" is questionable. Rather, the quality of the project and the independent implementation should be important for the evaluation. Thus, according to some experts, it should be okay if the doctoral students develop a research plan that is based on the MA or research ideas of the supervisor, as long as the actual implementation of the idea is independently done by the doctoral students. Besides, evaluating where a research ideas stems from is difficult in the first place.

In addition, it is questionable, whether the **maximum of two years** between the MA degree and the application for Doc.CH is enough to come up with a research plan based on a new, own idea. In some disciplines, the regulation with two years may be more problematic than in others. For instance, in architecture, it appears to be common that the doctoral candidates work outside of academia for some time after their degree. Consequently, the time frame is very short or too short for these people. Drawing up a research plan and writing a proposal demands a lot of effort and time. Doc.CH creates a gap here, in that this time of writing the proposal and waiting for the decision is, in principle, not covered financially. This period of uncertainty is also discussed in the context of the two years regulation. According to one of the experts, expanding the maximum would only aggravate the insecure situation.

They further find the fostering of **autonomy** important. In this regard, Doc.CH is a good impulse for the career at this early stage. The experts pointed out the importance of participating in doctoral programmes and being part of research networks in order to connect with the scientific community.

The idea that the doctoral students can and should spend **100 percent** on their research project is welcome on the one hand. On the other hand, it is problematic as it does not correspond with the reality of academia, which consists of more than research. For example, the Doc.CH recipients lack teaching experience if they do not teach in addition to Doc.CH or within their Doc.CH time. In addition, for better chances on their academic career path, the doctoral students should be involved in departmental activities, in the faculty and in university bodies and committees, which is time consuming.

A further critique of the experts concerns the fact that Doc.CH fosters a very specific profile and **type of researchers** (fully-determined, excellent and fast) and this may not be the only profile that is promising for great academic achievements. In addition, it might be too early to identify the “best ones” at this early stage, not least because this stage of the career is still associated with a rather high level of guidance and dependence.

As for the **restriction of Doc.CH to humanities and social sciences and the extension to other research domains** respectively, the experts have different views and arguments, both in favour and against the extension. In general, the expansion of Doc.CH to other disciplines was discussed along four aspects: the ways of working and structures of the disciplines, the specific needs, the concept of independence and the concept of excellence.

The needs correlate with the structures and ways of working in the disciplines. One argument is that natural sciences and medicine in particular may have more financial means in the first place, and therefore a smaller need for an instrument like Doc.CH. The departments are often bigger, there are more professors and labs, and consequently more means for doctoral students. In terms of financing, another aspect to be considered is that doctoral students in medicine and natural sciences may need other and possibly more financial support as they may require specific machines and materials. In terms of the ways of working, some experts assume that there is a bigger need for Doc.CH in the humanities and social sciences because there are more independent project ideas that actually come from the doctoral students. That is, there

is a lot of bottom-up, innovation-driving research in the humanities and social sciences. By contrast, research in the natural sciences and in medicine is much more collective in nature and the research ideas allegedly stem more often from the professors and grow in the context of research groups and labs. Thus, there may be a smaller need for doctoral students in these research domains to apply independently for topics of their own choice. Importantly, as the experts pointed out, there is already a broad range of research settings in the humanities and social sciences. In this regard, some experts even suggested to further restrict the current range of disciplines, for example by excluding economics. Similarly, it was mentioned that legal sciences also see difficulties with independently developed research proposals and projects, because the doctoral students had not been as well prepared for research in their MA studies as in other disciplines.

In principle, fostering the independence of young researchers is a good direction and desirable, according to the experts, and this applies to people in medicine and the natural sciences as well. This argument speaks for the expansion to all research domains. However, it may not be implementable to the same degree in all disciplines – although the implementation is not precluded per se. Another argument supporting the extension is if one takes the concept of excellence as a starting point. Despite the problem of what “excellence” actually means, it would make sense to foster promising young researchers likewise in all disciplines. However, the experts point out that Doc.CH might not be equally favoured and made use of by the most promising doctoral candidates in other disciplines. For instance, there might be more attractive options (in particular financially) in the IT sector or in medicine, where there are private companies and foundations offering good conditions and prospects, that are absent in the humanities and social sciences. Thus, Doc.CH might not be able to compete and might not be able to attract the promising researchers it aims to attract. Similarly, with other funding options available, the doctoral candidates might not take the risk of entering this highly competitive procedure (i.e. taking the time to draw up a complete project plan and apply to Doc.CH in light of the low success rates). Thus, when chances are lower than for projects or other funds, Doc.CH will not get the top people.

Finally, the experts listed things to consider in case of an extension to all the disciplines. Firstly, the extension should not occur at the cost of the humanities and social sciences. The success rate should be remained (if not increased) and the budget should be raised accordingly – not least because the success rate is an important incentive for applications. Secondly, it should be clarified how material expenses are dealt with. Specifically, it should be determined who (SNSF or labs at host institutions) bears the costs for the additional materials, instruments and similar that are potentially required for doctoral projects in other fields. Thirdly, it should be clearly defined what kind of doctorate (irrespective of discipline) is fostered by Doc.CH in order to adjust expectations. For example, it would need to be clearly defined what independence means (independently developed research questions? independently implemented projects?), such that the requirements are clear and applicable to all disciplines. In this regard, the heterogeneity of the disciplines and their researchers need to be taken into account. Finally, the extension to all disciplines would require the extension of the evaluation procedure, or more specifically, the evaluation commissions, for example by introducing discipline-specific sub-evaluation commissions.

4.7 Evaluation procedure

This chapter presents the evaluation of the evaluation procedure used for the funding scheme Doc.CH. The results in this chapter stem from the survey and the interviews with the experts, that is mainly with the members of the local Research Commissions and the SNSF Evaluation Commissions.

Survey results

In the survey, the participants were asked to rate several aspects of the current evaluation procedure on a scale from one (very poor) to five (excellent). Consider that this rating of the evaluation procedure is based on the views of successful applicants only. Naturally, applicants who did not get the grant might have other opinions on the procedure. The quality of the documentation of the evaluation procedure (mean = 4) and of the administrative support provided by the SNSF (mean = 4.5) was rated as very good or excellent by the majority of the survey participants (cf. Figure 34).

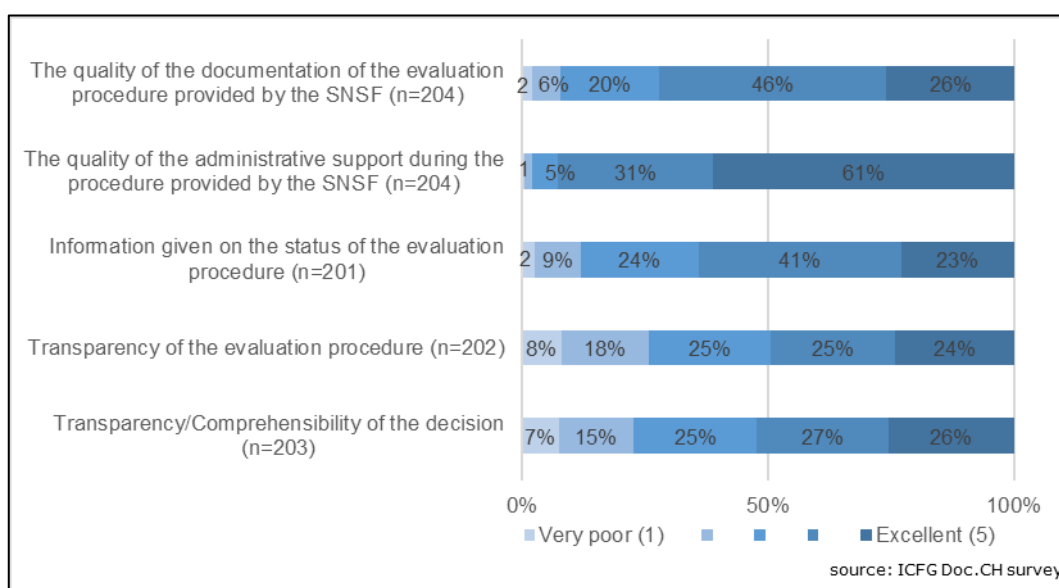


Figure 34. Rating of quality, information and transparency in the evaluation

The information given on the status of the evaluation was rated as good on average (mean = 3.7). The transparency of the procedure and the comprehensibility of the decision were rated with 3.4 and 3.5 respectively.

76 percent of the survey participants find the overall setup of the evaluation procedure very good or excellent (cf. Figure 35; mean = 4). Similarly, 77 percent appreciate the two-stage procedure (mean = 4). The duration until the notification of the decision received a slightly lower rating (mean = 3.3). Moreover, the expertise of the commission was rated differently but on average positively by the survey participants (mean = 3.8).

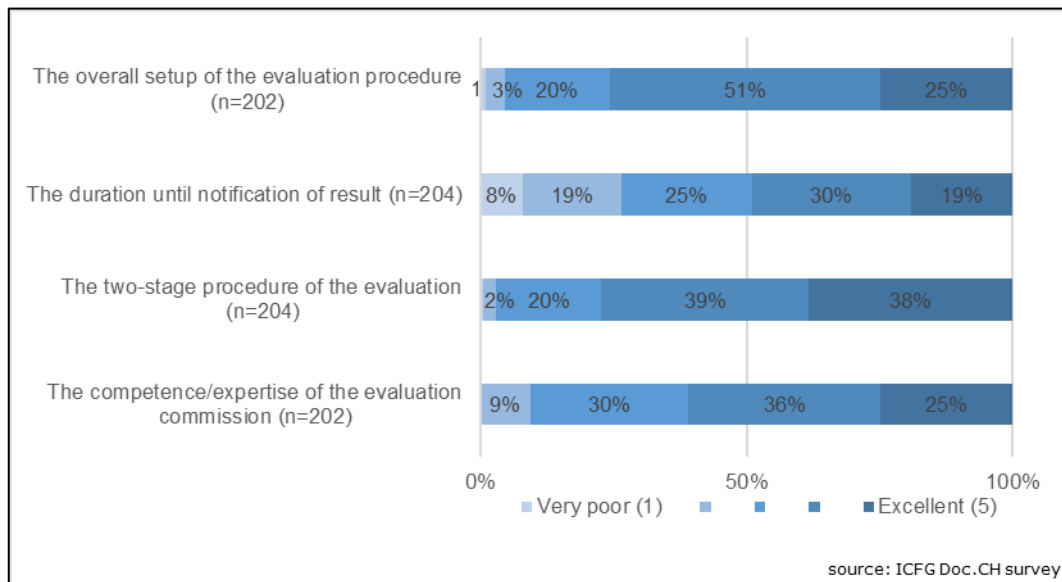


Figure 35. Rating of setup of the evaluation procedure

When asked how important the recipients find changes related to the evaluation procedure, the improvement of the support and advice provided from the SNSF was rated medium important (cf. Figure 36; mean = 3).

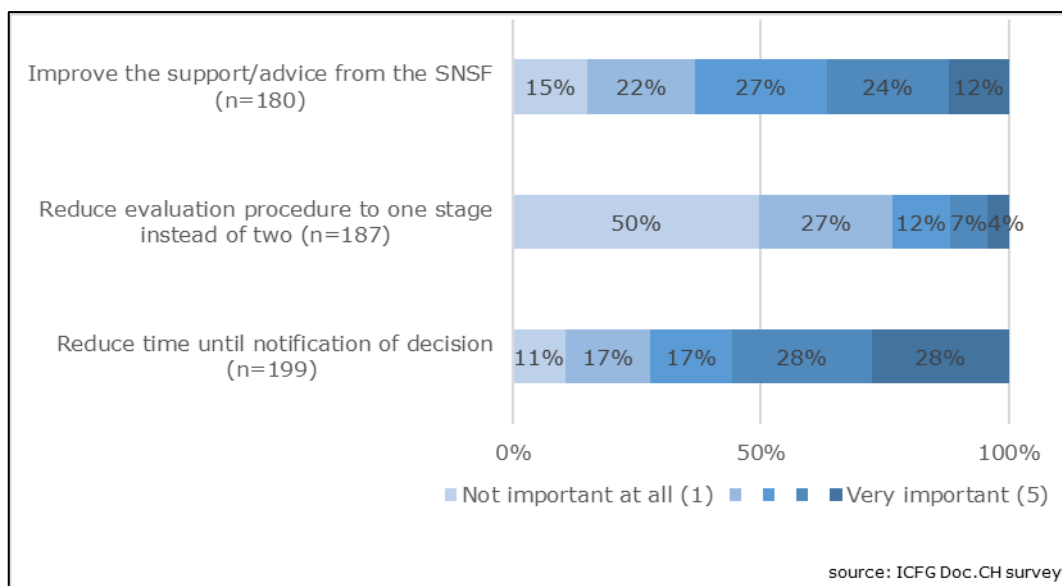


Figure 36. Rating of changes to evaluation procedure

Reducing the evaluation procedure from two to one stage is not important at all in the participants' opinion (mean = 1.9), which supports the two-stage model. Reducing the time until the notification of the decision, however, is desired by more than half of the survey participants, as 56 percent rate this as rather or very important (mean = 3.4). In an open question for feedback on the evaluation procedure, several participants again mentioned that the long time (according to the respective participants) they had to wait was problematic, for example in terms of the job they needed to resign. In addition, some mentioned they would have liked to get a detailed feedback on their proposal. Finally, some participants mentioned they were surprised to be reviewed by people from outside their disciplines and questioned their expertise.

Interview results: experts

As far as the **first phase** in the Research Commissions is concerned, the experts highly appreciate that the proposals are actually discussed by the commission members and that this is not just a written procedure.

Some experts find the composition of the Research Commissions suitable and adequate, for example, that every faculty of the university is represented by at least one member. The interdisciplinary exchange thus created is viewed as fruitful and rewarding for the commission members. In addition, they find the procedure within the commission well resolved. A potential lack of expertise is also no problem, because it can be compensated by sufficient evaluation experience, according to one expert. By contrast, several experts criticized the composition and, consequently, the expertise of the commissions. In this view, it is problematic that not every discipline receiving a proposal is actually represented by a specialist in the commission. Moreover, the quality of a commission depends on its individual members and their contribution. The commissions and their competence vary from university to university and from year to year within each university.

The fact that the local Research Commissions do the preselection is rated positively and negatively as well. On the one hand, the people in these commissions have local knowledge, they may know the candidates and supervisors, and may be competent to decide on the feasibility of a project at the specific host institution and the specific departments. On the other hand, there is the danger of local politics involved in the evaluation procedure in this first stage and the fear that the commissions and the scope is too small to be fair. In fact, one expert explicitly discussed the fostering and protecting of specific candidates in the context of effort.

In general, the great advantage of the first phase is that it makes a massive selection and greatly reduces the number of proposals for the second phase. In the opinions of some experts, this selection is good, meaning that the right people are selected for the next phase (with few exceptions). Other experts however, doubt this selection. Some find it difficult to evaluate the candidates and proposals on paper only and would prefer interviews for the preselection to enhance the selection security. The effort in the current procedure is rated as okay, but it strongly depends on the disciplines. For reviewers in disciplines with a lot of proposals, the effort is very high.

Finally, the preselection at the local level is regarded as problematic in terms of the competition within universities. Depending on how many projects are proposed in a certain discipline, there may be more or less competition at different universities. In the extreme case, the experts fear that this may lead to strong proposals being rejected because several others are around at one university and weaker ones being accepted because no other proposals were around at a different university.

In the **second phase**, in the Evaluation Commissions at the SNSF, the experts highly appreciate the use of the interviews. The interviews are helpful to see how the candidates present themselves and their project plan, how fit they are both in theory and methodology. They are useful to clarify open questions, and to assess to what extent the candidate has developed the project independently and to what degree the

supervisors have supported the candidates. Sometimes the interviews lead to a deterioration and sometimes to an improvement of the assessment of the proposal.

Conducting the interviews takes a lot of time – although they are organized very well, and viewed as compact and efficient. At the same time, the interviews seldom lead to completely different ratings of the proposal. Thus, some experts question the use of the interviews when considering the high effort. Similarly, some experts involved in the first phase, find it hard to judge how much additional work is done in the second phase, because the main selection and evaluation occurs in the first phase, and the final evaluation rarely comes to a different conclusion.

Finally, the composition and competence of the commission is viewed as great by some, and as poor by others. One expert explains that whenever there is not sufficient expertise to properly evaluate a proposal, they tend towards generous assessments. At the same time, if one does not know a topic well, one looks more closely at the methods, which can be hampering innovation. Rather, more focus should be put on the topics in these cases.

As for the **evaluation in general**, the procedure as a whole is regarded as too effortful in light of the comparatively low financial contributions, especially in comparison with other funding schemes at the SNSF. By contrast, some experts pointed out the effortful procedure is worth it, particularly at the stage of doctorates. Also, the evaluation process is seen as a personal enrichment and a possibility to shape the future of science. Moreover, they appreciate the social factors provided by the SNSF, for example the organised dinners, as well as the positive atmosphere in the commissions in Bern and their size (everyone knows everyone).

The two application deadlines per year are regarded as an advantage mainly for the doctoral students. This way, the candidates are more flexible and the deadlines meet the different university calendars. Moreover, the candidates whose applications were rejected do not need to wait as long (or possibly drop out) when there are two deadlines per year. In contrast, one deadline per year might be easier for the commission members to handle and might – given the larger sample – provide for a better comparison of all the proposals within a discipline. However, reducing the deadlines to one would of course mean more effort at this one time.

The length of the proposals is regarded as adequate, but the long publication lists from the supervisors are viewed as a burden, and as exaggerated compared with the length of the project proposal. One expert therefore suggested to require a condensed list of publications, with a selection of publications that are relevant for the proposed project.

The idea of the **new evaluation procedure as of 2021**, with a national selection from the beginning (instead of a local preselection), is appreciated by the experts, because it is fairer. However, the experts find it very difficult to imagine, how the new procedure could look like, especially in terms of administration, and because, in the current procedure, the local Research Commissions actually manage a lot. Dealing with all the applications at once would mean an enormous amount of work, which none of the evaluation members could possibly cope with. Therefore, some kind of a two-stage procedure with a preselection might still be helpful. Bigger evaluation commissions in order to divide the work might be difficult for two reasons. Firstly, Switzerland is small

and the number of professors limited. Secondly, a bigger commission might not work as well as a smaller one. One expert suggested a first selection by means of a rough screening of the proposals by experts in the particular disciplines worldwide, followed by a final selection by a physical commission at the SNSF. Furthermore, for the new evaluation procedure, most experts recommend to make use of interviews as well. The interviews are important at this early career stage, because the performances and capabilities of the candidates at this level may not be as visible in the proposals. Similarly, some experts believe that it would be necessary to still have reviews and a discussion of these reviews.

In addition, several experts suggested evaluating and comparing proposals to other proposals within their discipline or research field. They argued in terms of discipline standards as an important criterion, and as more important than interdisciplinarity at the doctorate level. Similarly, they stress to put more focus on topics than on methods, and more focus on relevance than on innovativeness.

One expert would actually prefer to keep the preselection in the Research Commissions at the local level, and further to let these commissions do the final selection based on interviews. The expert argued for this version, because the Research Commissions know the local conditions the best. To reduce the effort of the local commission in this case, one would need to reduce the application time points to one per year.

4.8 Attractiveness of Doc.CH

This chapter presents the results of the evaluation of the grant's attractiveness, which were gathered from the survey and, mostly, from the interviews.

Survey results

The survey participants were asked to what extent they agree with the statement "Doc.CH is a very attractive funding opportunity for students in the humanities and social sciences" on a scale from one to five. 97 percent of all the survey participants agree (almost) fully with this statement (mean = 4.8; cf. Figure 37).

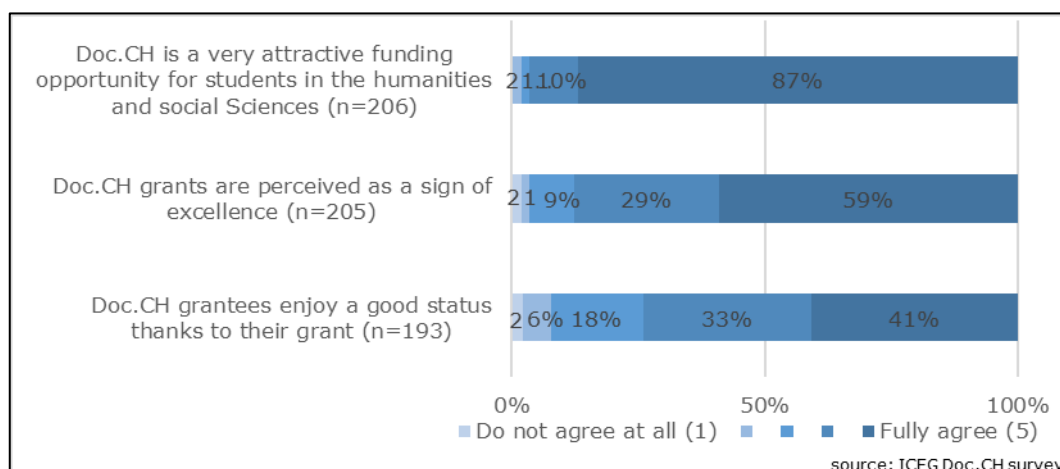


Figure 37. Rating of attractiveness

Furthermore, 78 percent rather or fully agreed that Doc.CH grants are perceived as a sign of excellence (mean = 4.4). When asked how much they agree with the general statement “Doc.CH grantees enjoy a good status thanks to their grant”, 74 percent rather or fully agree (cf. Figure 37; mean = 4.1). Thus, the participants are not only satisfied with their own status (cf. Figure 27) but also attribute a positive impact to the grant in terms of positive status.

Interview results: doctoral students and supervisors

The interviews with the Doc.CH recipients yielded various **positive aspects and advantages of Doc.CH**. Firstly, they find the autonomy granted by Doc.CH very attractive. This autonomy makes them less dependent on good (or bad) guidance, because they are their own “boss”. In this regard, some interviews pointed out that the grant is ideal for a certain type of people, namely those who can deal with a lot of freedom and self-imposed structure and pressure. The grant allows them to realize their own ideas, and to work full time on their project. Having enough time for the doctorate improves the quality of the projects as well.

A further advantage of the grant is the good effect of the grant for their future career. The interviewees agree that it looks good on the CV, because the grant (and also the SNSF) has a good reputation, and because it is associated with excellent performance. Thus, it is a great advantage for the recipients to be able to prove that they have successfully raised funding for their own research. Hence, the grant does not simply promote their research project but also their career.

The responsibility that they bear also brings advantages. For one thing, it is a stronger motivation to succeed, because the recipients are responsible for their own project. Moreover, they have the full control over their project in terms of finances but also with regard to deadlines and requirements.

They appreciate the possibility of going abroad and having a budget to go abroad. The financial support – and especially the contributions to additional costs – is generally highly appreciated. The recipients also profit from the financial security. Knowing that the next two to four years of the doctorate are financially well covered is valuable to the doctoral students.

The evaluation procedure was viewed as positive in terms of what the candidates learnt in the process and what they could do to refine their research idea and plan. Similarly, they appreciate the experience of having drawn up a research plan on their own. Also, the details required for the application (in terms of budgeting, research plan etc.) have proven very helpful in the course of the doctorate, as they were already organized and did not need to be taken care of later.

For the Doc.CH recipients, the grant is also very attractive in comparison with options abroad. For example, one person who considered doing a doctorate in Germany did not find any comparable career funding scheme there.

The supervisors in general find Doc.CH very attractive as well, and they mentioned very similar advantages and positive aspects, for example, the possibility to apply for independent projects in the first place, duration and financial resources, and the

possibility (and requirement) to change the host institution. They find it a great scheme to promote young researchers and to promote autonomy at this early stage. From their point of view, it is also an advantage for the doctoral students that their projects run under their own names. In addition, from their perspective it is an attractive option to promote doctoral students when they have no other funding options (assistant positions, project positions) available.

The interviewed Doc.CH recipients also described some **negative aspects and disadvantages** of Doc.CH. Firstly, they criticize that the conception of the grant does not entail teaching. A lack of teaching is bad for the CV and for the career in academia. In general, they see the requirement of working 100 percent on the doctorate as too strict and find it important, that 20 percent can be used for other tasks or projects. The reduction to a minimum of 80% is possible on request.

Another disadvantage mentioned by the recipients is that the application for Doc.CH is very risky. The competition is high and they bear the full risk and responsibility. It is their responsibility to have a second plan and to financially bridge the time used for the application and the time after a potential rejection.

The responsibility related with the grant further entails a rather big administrative load (including the reporting), which is viewed as a burden by some of the interviewed persons. Few of the interviewees find the salary of Doc.CH rather unattractive.

The grant may not be attractive to all promising young researchers, as it only fits for those who are already highly independent at this early stage already and who have no problem with autonomy. However, even for the Doc.CH recipients who have successfully applied to the grant, independence can become a challenge in the course of the doctorate, for example, when problems turn up and decisions need to be made. At this stage, the doctoral students often have little experience to profit from. Some also find the focus on excellence a negative point. This can put too much pressure on the promising researchers, and their wellbeing is neglected.

Another thing that that Doc.CH recipients miss is a more concrete perspective of what follows after the doctorate, and, in this respect, more support in terms of planning the career. In fact, the grant recipients feel very much obliged to the SNSF and at the same time also promoted directly by the SNSF. Consequently, they would also wish for more support from the SNSF in the form of workshops or seminars on topics such as career planning, mental health in academia, media training or structuring a doctorate. Furthermore, some Doc.CH would find a platform for exchange among all the Doc.CH recipients helpful.

The supervisors criticized the lack of teaching experience as well. One person suggested that teaching should be a requirement to fulfil during the doctorate for example during one semester. However, such a requirement would need to be evaluated carefully and defined clearly, because doctoral students might be exploited by the departments or professorships. Still, teaching at last one course that is closely related to the doctoral project would be a great benefit for the Doc.CH recipients.

In addition, in the perspective of the supervisors, proposals with good chances of approval usually require a rather long time of preparatory work, and this time is not

financed, which is a disadvantage of the grant. As a consequence, some supervisors employ the candidates as assistants for one year or less to develop a research plan.

The supervisors further fear that a disadvantage of Doc.CH is that the recipients could be rather lonely with their project. Therefore, they stress the importance of the integration of the candidates in the professorship and the institute.

Interview results: experts

The experts clearly find Doc.CH a very attractive funding scheme. It is particularly attractive in research domains with little project funding and a great option to realize an independent research project. As such, it promotes autonomy at an early stage. Moreover, the duration of the grant and the extensive financial support make Doc.CH very attractive and, often to the first choice to fund a doctorate. Finally, the grant is associated with quality and excellence.

In light of this high attractiveness, some experts are actually surprised that there are not more applications for this grant. The main disadvantage, which might make Doc.CH unattractive at least for some people, is that the doctoral students bear the full risk. They need to put a lot of (often unpaid) time and effort in the application and wait for the decision with the risk of being rejected, and, this risk is big given the high competition. Moreover, as far as Doc.CH as the first choice is concerned, some experts mentioned that it might not always be the most attractive option and the first choice from the point of view of the supervisors. Actually, the supervisors might want to keep the top people close to the professorship, that is on assistant positions in the department.

The advantages of Doc.CH also become clear in the **international comparison**. It needs to be considered that a comparison with grants and other funding options abroad is difficult as it depends on various factors, such as the financial means, the duration, the competitiveness, and the range of research domains. Despite these difficulties, the experts implied that they did not know of any funding scheme of such an extent abroad. For example, the experts mentioned special grants for young scholars with good conditions, but which are extremely competitive with less than 10 percent success rates, or which only cover a few months, or a low salary. In comparison with the Graduiertenkollegs in Germany, one expert pointed out the thematic and financial interconnection as positive, which contrasts the promotion of more independent and free-floating doctoral students by Doc.CH. Finally, the fact that there is no comparable funding scheme outside Switzerland, can either be interpreted critically, by questioning the idea of an independent doctorate; or, it can be interpreted as a sign of the SNSF taking over a pioneering role in the promotion of young researchers.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this evaluation was to examine the impact of Doc.CH and the success of the Doc.CH recipients, as well as the extent to which their success is due to the grant. Moreover, the aim was to evaluate the conception, the evaluation procedure and the attractiveness of Doc.CH. In the following, we summarise and synthesise the results

from the survey and the interviews for each of the seven evaluation questions presented in Chapter 2.

First, we examined **whether Doc.CH reasonably fills the funding gap for students in the humanities and social sciences**. Roughly half of the Doc.CH recipients had already worked on their doctorate before their grant. Presumably, they applied for Doc.CH because they needed funding as their former option expired or because they were not satisfied enough with the conditions of their former funding. For the majority of the recipients, Doc.CH was the first choice. A quarter of the recipients had no other funding options available. Almost half of the recipients had tried other options before Doc.CH. Mostly, they had tried to get an assistant position or another grant from a Swiss institution. The main aspects of the grant (independent application, independent working, full-time for research, long duration) were also rated as the most important aspects for the application for Doc.CH. In case the proposal had been rejected, a third of the recipients indicated they would have had no other options to fund their doctorate. Others would have had a second plan, for example firm offers for assistant positions by their supervisors. The rest would have tried other options, which include re-submitting to Doc.CH, trying to get other grants or assistant positions, or doing a free doctorate financed by part-time employment outside of the university. The application for Doc.CH comes with a lot of time and effort for the development of the proposal. This time is an insecure phase, which is often not funded or cross-financed. The insecurity is increased by the fact that the doctoral students bear the full responsibility and consequently the full risk.

In sum, the results support the assumption, that there is a need for funding in the social sciences and humanities, and that Doc.CH appears to be a good solution to fulfil the needs for this particular target group (note at this point that non-successful applicants were not included in the evaluation). It covers a need in terms of financial support and in terms of enabling independent doctoral projects. However, this funding gap is filled at the expense of the doctoral students when it comes to the time before the grant actually starts, which creates a new gap. The time required for the development of the proposal and the time until the notification of the decision is not covered financially and risky given the high competition.

Second, we analysed **whether Doc.CH complements other funding options in a useful way**. For professors, Doc.CH is a welcome option to promote young researchers, especially when they have no other funding options – such as project positions or assistant positions – available when a promising candidate wishes to do a doctorate. The grant is regarded as particularly useful since the introduction of a limit on the number of applications in project funding. It has helped to reduce “hidden project proposals” and enables doctoral students to conduct a research project independently and, importantly, under their own name. In this regard, Doc.CH appears to meet needs that are exemplary for the humanities and social sciences, where much doctoral research is driven by the doctoral students, in contrast to natural sciences and medicine, where research is more collective in nature and research projects emerge rather top down. However, the candidates also need to meet the criteria of the grant. It is important to consider that we only gathered results in reference to the successful applicants. Still, the Doc.CH grant on the one side and project positions on the other side may be useful to foster different types of young researchers. Compared to funding options other than project funding – such as assistant positions or other grants –

Doc.CH may offer considerably better conditions, (for example a higher salary, a longer duration or more time for research) and thereby decrease insecurity and pressure. In sum, the combination of the career scheme Doc.CH and the SNSF project funding at the doctorate level is viewed as necessary and valuable. Doc.CH is also regarded as a necessary and good funding option in comparison with assistant positions and other grants.

Third, we examined the **success of the Doc.CH recipients both in their doctorate and on their further career path**, and analysed **to what degree their success is attributable to Doc.CH**. Note that the latter is difficult to assess at this time because only few recipients have finished their doctorate yet. The doctorate holders who had a Doc.CH grant took four years and four months on average to finish their doctorate. In general, they were faster than the control group. The Doc.CH recipients further believe that Doc.CH reduces the duration of the PhD, because the grant allows to work full time on research. In addition, those who have already finished received very good grades for their doctorate – though this result needs to be interpreted considering that grades are potentially arbitrary and good (MA) grades are a precondition for the grant. Furthermore, the Doc.CH recipients are on average quite determined to continue an academic career. More than half of them aim for an academic career, and a quarter is undecided yet. In the control group, the proportion of those aiming for an academic career is smaller and the proportion of those decided against an academic career bigger. In both groups, the proportion of those aiming for an academic career is the same for men and women. Almost half of the Doc.CH recipients (and more men than women) aspire to a professorship. Note however, that this may partially result from the impression of having to meet expectations of the SNSF. The proportion of those with gainful employment is bigger in the control group than in the group of Doc.CH recipients who have finished their doctorate. Of the former Doc.CH recipients with gainful employment, 77 percent are actually still employed in academia and almost as many have started a post-doc after their doctorate. By contrast, roughly half of the doctorate holders in the control group are still employed at university, and merely 20 percent have started a post-doc. On average, the Doc.CH recipients believe that they gain useful experience for their future (e.g. self-dependence, competitive fund raising, project management, budget responsibility) and that the grant has a positive effect on their career – in academia probably more so than outside academia. In their view, more team- and project-experience might be more helpful for a career outside academia. For a career in academia, Doc.CH lacks the benefit of teaching experience. Teaching experience is relevant for the further academic career, and may be more difficult to gain with Doc.CH, because it is not entailed in the concept. In comparison with the doctoral students with project funding, it becomes clear that they can be as independent as the Doc.CH recipients can. They face similar questions and reflect on similar things regarding their future. Both groups and the supervisors see big benefits of both kinds of funding. Career wise, the advantage of the Doc.CH recipients is that they had a research grant under their own name and carried the full responsibility. In sum, the few Doc.CH recipients who have already finished their doctorate have proven very successful. In addition, in many cases their career continues successfully in academia. This success can be attributed to Doc.CH in so far as the control group is less successful (in terms of the chosen indicators) and less represented in academia after the doctorate. Doc.CH is believed to have a great impact on the career in terms of prestige and in terms of experience with managing, budgeting and being

independent. They may, however, lack teaching experience, which is a disadvantage for the further academic career.

Fourth, we investigated the **functionality of the financial support and the enabling of an independent dissertation**. The financial support is highly appreciated by the recipients and rated very good by the supervisors. The guarantee, that two to four years are fully funded, especially including costs related to the projects (such as travel expenses or material costs), is important for the doctoral students and functional. As far as the independent doctorate is concerned, the results showed that the project ideas were mostly developed based on the ideas of the doctoral students. For 30 percent, the idea was partly predefined. For almost 80 percent, there is a small or big relation to the topic of the MA thesis. According to the experts, this should not be seen as problematic, as long as the projects are implemented independently by the doctoral students. The doctoral projects are in many cases related to the research fields of the supervisors at least a bit, and in 61 percent rather or very closely. Most of the Doc.CH recipients get actual supervision from their official supervisors and are (rather) satisfied with their supervision, but only 63 percent are also supervised by their second supervisor, and to a lesser extent. The Doc.CH recipients have been able to establish contact with other scientists in the immediate work surroundings to a great extent (with exceptions), and are (rather) satisfied with their exchanges and integration in the team. The Doc.CH recipients highly appreciate their autonomy in their doctoral project. The results further show that the recipients are often the type of persons who very much like to work on their own and have no difficulties in working independently. Still, autonomy can become a challenge when it comes to the implementation of the project and to making decisions in case problems come up in the course of the doctorate. 41 percent indicated that they often felt alone with problems related to their doctorate. Coupled with the full responsibility, independence can further lead to a lot of self-imposed pressure. Finally, the interviews with the constellations show that independence is not a mere Doc.CH phenomenon. Doctoral students with project funding can be highly independent as well. The degree of autonomy rather depends on the supervisor's understanding of supervision, and on the personality and needs of the doctoral students. Similarly, the network and integration of the doctoral students does not so much depend on the kind of funding but on the size and vibe of the departments and the characters of the doctoral students.

In sum, the financial support appears to be generally functional, especially because the financial support covers the salary as well as costs for travel expenses and similar. The enabling of an independent doctorate is functional as well, not least because doctorates – in particular in the humanities and social sciences – are often independent anyway, independent of the funding source. The degree of independence rather depends on the individuals and the conditions at the work place. To counter a potential isolation and helplessness, a good integration and network as well as good supervision are vital.

Fifth, we examined how the doctoral students, supervisors, and experts assess the **conception of Doc.CH**. The Doc.CH recipients highly appreciate the concept of having 100 percent time for research. The results show that they spend 43 hours per week on their research, on average. This is more than the control group has available, which is also due to their contracts (provided they have one), which allow for less work time for the doctorate than stipulated by Doc.CH. In the view of the recipients, too, they spend more time on their research than doctoral students with other funding do. More

than half of the Doc.CH recipients indicated that they use some of their time for work not directly related to their doctorate, such as other research projects, writing articles or teaching. Furthermore, almost 30 percent have a job or several jobs in addition to their Doc.CH, mostly in order to enhance their general profile, to gain teaching experience and to improve their financial situation. In general, they highly appreciate their time resources and flexibility, in particular in comparison with doctoral students on assistant positions. The supervisors and experts also stressed the importance of spending much time on research but also pointed out that teaching and faculty or departmental engagement is very important as well.

As for the duration concept, it is very important that up to four years are funded. Some experts fear a misbalance of the maturity of proposals because doctoral students can apply at different levels (at the very beginning and up to two years into their doctorate). They stress the importance of a fair procedure in this regard. The maximum of two years between the MA and application to Doc.CH is regarded as too short by some experts, especially when students work and need to come up with a new idea and project plan. On the other hand, considering that the time of writing the proposal and waiting for the decision is not financed (except if students are provided university funding explicitly for this purpose) and thus marks a precarious phase, prolonging the maximum might only increase the insecurity. A useful solution could be some sort of seed money or initiator grants. The success rate is viewed as adequate by some experts, and as way too low by others.

The requirement of co-supervision is in principle very welcome in order to strengthen the quality of supervision and to decrease the dependency of the doctoral students of one single professorship. In practice, it may sometimes be difficult for the doctoral students (and also their supervisors) to find a second supervisor, and they may not take over a very big supervision role, too. Nevertheless, they can also play an important role in the course of the doctorate and help to build a network, also internationally. In this regard, doctoral programmes or Graduiertenkollegs are another valuable means for diversifying supervision and providing a network.

The mobility requirement may be criticised by some researchers, but it is regarded as a necessary requirement by the experts. Importantly, the regulation that the change of host institution can occur during the doctorate is useful and much appreciated.

The concept to foster independence is important and much appreciated by doctoral students and professors. In the experts' opinion, especially with regard to the evaluation of proposals, it is important that the development and implementation of the research project are independently done by the doctoral students. By contrast, it should not be rated as too important that students come up with the idea for a research project completely on their own. That is, projects can base on ideas from the MA or the supervisor, as they often do, but the implementation is important to be autonomous.

The extension of Doc.CH to all disciplines was discussed in regard of the concepts of autonomy and excellence and in terms of the structures and needs of different disciplines. Fostering autonomy and promoting the top people is desirable and possible if not required in all research domains, in principle. However, different disciplines (and even different subject areas within disciplines) have different research settings and ways of working, and consequently different needs. Research in natural sciences and medicine, for instance, are more collective in nature than in the social sciences and humanities. The need for funding of independent projects may be smaller in these domains. Natural sciences and medicine may also have more financial means, not only project-wise but also in the form of support by companies and private

foundations. At the same time, they have different financial needs in terms of required materials and machinery. For students in these domains, Doc.CH would need to be attractive enough to compete with other funding options in order to attract the top people. In other words, the success rate and the financial support would have to be worth it to take the risk of applying to Doc.CH. Finally, should Doc.CH be expanded, it must not be at the costs of the social sciences and humanities, and it must be clearly defined what kind of doctorate is meant to be promoted in order to adjust expectations.

Sixth, we examined how doctoral students, supervisors, and experts assess the **evaluation procedure of Doc.CH**. Note that these results only include the views of and on the applicants who were successful in the procedure. The results show that most Doc.CH recipients are satisfied with the quality and support provided by the SNSF in the evaluation procedure. Moreover, they find the overall setup and the two-stage procedure to be (very) good. In general, they would wish for some more transparency on the procedure and the actual decision, and for a shorter duration until the notification of the decision. The experts find the overall setup of and the two stages of the current procedure adequate in general. Some find the effort for the commission members too high and the whole procedure too intense compared to evaluations for schemes or projects with much higher financial contributions. Other believe the big effort is worth it and particularly important for a scheme at this early stage of the career. The interviews in the second stage are regarded as very useful in many regards. The composition and competence of the commissions is criticised with respect to the representation of the disciplines. In this regard, it was mentioned that proposals should rather be evaluated within their disciplines and by actual experts in the field. In light of this critique, changes to the evaluation procedure by means of substituting the local preselection by a national selection are welcome. It remains unclear however, how the new procedure should be organised. The experts mentioned that some preselection would still be useful, as also in the current system the preselection in the first stage is seen as very helpful for the second stage.

In sum, the evaluation procedure was evaluated positively, with the exception of transparency and duration until notification from the perspective of the recipients, and the critique of the current first selection occurring locally and not necessarily by experts in the field and not within the respective disciplines.

Seventh, we analysed how the doctoral students, supervisors, and experts assess the **attractiveness of Doc.CH**. The funding scheme is regarded as very attractive and as a sign of quality and excellence. It is attractive in various regards, which includes the independence of the students, the possibility to realise own ideas, as well as the great financial and time resources. Moreover, having been rewarded with a Doc.CH, and the experience in project management and taking over responsibility are helpful for the further career, particularly in academia. The recipients and professors also find the grant attractive in comparison with other funding options both in Switzerland and abroad. Comparing their own conditions with those of (research) assistants, in particular, the doctoral students stress the importance for Doc.CH to be flexible enough to give room for tasks in the faculty or department and for teaching, which are important and necessary. An unattractive aspect of the grant is the high competition and risk, that the students bear by taking over the full responsibility. In this regard, the (often) unpaid time required to draw up the proposal needs to be considered as well. A further disadvantage is that Doc.CH can in some cases lead to isolation of the doctoral students, which may not necessarily be due to the grant itself, but which

makes promoting networks and programmes for doctoral students even more important.

In sum, Doc.CH is viewed as a very attractive funding scheme, both in the national and international context, given its great conditions and enabling of independent doctoral projects. Shortcomings concern the potential gap and insecurity for applicants before the grant and the threat for doctoral students to be more or too much on their own.

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APPENDIX I: Survey among recipients of Doc.CH

Topic	Quesion Nr.	Question Type	Question Text	Response Categories	Response Values	Filter	Research question	Variable	Source, incl. Page Nr.	Question-Nr.-Marker
PhD general		heading	First, we are interested in your Doc.CH and PhD situation in general.							
	1	single choice	What is the status of your Doc.CH grant?	My grant has not started yet My grant is running My grant has finished (including early completion and extensions) My grant is currently interrupted I have broken off/discontinued my grant I have not taken up/withdrawn my grant	1 2 3 4 5 6		Info (Filter)	statusgrant		x
	2	open text	Why have you interrupted your Doc.CH grant? Please describe shortly:	Open text	string	if Q1 = 4	1,7	whyinterruptg		x
	3	open text	Why have you broken off/discontinued your Doc.CH grant? Please describe shortly:	Open text	string	if Q1 = 5	1,7	whybrokenoffg		x
	4	open text	Why have you withdrawn/not taken up your Doc.CH grant? Please describe shortly:	Open text	string	if Q1 = 6	1,7	whywithdrawng		x
	5	single choice	What is the status of your PhD?	I have not started working on my PhD yet I am working on my PhD I have completed my PhD (submitted dissertation, passed exams/defence if required) I have broken off/discontinued my PhD I have not taken up my PhD (no intention to do a PhD)	1 2 3 4 5		Info (Filter)	statusphd		x
	6	open text	Why have you discontinued/broken off your PhD? Please describe shortly:	Open text	string	if Q5 = 4	1,7	whybrokenoffp		x
	7	open text	Why have you not taken up your PhD? Please describe shortly:	Open text	string	if Q5 = 5	1,7	whyntakenupp		x
	8	single choice	In which phase of your PhD are you?	Start phase Middle phase End phase	1 2 3	if Q5 = 2	4	phasephd		x
	9	single choice	Were you working (i.e. preparing/conducting research) for your PhD already before you applied for Doc.CH (excluding writing the proposal)?	Yes No	1 2	if Q5 ≠ 1	1,2,4	workbdocch		x
	10	open numeric	When did you start working on your PhD (excluding writing the proposal)?	Month Year	numeric2 numeric4	if Q9 = 1	1,2,4	workbdocch_month workbdocch_year		x
	11	open numeric	On average, how much did you work on your PhD (before Doc.CH)?	Average work time percentage:	numeric3			workbdocch_perc		x
	12	multiple choice	What sources of income did you have during the time you worked on your PhD before Doc.CH? Check all that apply	Position as assistant, research assistant in a university or research institute within a cantonal or federal framework Employed to take part in a research project (e.g. funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation)	1 2	if Q9 = 1	1,2,4	workbdocch_assi workbdocch_rproject		x

			Individual grant (e.g. funded by a foundation) or programme to promote young researchers granted by a Swiss institution (e.g. the SNSF)	3			workbdocch_grants	
			Individual grant (e.g. funded by a foundation) or programme to promote young researchers granted by a foreign institution	4			workbdocch_grantf	
			Employment outside of the university or research institute	5			workbdocch_ouni	
			Funding of the PhD by parents, partner, personal savings	6			workbdocch_personal	
			Loan (from a bank, family, partner, friends etc.)	7			workbdocch_loan	
			No income	8			workbdocch_nincome	
			Other, please specify:	9			workbdocch_other	
			Open text	string			workbdocch_otherc	
13	single choice	In your estimation, is it realistic for you to submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?			if Q1 = {1,2,4} 3,5 & Q8 ≠ 3,4		submit_prosp	x
			Yes	1				
			No	2				
14	open numeric	How much additional time will you approximately need to submit your dissertation?			if Q13 = 2 3,5 oder Q1 = 3 & Q8 = 2			x
			Additional time required in months:	numeric2			submit_prosp_addtime	
15	open numeric	How long did it take to complete your PhD?			if Q5 = 3 3,5; Vergleich		ABS_e2015 A2d_1, 11	x
		Please calculate this period starting at the moment you began preparing the topic for your PhD and ending when you submitted your dissertation or passed exams/defence (if required), including any interruptions.		instruction				
			Years:	numeric4			durationphd_year	
			Months:	numeric2			durationphd_month	
16	multiple choice	Which degree requirements did/do you have to fulfill in order to obtain your PhD degree? Check all that apply			if Q5 = 3 resp Info, 3, Q5 ≠ 3 Vergleich		ABS_e2015, A2d_3, 11	x
			Submit a monograph	1			phdrequires_retro_mon o resp	
							phdrequires_prosp_mon o	
			Publish articles in a national or international scientific publication.	2			phdrequires_retro_articl e resp	
							phdrequires_prosp_artic le	
			Oral defence of PhD thesis	3			phdrequires_retro_defe nce resp	
							phdrequires_prosp_def ence	
			Participate in courses/seminars	4			phdrequires_retro_cour ses resp	
							phdrequires_prsop_cour ses	
			Examinations on specific topics related to the content of the thesis	5			phdrequires_retro_exa mination resp	
							phdrequires_prosp_exa mination	

			Lectures at conferences/congresses	6					phdrequires_retro_conf erence resp phdrequires_prosp_conf erence		
			Laboratory work/clinical studies/empirical works	7					phdrequires_retro_emip irical resp phdrequires_prosp_emi pirical		
			Obtain ECTS	8					phdrequires_retro_ects resp phdrequires_prosp_ects		
			Not defined yet	9					phdrequires_prosp_not defined		
			Other, please specify: Open text	10 string					phdrequires_retro_othe r resp phdrequires_prosp_oth er		
17	single choice	Please indicate the qualification/grade you obtained with your PhD.			if Q5 = 3	3			phdgrade	SNF-CTC 33	x
			Passed (if no particular grading)	1							
			Summa cum laude, 6, or equivalent	2							
			Insigni cum laude, 5.5, or equivalent	3							
			Magna cum laude, 5, or equivalent	4							
			Cum laude, 4.5, or equivalent	5							
			Rite, 4, or equivalent	6							
18	single choice	Have you received a scientific prize or award for your dissertation (or part of it)?			if Q5 = 3	3			phdprize	SNF-CTC 34	x
			Yes	1							
			No	2							
19	multiple choice	Have you published any of the following scientific articles/contributions as author or co-author?			if Q5 = {2,3}	3, Vergleich				ABS_e2015, A2d_5a 12	x
		Please indicate (where appropriate) the number of articles/contributions			instruction						
			Essays/articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals	1					pub_rev		
			Number:	numeric2					pub_rev_numb		
			Essays/articles in non peer-reviewed scientific journals	2					pub_nrev		
			Number:	numeric2					pub_nrev_numb		
			Essays in anthologies/edited volume	3					pub_essadvol		
			Number:	numeric2					pub_essadvol_numb		
			Monographs (also several authors)	4					pub_mono		
			Number:	numeric2					pub_mono_numb		
			Anthologies/edited volumes (also several editors)	5					pub_editvol		
			Number:	numeric2					pub_editvol_numb		
			Reports:	6					pub_rep		
			Number:	numeric2					pub_rep_numb		
			Newspaper articles, book reviews and others	7					pub_new		
			Number:	numeric2					pub_new_numb		
			Other, please specify:	8					pub_other		
			Open text	string					pub_other_comment		
			Number:	numeric2					pub_other_numb		
			I have not published any scientific article/contribution	9					pub_no		
20	single choice	At what type of institution was/is your Doc.CH host institution based?				Info			hostinst		x
			University	1							
			ETH/EPF	2							
			University of applied sciences	3							

			University of teacher education	4					
			Other institution, please specify:	5					
			Open text	string					
21	multiple choice	Why did you choose your host institution? Check all that apply				Info			x
			Reputation of the host institution	1			hicos_repinst		
			Reputation of scientists at the host institution	2			hicos_repscient		
			Importance of the host institution in my research field	3			hicos_importinst		
			Existing links to the host institution	4			hicos_linkinst		
			Infrastructure of the host institution	5			hicos_infrainst		
			Employment conditions at the host institution	6			hicos_emploinst		
			Supervision reasons	7			hicos_supervision		
			Family/personal reasons	8			hicos_personal		
			Other/further reasons	9			hicos_other		
			Open text	string					
22	single choice	Did/do you participate in a structured programme (e.g. graduate school) during your Doc.CH grant?			if Q1 = {3,5} resp Q1 = {2,4}	Info, 1, Vergleich	strucprogr	ABS_e2015, A2d_9a 15	x
			Yes	1					
			No	2					
23	multiple choice	During your Doc.CH grant, did you complete one or more research or study visits at another university and/or research institute?			if Q1 ≠ {1,6}	Info, 1,3, Vergleich		ABS_e2015, A2d_12a/b 16	x
			Yes, in Switzerland	1			mobsw		
			Number:	numeric 2			mobsw_num		
			Total duration in months:	numeric 2			mobsw_month		
			Yes, abroad	2			mobabr		
			Number:	numeric 2			mobabr_num		
			Total duration in months:	numeric 2			mobabr_month		
			No, I did not complete any research/study visit at another university	3			nomob		
24	single choice	Did you interrupt your Doc.CH at any time in the past? If so for how long?			if Q1 ≠ {1,6}	1,7, Vergleich		ABS_e2015, A2d_6a 12	x
			Yes	1			interruptpast		
			Total duration in months:	numeric2			interruptpast_month		
			No	2			interruptpast		
25	open text	Why did you interrupt your Doc.CH grant? Please describe shortly:			if Q24 = 1	1,7, Vergleich	interruptpast_cos	(ABS_e2015, A2d_6b1 12)	x
			Open text	string					
PhD time use		heading	In the following, we are interested in your time use during your Doc.CH grant.						
26	open numeric	How many hours per week were/are you able to devote to work on your PhD (incl. unpaid time) during your Doc.CH grant?			if Q1 = {3,5} resp Q1 = {2,4}	5, Vergleich	hours_workphd	ABS_e2015 A2d_2a, 11	x
			Average number of hours per week:	numeric2					
27	single choice	Did/Do you regularly devote some of your Doc.CH time for work not directly related to your PhD (e.g., teaching, other research, support of supervisor)?			if Q1 = {3,5} resp Q1 = {2,4}	3,5	worknphd		x
			Yes	1					
			No	2					
28	multiple choice	What kind of work (that was/is not related to your PhD) did/do you devote time for? Please indicate (where applicable) the number of hours you spend on the following activities			if Q27 = 1	3,5			x
					instruction				
			Teaching and supervising students	1					
			Number of hours per week:	numeric2			worknphdt_hours		
			Administrative duties (not related to my PhD)	2					
			Number of hours per week:	numeric2			worknphdad_hours		
			Writing of articles not related to my PhD	3					

			Number of hours per week:	numeric2		worknphdart_hours	
			Work in support of supervisor	4			
			Number of hours per week:	numeric2		worknphdsup_hours	
			Work in support of team	5			
			Number of hours per week:	numeric2		worknphdtea_hours	
			Work in another research project	6			
			Number of hours per week:	numeric2		worknphdrp_hours	
			Other activities, please specify:	7			
			Open text	string			
			Number of hours per week:	numeric2		worknphdother_hours	
29	single choice	Did you have/Have you had additional (paid) jobs during your Doc.CH grant?			if Q1 = {3,5} resp Q1 = {2,4}	1,5 addjob	x
			Yes, one	1			
			Yes, several	2			
			No	3			
30	multiple choice	Where did you work/have you worked in this job/these jobs, for how long per week and for how many months?			if Q29 = {1,2}	1,5	x
		Check all that apply		instruction			
			At a university/research institute	1		addjob_place, addjobs_uni	
			Number of hours per week (on average):	numeric2		addjobuni_hours, addjobsuni_hours	
			Duration in months:	numeric2		addjobuni_month, addjobsuni_month	
			Outside of the university	3		addjob_place, addjobs_out	
			Number of hours per week (on average):	numeric2		addjobout_hours, addjobsout_hours	
			Duration in months:	numeric2		addjobout_month, addjobsout_month	
31	multiple choice	Why did you/ have you had this additional job/these additional jobs?			if Q29 = {1,2}	1,5	x
		Check all that apply		instruction			
			To improve my financial situation	1		addjob_cosfinanc	
			To acquire additional experience/knowledge in teaching	2		addjob_costeach	
			To acquire additional experience/knowledge in research related to my PhD	3		addjob_cosresphd	
			To acquire additional experience/knowledge in research not related to my PhD	4		addjob_cosresnphd	
			To enhance my profile in general	5		addjob_cosprofil	
			To have an additional mainstay	6		addjob_cosadd	
			Other, please specify:	7		addjob_cosother	
			Open text	string		addjob_cosother_comm ent	
PhD supervision and network		heading	The following questions concern your supervision and network during your Doc.CH grant.				
32	multiple choice	How did you find your supervisor?			Info, 1,5		x
			My supervisor was my former master supervisor	1		smastersup	
			I knew my supervisor thanks to personal contacts	2		sperscon	
			I knew my supervisor due to earlier stays	3		sstay	
			I was already employed at her/his institute before I applied for Doc.CH	4		sempl	
			My supervisor was recommended to me by scientific mentors or colleagues	5		secomm	

33	5-point scale	How closely was/is the topic of your PhD related to your supervisor's research field?	I found my supervisor by other means: Open text	6 string	if Q1 = {3,5} resp Q1 = {2,4}	1,5	sother sother_comment closeness_sres	x
			Not at all related	1				
				2				
				3				
				4				
34	multiple choice	Who actually supervised/is actually supervising you during your Doc.CH grant?	Very closely related	5	if Q1 = {3,5} resp Q1 = {2,4}	1,5, Vergleich	ABS_e2015, A2d_11a 15	x
			Check all that apply	instruction				
			My first supervisor	1				
			My second/co-supervisor	2				
			Professors engaged in the structured programme I participate in	3				
			Other scientists (e.g. research group head, project head, research assistant/associate etc.)	4				
			Other PhD students (in order to exchange experience and information)	5				
			Other, please specify:	6				
			Open text	string				
35	matrix	To what extent were/are you supervised during your Doc.CH grant by the following?			if Q1 = {3,5} resp Q1 = {2,4}	1,5, Vergleich	ABS_e2015, A2d_11a 15	x
			Not much	1				
				2				
				3				
				4				
			To a great extent					
36	matrix	How satisfied were/are you with the following aspects?			if Q1 = {3,5} resp Q1 = {2,4}	1,5	(DFG 2001)	x
			Not at all satisfied	1				
				2				
				3				
				4				
				5				
			Very satisfied					

37	matrix	To what degree have you been able to establish contact with other scientists so far?			if Q1 ≠ {1,6}	1,5	DFG 2001	x
		I have established contact with researchers	Not at all	instruction				
				1				
				2				
				3				
				4				
			To a large extent	5				
		In my immediate work surroundings					netw_works	
		On a national level					netw_nat	
		On an international level					netw_int	
		In my particular field of study					netw_field	
		Outside my particular field of study					netw_nfield	
University education	heading	The following questions concern your research topic and the relation to your Master's degree.						
38	single choice	How did you develop the research question/project idea for your PhD?				1,5	develop	x
			Mostly on my own/based on my ideas	1				
			Partly on my own, partly predefined (e.g. by supervisor, previous research project)	2				
			Mostly predefined (e.g. by supervisor, previous research project)	3				
39	5-point scale	How closely was/is the topic of your PhD related to your Master's degree?			if Q48 = {3,5} resp Q48 = {2,4}	1,5	closeness_ma	x
			Not at all related	1				
				2				
				3				
				4				
			Very closely related	5				
40	open numeric	In which year did you complete your Master studies?					mayear	x
			Year:	numeric4				
41	single choice	What is the final grade you received for your Master studies?					magrade	x
			Passed (if no particular grading)	1				
			Summa cum laude, excellent, 6, or equivalent	2				
			Insigni cum laude, very good, 5.5, or equivalent	3				
			Magna cum laude, good, 5, or equivalent	4				
			Cum laude, satisfactory, 4.5, or equivalent	5				
			Rite, pass, 4, or equivalent	6				
Application and alternatives	heading	The following questions concern your application to Doc.CH.						
42	multiple choice	Why did you choose to apply to Doc.CH?			if Q44 = 1	1,2,5,7		x
		Check all that apply			instruction			
			No other funding opportunities available	1			appcos_othernavail	
			Other funding opportunities were not suitable	2			appcos_othersuit	
			Other funding opportunities were not realistic	3			appcos_othernrea	
			Doc.CH was my first priority	4			appcos_firstprio	
			Other, please specify:	6			appcos_other	
			Open text	string			appcos_other_comment	
43	single choice	Before you received your Doc.CH grant, had you already applied for Doc.CH in the past?				Info	appbefore	x
			Yes	1				
			No, it was my first application	2				

44	single choice	Before you applied for Doc.CH, did you try alternative ways (instead of Doc.CH) to finance your PhD (or part of it), for example another employment, project or grant ?			1,2,7	beforealt	x
			Yes	1			
			No	2			
45	multiple choice	What alternatives did you try? Check all that apply		if Q44 = 1	1,2		x
			I applied for an individual grant/programme granted by a Swiss institution	1	instruction	beforealt_indgs	
			I applied for an individual grant/programme granted by a foreign institution	2		beforealt_indgns	
			I was a potential candidate in a research project (e.g. funded by the SNSF) that was rejected	3		beforealt_rp	
			I tried to get funding from a business			beforealt_busi	
			I tried to get an employment as an assistant (or similar) at a university/research institute	4		beforealt_assi	
			I tried to get an employment outside of the university	5		beforealt_out	
			Other, please specify:	6		beforealt_other	
			Open text	string		beforealt_other_comment	
46	single choice	If you had NOT received the Doc.CH grant, would you have had other options/tried other ways to still carry out your PhD project?			1,2	altphd	x
			(Rather) Yes	1			
			(Rather) No	2			
47	open text	What other options/ways would you have tried?		if Q46 = 2	1,2	altphd_comment	x
			Open text	string			
48	matrix	To what extent were the following features of Doc.CH important for your application of Doc.CH?			1,2,4,5,7		x
			Not at all important	1			
				2			
				3			
				4			
			Very important	5			
		Long duration of the grant (up to 4 years)				appimpo_dur	
		Good reputation of the SNSF				appimpo_repusnsf	
		Good reputation of Doc.CH				appimpo_repudocch	
		Amount of the salary				appimpo_salary	
		Opportunity to cover additional costs (travel expenses etc.)				appimpo_addcosts	
		Opportunity to propose and develop my own research project				appimpo_own	
		Opportunity to devote all my work time (80-100%) to my PhD				appimpo_time	
		Opportunity to work independently on my PhD				appimpo_independ	
		Option of going to another research institution				appimpo_mobinst	
		Option to produce a part of the dissertation at a host institution abroad				appimpo_mobabr	
		Other reasons, please specify:				appimpo_other	
		Open text				appimpo_other_comment	
49	matrix	To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding Doc.CH?			1,2,4,5,7		x
			Do not agree at all	1			
				2			
				3			
				4			
			Fully agree	5			

		Doc.CH is a very attractive funding opportunity for students in the Humanities and Social Sciences					stat_attr
		Doc.CH grants are perceived as a sign of excellence					stat_excell
		Doc.CH is difficult to receive					stat_diffreceive
		Most Doc.CH grantees probably applied because they had no other funding option					stat_notherfund
Evaluation rating	heading	Next, we are interested in your perception of the evaluation procedure.					
50	matrix	Please rate the following aspects:		6	MERCI	x	
		Very poor	1				
			2				
			3				
			4				
		Excellent	5				
		The quality of the information/documentation of the evaluation procedure provided by the SNSF					eval_info
		The quality of the administrative support during the procedure provided by the SNSF					eval_admin
		The overall setup of the evaluation procedure					eval_setup
		The duration until notification of result					eval_duration
		The two-stage procedure of the evaluation					eval_twostage
		The competence/expertise of the evaluation commission					eval_commi
		Information given on the status of the evaluation procedure					eval_status
		Transparency of the evaluation procedure					eval_transpeval
		Transparency/Comprehensibility of the decision					eval_transdec
51	open text	Other remarks or experiences related to the evaluation:		6		x	evaluation_comment
		Open text	string				
Conception	heading	The next questions concern the conception of Doc.CH in general.					
52	matrix	To what extent do you agree with the following statements?		if Q1 ≠ {1,6}	2,4,5,7	x	
		Do not agree at all	1				
			2				
			3				
			4				
		Fully agree	5				
		Doc.CH grantees are able to work more independently, as compared to PhD students with other funding					stat_moreindep
		Doc.CH grantees are able to spend more time on their research, as compared to PhD students with other funding					stat_moretime
		Doc.CH grantees are more "on their own", as compared to PhD students with other funding					stat_moreonown
		Doc.CH grantees are less integrated in the team, as compared to PhD students with other funding					stat_lessintegr
		Doc.CH grantees are financially well-off/properly funded, as compared to doctoral students with other funding					stat_finacwell
53	matrix	To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the impact of Doc.CH?		if Q1 ≠ {1,6}		x	
		Do not agree at all	1				
			2				
			3				

		Fully agree	4						
			5					impact_status	
		Doc.CH grantees enjoy a good status thanks to their grant As holders of their own grant, Doc.CH grantees gain useful experience for the future (e.g. responsibility of their own budget)						impact_experience	
		Doc.CH has a positive effect on careers in academia						impact_careeraca	
		Doc.CH has a positive effect on careers outside academia By helping researchers to dedicate 80-100% of their work time to their dissertation, Doc.CH reduces the duration of the doctorate						impact_careerout	
								impact_duration	
54	matrix	To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your experience with Doc.CH?				if Q1 = {3,5} resp Q1 = {2,4}	2,4,5,7	DFG 2001	x
		Do not agree at all	1						
			2						
			3						
			4						
		Fully agree	5						
		I very much like working on my own I had/have no difficulties working independently on my project I had/have enough time to work on my PhD I often felt/feel on my own with problems related to my PhD I believe that Doc.CH has a positive impact on my career						exp_lworkindep	
								exp_nprworkindep	
								exp_time	
								exp_onown	
								exp_impactcar	
55	matrix	In your opinion, how important is it to change any of the following aspects?					1,5,6		x
		Not important at all	1						
			2						
			3						
			4						
		Very important	5						
		Don't know	9						
		Improve the support/advice from the SNSF Extend the duration of the grant Increase the salary Increase the amount to cover additional costs related to the PhD implementation (travel expenses, etc						change_suppsnsn	
								change_duration	
								change_salary	
								change_addcosts	
		Relax regulations regarding submission up to two years after Master's degree Relax regulations regarding submission before having obtained Master's degree Relax regulations regarding mobility (required change of higher education institution) Relax regulations regarding required supervisor and co-supervisor Reduce evaluation procedure to one stage instead of two						change_yearsama	
								change_beforema	
								change_mob	
								change_supervisor	
								change_twostage	
		Reduce time until notification of decision						change_evalduration	
56	open text	Are there other significant aspects which should be changed?					5		x
		Open text			string			change_comment	

Career prospects and aspirations	heading	The following questions are about your career prospects and aspirations.				
57	matrix	How important to you are the following aspects when looking for a job?		Vergleich		ABS_e1015, B1 x 25
			Not at all important	1		
				2		
				3		
				4		
			Very important	5		
		To find work near to where I live			worknear	
		To be able to work part-time			workparttime	
		To be able to reconcile work and family life			workfamily	
		To be able to reconcile my work with other activities (e.g. professional sport, travel etc.)			workactiv	
		To find a job with good career prospects			workprospects	
		To find a secure job			worksecurity	
		To earn a high salary			worksalary	
		To work for a prestigious company			workprestige	
		To be able to use my specialist qualifications at work			workquali	
		To find a job that enables me to further my academic career			workacacar	
58	single choice	Are you currently following an academic career?		if Q1 = {3,5,6} Vergleich, Erfolg	acacar	ABS_e2015, B6 x 29
		Academic career is understood as following a path that leads to a permanent job at a university with the possibility of undertaking one's own research (e.g. as professor, tutor, lecturer etc.).		instruction		
			Yes	1		
			No	2		
59	single choice	Are you aiming for an academic career in the future?		Vergleich, Erfolg	aim_acacar	ABS_e2015, B6 x 29
			Yes	1		
			No	2		
			I do not know yet	3		
60	single choice	What would you aspire most?		if Q5 ≠ 4 Vergleich, Erfolg	aspiremost	ABS_e2015, A2d_15 17 x
			Professorship at a university	1		
			Professorship at a university of applied sciences/university of teacher education	2		
			Scientific post at a university/research institute	3		
			Scientific post in private industry	4		
			Scientific post in public service	5		
			Senior management position outside of academia, science and research	6		
			Senior management position within academia, science and research	7		
			Self-employment	8		
			Other, please specify:	9		
			Open text	string	aspiremost_other_comment	
61	multiple choice	Since you completed your PhD, have you begun, continued or completed any of the following?		if Q5 = 3 Vergleich, Erfolg		ABS_e2015, A3_1 20 x
		Check all that apply		instruction		
			Post-doc at an institution of higher education or research institute	1	postdoc	
			Habilitation	2	habil	
			No, none of the above	3	nposthabil	

Current professional situation (after Doc.CH)	heading	The following questions are about your current work situation.					
	62	single choice	Are you currently gainfully employed (i.e. in paid employment or self-employed) ?		if Q1 = {3,5,6} Vergleich	empl	ABS_e2015, C1 x 30
			Yes, I am gainfully employed	1			
			Yes, I am currently in an employment scheme offered by the employment office (RAV)	2			
			No, I'm looking for a job	3			
			No, but I have a firm job offer or have been assured a contract	4			
			No, because I am exclusively pursuing an education/training programme (e.g. second degree, post-graduate degree, scholarship holder)	5			
			No, because I run the household or look after children	6			
			No, because I am travelling	7			
			No, because I have health problems	8			
			No, for other reasons, please specify:	9			
			Open text	string		empl_other_comment	
	63	single choice	Do you have one or several jobs?		if Q62 = 1 Vergleich	empl_numb	ABS_e2015, C61 x 32
			One job	1			
			Several jobs	2			
	64	open numeric	Since when have you been working in your current employment?		if Q62 = 1 Vergleich		ABS_e2015, C7 x 32
			If you have more than one job refer to your main employment.			instruction	
			Month:	numeric2		empl_month	
			Year:	numeric4		empl_year	
	65	single choice	Are you gainfully employed in or outside Switzerland?		if Q62 = 1 Vergleich	empl_where	ABS_e2015, C8a x 32
			In Switzerland	1			
			Abroad	2			
	66	single choice	What is your current occupational status?		if Q62 = 1 Vergleich	empl_status	ABS_e2015, C14 x 36
			Trainee	1			
			Legal trainee	2			
			PhD student, assistant or lecturer without a PhD degree at an institution of higher education	3			
			Junior/assistant doctor	4			
			Teacher	5			
			Employee without leadership/managerial responsibilities	6			
			Employee with managerial responsibilities/junior manager (e.g. project manager)	7			
			Employee with managerial responsibilities/middle manager (e.g. staff office)	8			
			Employee with managerial responsibilities/senior manager (e.g. corporate management)	9			
			Employee in your own family-owned business	10			
			Self-employed without employees	11			
			Self-employed with employees	12			
	67	single choice	Are you gainfully employed at an institution of higher education or in a research institute affiliated with such an institution?		if Q62 = 1 Vergleich	empl_uni	ABS_e2015, C17 x 37
			Yes	1			

			No	2						
68	multiple choice	In what capacity are you employed in the institution of higher education or affiliated research institute?			if Q67 = 1	Vergleich		ABS_e2015, C18a 37	x	
		Check all that apply		instruction						
			I am employed as a researcher	1				empl_unires		
			I am employed as a lecturer (preparing and giving classes/lectures, supervising students etc.)	2				empl_unilect		
			I am employed in an administrative position in one of the following departments in the institution: accounting, personnel administration, marketing etc.	3				empl_uniadmin		
69	single choice	Which function do you have there?	Please only one answer		if Q67 = 1	Vergleich	empl_func	ABS_e2015, C18b 37	x	
			Professor (e.g. ordinary/extraordinary professorship, assistant professor, associate professor)	1						
			Other lecturing and research position (e.g. private-docent, assistant lecturer, visiting professor, head of lecturing or research, chief assistant)	2						
			Research assistant (requiring PhD)	3						
			Research assistant (requiring university degree)	4						
			Administrative member of staff	5						
			Other, please specify:	6						
			Open text	string				empl_funcother_comment		
70	single choice	Are you employed on a fixed-term or a permanent contract?			if Q62 = 1	Vergleich	empl_contr	ABS_e2015, C19 37	x	
			Fixed-term	1						
			Contract duration:	numeric3						
			Permanent contract	2						
71	open numeric	What is your work-time percentage?			if Q63 = 1		empl_perc1job, empl_percmainjob, empl_percsecjob	ABS_e2015, C22a, 38	x	
			Contracutal work-time percentage:	numeric3						
72	open numeric	What is your work-time percentage?			if Q63 = 2			ABS_e2015, C22a, 38	x	
			Contracutal work-time percentage of your main employment:	numeric3						
			Contracutal work-time percentage in other (secondary) employments:	numeric3						
73	open numeric	What is your annual gross income (corresponding to your total work-time percentages)?			if Q62 = 1	Vergleich		ABS_e2015, C23 39	x	
			Contractual annual gross salary in your main employment (including 13th month salary, in CHF):	numeric				empl_mainjobovertime, empl_1jobsalary		
			Annual income from paid overtime in your main employment (in CHF):	numeric				empl_mainjobovertime, empl_1jobovertime		
			Premiums or end-of-year bonuses or gratuities from your main employment (in CHF):	numeric				empl_mainjobbonus, empl_1jobbonus		
			Annual gross income from other (secondary) employments (including 13th month salary, in CHF):	numeric				empl_secjobincome		
74	multiple choice	Regarding the time since the end of your Doc.CH, which of the following statements apply to you?			if Q5 = 3	Info			x	
		Check all that apply		instruction						
			I have already changed my employment	1				changeempl		
			I have always had the same employment	2				sameempl		
			I have had a period of non-employment	3				nonempl		
			I have worked abroad	4				emplabroad		
Personal life situation	heading	The next section contains questions about yourself and your life situation.								

75	multiple choice	What is your current living situation? I live...				Vergleich		ABS_e2015, E4 49	x
		Check all that apply	on my own with my spouse/partner with children at my parents' with other adults	instruction		livealone livepart livechild liveparent liveadult			
76	single choice	Do you have or share responsibility for children?				Vergleich		ABS_e2015, E6a 49	x
			Yes Please indicate number: No	1 numeric2 2		childcare childcare_num childcare			
77	open numeric	When was this child born?			if Q76 = 1 & number of children = 1	Vergleich	childbirthy	ABS_e2015, E6b 49	x
			Birth year:	numeric4					
78	open numeric	When were these children born? If there are more than two children, please indicate the year of birth of the oldest and of the youngest child.			if Q76 = 1 & number of children > 1	Vergleich			x
			Birth year of oldest child: Birth year of youngest child:	numeric4 numeric4		childbirthy_oldest childbirthy_youngest			
79	multiple choice	Do you have any of the following care responsibilities?				Info	othercare	CTC	x
		Check all that apply	Elder care Adult with disability Adult with illness Other, please specify: Open text No, I do not have any such caring responsibilities	instruction 1 2 3 4 string 5		eldercare disabilitycare illnesscare othercare othercare_comment caren			
	heading	Feedback						ABS_e2015 4	
80	open text	If you have any final comments in relation to Doc.CH or explanations, please write them down below:					final_comment		x
			Open text	string					

APPENDIX II: Survey layout

Doc.CH Survey

Welcome to the Doc.CH survey!

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate Doc.CH. This survey is conducted by a project team at the University of Bern, on behalf of the SNSF. Your data will be treated with strict confidentiality. The SNSF administration will have no access to the answers you provide and the results of the study will be presented in a form that will not allow the identification of individual respondents.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the project team.

Dr. Janine Lüthi: janine.luethi@izfg.unibe.ch
Gwendolin Mäder, M.A.: gwendolin.maeder@izfg.unibe.ch
University of Bern, Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies

First, we are interested in your Doc.CH and PhD situation in general.

What is the status of your Doc.CH grant? *

- ☐ My grant has not started yet
- ☐ My grant is running
- ☐ My grant has finished (including early completion and extensions)
- ☐ My grant is currently interrupted
- ☐ I have broken off/discontinued my grant
- ☐ I have not taken up/withdrawn my grant

Page 3

Why have you interrupted your Doc.CH grant?
Please describe shortly:

Why have you broken off/discontinued your Doc.CH grant?

Please describe shortly:

Why have you withdrawn/not taken up your Doc.CH grant?

Please describe shortly:

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What is the status of your PhD? *

- ☐ I have not started working on my PhD yet
- ☐ I am working on my PhD
- ☐ I have completed my PhD (submitted dissertation, passed exams/defence if required)
- ☐ I have broken off/discontinued my PhD
- ☐ I have not taken up my PhD (no intention to do a PhD)

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**Why have you discontinued/broken off your PhD?
Please describe shortly:**

**Why have you not taken up your PhD?
Please describe shortly:**

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In which phase of your PhD are you?

- ☐ Start phase
- ☐ Middle phase
- ☐ End phase

**Were you working (i.e. preparing/conducting research) for your PhD already before you applied for Doc.CH
(excluding writing the proposal)?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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When did you start working on your PhD (excluding writing the proposal)?

Month (e.g. 03):

Year (e.g. 2014):

Start of your PhD

On average, how much did you work on your PhD (before Doc.CH)?

Average work time percentage: %

What sources of income did you have during the time you worked on your PhD before Doc.CH?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Position as assistant, research assistant in a university or research institute within a cantonal or federal framework
- ☐ Employed to take part in a research project (e.g. funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation)
- ☐ Individual grant (e.g. funded by a foundation) or programme to promote young researchers granted by a Swiss institution (e.g. the SNSF)
- ☐ Individual grant (e.g. funded by a foundation) or programme to promote young researchers granted by a foreign institution
- ☐ Employment outside of the university or research institute
- ☐ Funding of the PhD by parents, partner, personal savings
- ☐ Loan (from a bank, family, partner, friends etc.)
- ☐ No income
- ☐ Other, please specify:

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In your estimation, is it realistic for you to submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

In your estimation, is it realistic for you to submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

In your estimation, is it realistic for you to submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?

☐ Yes

☐ No

In your estimation, is it realistic for you to submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?

☐ Yes

☐ No

In your estimation, is it realistic for you to submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?

☐ Yes

☐ No

In your estimation, is it realistic for you to submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did you submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did you submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did you submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did you submit your dissertation within the period of your Doc.CH grant?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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How much additional time will you approximately need to submit your dissertation?

Additional time required in months:

How much additional time will you approximately need to submit your dissertation?

Additional time required in months:

How much additional time did it take to submit your dissertation?

Additional time required in months:

How long did it take to complete your PhD?

Please calculate this period starting at the moment you began preparing the topic for your PhD and ending when you submitted your dissertation or passed exams/defence (if required), including any interruptions.

Years (e.g. 4):

Months (e.g. 10):

Which degree requirements did you have to fulfill in order to obtain your PhD degree?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Submit a monograph
- ☐ Publish articles in a national or international scientific publication
- ☐ Oral defence of PhD thesis
- ☐ Participate in courses/seminars
- ☐ Examinations on specific topics related to the content of the thesis
- ☐ Lectures at conferences/congresses
- ☐ Laboratory work/clinical studies/empirical works
- ☐ Obtain ECTS
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Which degree requirements do you have to fulfill in order to obtain your PhD degree?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Submit a monograph
- ☐ Publish articles in a national or international scientific publication
- ☐ Oral defence of PhD thesis
- ☐ Participate in courses/seminars
- ☐ Examinations on specific topics related to the content of the thesis
- ☐ Lectures at conferences/congresses
- ☐ Laboratory work/clinical studies/empirical works
- ☐ Obtain ECTS
- ☐ Not defined yet
- ☐ Other, please specify:

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Please indicate the qualification/grade you obtained with your PhD.

- ☐ Passed (if no particular grading)
- ☐ Summa cum laude, 6, or equivalent
- ☐ Insigni cum laude, 5.5, or equivalent
- ☐ Magna cum laude, 5, or equivalent
- ☐ Cum laude, 4.5, or equivalent
- ☐ Rite, 4, or equivalent

Have you received a scientific prize or award for your dissertation (or part of it)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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Have you published any of the following scientific articles/contributions as author or co-author?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Essays/articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals
- ☐ Essays/articles in non peer-reviewed scientific journals
- ☐ Essays in anthologies/edited volume
- ☐ Monographs (also several authors)
- ☐ Anthologies/edited volumes (also several editors)
- ☐ Reports
- ☐ Newspaper articles, book reviews and others
- ☐ I have not published any scientific article/contribution
- ☐ Other publications

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Please indicate the number of articles/contributions you have published.

Essays/articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals *{{publications}}*

Essays/articles in non peer-reviewed scientific journals *{{publications}}*

Essays in anthologies/edited volume *{{publications}}*

Monographs (also several authors) *{{publications}}*

Anthologies/edited volumes (also several editors) *{{publications}}*

Reports *{{publications}}*

Newspaper articles, book reviews and others *{{publications}}*

I have not published any scientific article/contribution *{{publications}}*

Other publications *{{publications}}*

What are these other publications? Please specify:

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At what type of institution was your Doc.CH host institution based?

☐ University

☐ ETH/EPF

☐ University of applied sciences

☐ University of teacher education

☐ Other institution, please specify:

At what type of institution is your Doc.CH host institution based?

- ☐ University
- ☐ ETH/EPF
- ☐ University of applied sciences
- ☐ University of teacher education
- ☐ Other institution, please specify:

Why did you choose your host institution?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Reputation of the host institution
- ☐ Reputation of scientists at the host institution
- ☐ Importance of the host institution in my research field
- ☐ Existing links to the host institution
- ☐ Infrastructure of the host institution
- ☐ Employment conditions at the host institution
- ☐ Supervision reasons
- ☐ Family/personal reasons
- ☐ Other/further reasons

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How did you find your Doc.CH supervisor?

Check all that apply

- ☐ My supervisor was my former master supervisor
- ☐ I knew my supervisor thanks to personal contacts
- ☐ I knew my supervisor due to earlier stays
- ☐ I was already employed at her/his institute before I applied for Doc.CH
- ☐ My supervisor was recommended to me by scientific mentors or colleagues
- ☐ I found my supervisor by other means:

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Did you participate in a structured programme (e.g. graduate school) during your Doc.CH grant?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you participate in a structured programme (e.g. graduate school)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

During your Doc.CH grant, did you complete one or more research or study visits at another university and/or research institute?

- ☐ In Switzerland
- ☐ Abroad
- ☐ No, I did not complete any research/study visit at another university

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How many research or study visits did you complete at another university and/or at a research institute during your Doc.CH grant and for how long?

	Number:	Total duration in months:
In Switzerland {{visits}}		
Abroad {{visits}}		
No, I did not complete any research/study visit at another university {{visits}}		

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Did you interrupt your Doc.CH grant at any time in the past?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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For how long did you interrupt your Doc.CH grant?

Duration in months:

Why did you interrupt your Doc.CH grant?

Please describe shortly:

In the following, we are interested in your time use during your Doc.CH grant.

How many hours per week were you able to devote to work on your PhD (incl. unpaid time) during your Doc.CH grant?

Hours per week (on average):

How many hours per week are you able to devote to work on your PhD (incl. unpaid time)?

Hours per week (on average):

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Did you regularly devote some of your Doc.CH time for work not directly related to your PhD (e.g., teaching, other research, support of supervisor)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you regularly devote some of your Doc.CH time for work not directly related to your PhD (e.g., teaching, other research, support of supervisor)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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What kind of work (that was not related to your PhD) did you devote time for?

Please indicate (where applicable) the number of hours you spend on the following activities

	Number of hours per week (on average):
Teaching and supervising students	
Administrative duties not related to my PhD	
Writing of articles not related to my PhD	
Work in support of supervisor	
Work in support of team	
Work in another research project	
Other work not related to my PhD	

What kind of work (that is not related to your PhD) do you devote time for?

Please indicate (where applicable) the number of hours you spend on the following activities

	Number of hours per week (on average):
Teaching and supervising students	
Administrative duties not related to my PhD	
Writing of articles not related to my PhD	
Work in support of supervisor	
Work in support of team	
Work in another research project	
Other work not related to my PhD	

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Did you have additional (paid) jobs during your Doc.CH grant?

- ☐ Yes, one
- ☐ Yes, several
- ☐ No

Have you had additional (paid) jobs during your Doc.CH grant?

- ☐ Yes, one
- ☐ Yes, several
- ☐ No

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Where did you work in this job?

- ☐ At a university/research institute
- ☐ Outside of the university

Where did you work in these jobs?

Check all that apply

- ☐ At a university/research institute
- ☐ Outside of the university

Where have you worked in this job?

- ☐ At a university/research institute
- ☐ Outside of the university

Where have you worked in this these jobs?

Check all that apply

- ☐ At a university/research institute
- ☐ Outside of the university

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For how long per week and for how many months did you work in this job?

	Number of hours per week (on average):	Duration in months:
At a university/research institute <i>{{addJob_past}}</i>		
Outside of the university <i>{{addJob_past}}</i>		

For how long per week and for how many months did you work in these jobs?

	Number of hours per week (on average):	Duration in months:
At a university/research institute <i>{{addJob_past2}}</i>		
Outside of the university <i>{{addJob_past2}}</i>		

For how long per week and for how many months have you worked in this job?

Number of hours per week (on average):

Duration in months:

At a university/research institute
{{addJob_now}}

Outside of the university {{addJob_now}}

For how long per week and for how many months have you worked in these jobs?

Number of hours per week (on average):

Duration in months:

At a university/research institute
{{addJob_now2}}

Outside of the university {{addJob_now2}}

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Why did you have these additional jobs?

Check all that apply

- ☐ To improve my financial situation
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in teaching
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in research related to my PhD
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in research not related to my PhD
- ☐ To enhance my profile in general
- ☐ To have an additional mainstay
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Why did you have this additional job?

Check all that apply

- ☐ To improve my financial situation
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in teaching
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in research related to my PhD
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in research not related to my PhD
- ☐ To enhance my profile in general
- ☐ To have an additional mainstay
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Why have you had these additional jobs?

Check all that apply

- ☐ To improve my financial situation
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in teaching
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in research related to my PhD
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in research not related to my PhD
- ☐ To enhance my profile in general
- ☐ To have an additional mainstay
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Why have you had this additional job?

Check all that apply

- ☐ To improve my financial situation
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in teaching
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in research related to my PhD
- ☐ To acquire additional experience/knowledge in research not related to my PhD
- ☐ To enhance my profile in general
- ☐ To have an additional mainstay
- ☐ Other, please specify:

The following questions concern your supervision and network during your Doc.CH grant.

How did you find your supervisor?

Check all that apply

- ☐ My supervisor was my former master supervisor
- ☐ I knew my supervisor thanks to personal contacts
- ☐ I knew my supervisor due to earlier stays
- ☐ I was already employed at her/his institute before I applied for Doc.CH
- ☐ My supervisor was recommended to me by scientific mentors or colleagues
- ☐ I found my supervisor by other means:

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How closely was the topic of your PhD related to your supervisor’s research field?

Not at all related

Very closely related

Please indicate:

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

How closely is the topic of your PhD related to your supervisor's research field?

Not at all related

Very closely related

Please indicate:

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Who actually supervised you during your Doc.CH grant?

Check all that apply

- ☐ My first supervisor
- ☐ My second/co-supervisor
- ☐ Professors engaged in the structured programme I participate in
- ☐ Other scientists (e.g. research group head, project head, research assistant/associate)
- ☐ Other PhD students (in order to exchange experience and information)
- ☐ Other persons

Who is actually supervising you during your Doc.CH grant?

Check all that apply

- ☐ My first supervisor
- ☐ My second/co-supervisor
- ☐ Professors engaged in the structured programme I participate in
- ☐ Other scientists (e.g. research group head, project head, research assistant/associate)
- ☐ Other PhD students (in order to exchange experience and information)
- ☐ Other persons

To what extent were you supervised by the following?

	Not much			To a great extent
My first supervisor <i>{{supervision_past}}</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐
My second/co-supervisor <i>{{supervision_past}}</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professors engaged in the structured programme I participate in <i>{{supervision_past}}</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other scientists (e.g. research group head, project head, research assistant/associate) <i>{{supervision_past}}</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other PhD students (in order to exchange experience and information) <i>{{supervision_past}}</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other persons <i>{{supervision_past}}</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐

Who were these other persons? Please specify:

To what extent are you supervised by the following?

	Not much			To a great extent
My first supervisor {{supervision_now}}	☐	☐	☐	☐
My second/co-supervisor {{supervision_now}}	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professors engaged in the structured programme I participate in {{supervision_now}}	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other scientists (e.g. research group head, project head, research assistant/associate) {{supervision_now}}	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other PhD students (in order to exchange experience and information) {{supervision_now}}	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other persons {{supervision_now}}	☐	☐	☐	☐

Who are these other persons? Please specify:

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How satisfied were you with the following aspects?

	Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied
The supervision by my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of feedback I got from my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The exchange with peers on my level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My status and prestige in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My integration in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The support I got from my supervisor in planning my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The input and support through the structured programme I participated in	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How satisfied were you with the following aspects?

	Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied
The supervision by my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of feedback I got from my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The exchange with peers on my level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My status and prestige in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My integration in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The support I got from my supervisor in planning my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The input and support through the structured programme I participated in	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How satisfied were you with the following aspects?

	Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied
The supervision by my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of feedback I got from my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The exchange with peers on my level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My status and prestige in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My integration in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The support I got from my supervisor in planning my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How satisfied are you with the following aspects?

	Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied
The supervision by my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of feedback I get from my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The exchange with peers on my level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My status and prestige in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My integration in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The support I get from my supervisor in planning my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The input and support through the structured programme I participate in	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How satisfied are you with the following aspects?

	Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied
The supervision by my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of feedback I get from my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The exchange with peers on my level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My status and prestige in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My integration in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The support I get from my supervisor in planning my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The input and support through the structured programme I participate in	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How satisfied are you with the following aspects?

	Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied
The supervision by my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The amount of feedback I get from my official PhD supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The exchange with peers on my level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My status and prestige in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My integration in the team/institute	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The support I get from my supervisor in planning my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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To what degree have you been able to establish contact with other scientists so far?

	Not at all				To a large extent
In my immediate work surroundings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On a national level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On an international level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In my particular field of study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Outside my particular field of study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what degree were you able to establish contact with other scientists during your Doc.CH?

	Not at all				To a large extent
In my immediate work surroundings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On a national level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On an international level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In my particular field of study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Outside my particular field of study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The following questions concern your research topic and the relation to your Master's degree.

How did you develop the research question/project idea for your PhD?

- ☐ Mostly on my own/based on my ideas
- ☐ Partly on my own, partly predefined (e.g. by supervisor, previous research project)
- ☐ Mostly predefined (e.g. by supervisor, previous research project)

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How closely was the topic of your PhD related to your Master's degree?

	Not at all related				Very closely related
Please indicate:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How closely is the topic of your PhD related to your Master's degree?

	Not at all related				Very closely related
Please indicate:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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In which year did you complete your Master's studies?

Year:

What is the final grade you received for your Master's studies?

- ☐ Passed (if no particular grading)
- ☐ Summa cum laude, excellent, 6, or equivalent
- ☐ Insigni cum laude, very good, 5.5, or equivalent
- ☐ Magna cum laude, good, 5, or equivalent
- ☐ Cum laude, satisfactory, 4.5, or equivalent
- ☐ Rite, pass, 4, or equivalent

The following questions concern your application to Doc.CH.

Why did you choose to apply to Doc.CH?

Check all that apply

- ☐ No other funding opportunities available
- ☐ Other funding opportunities were not suitable
- ☐ Other funding opportunities were not realistic
- ☐ Doc.CH was my first priority
- ☐ Other, please specify:

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Before you received your Doc.CH grant, had you already applied for Doc.CH in the past?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, it was my first application

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Before you applied for Doc.CH, did you try alternative ways (instead of Doc.CH) to finance your PhD (or part of it), for example another employment, project or grant?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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What alternatives did you try?

Check all that apply

- ☐ I applied for an individual grant/programme granted by a Swiss institution
- ☐ I applied for an individual grant/programme granted by a foreign institution
- ☐ I was a potential candidate in a research project (e.g. funded by the SNSF) that was rejected
- ☐ I tried to get funding from a business
- ☐ I tried to get an employment as an assistant (or similar) at a university/research institute
- ☐ I tried to get an employment outside of the university
- ☐ Other, please specify:

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If you had NOT received the Doc.CH grant, would you have had other options/tried other ways to still carry out your PhD project?

- ☐ (Rather) Yes
- ☐ (Rather) No

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What other options/ways would you have tried?

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To what extent were the following features of Doc.CH important for your application of Doc.CH?

	Not at all important				Very important
Long duration of the grant (up to 4 years)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good reputation of the SNSF	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good reputation of Doc.CH	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Amount of the salary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity to cover additional costs (travel expenses etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity to choose my own supervisor and host institution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity to propose and develop my own research project	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity to devote all my work time (80-100%) to my PhD	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity to work independently on my PhD	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Option of going to another research institution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Option to produce a part of the dissertation at a host institution abroad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other reasons, please specify: 	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding Doc.CH?

	Do not agree at all				Fully agree
Doc.CH is a very attractive funding opportunity for students in the Humanities and Social Sciences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doc.CH grants are perceived as a sign of excellence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doc.CH is difficult to receive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Most Doc.CH grantees probably applied because they had no other funding option	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Next, we are interested in your perception of the evaluation procedure.

Please rate the following aspects of the evaluation procedure.

	Very poor				Excellent
The quality of the documentation of the evaluation procedure provided by the SNSF	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The quality of the administrative support during the procedure provided by the SNSF	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The overall setup of the evaluation procedure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The duration until notification of result	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The two-stage procedure of the evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The competence/expertise of the evaluation commission	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information given on the status of the evaluation procedure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transparency of the evaluation procedure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transparency/Comprehensibility of the decision	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other remarks or experiences related to the evaluation:

The next questions concern the conception of Doc.CH in general.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Do not agree at all				Fully agree
Doc.CH grantees are able to work more independently, as compared to PhD students with other funding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doc.CH grantees are able to spend more time on their research, as compared to PhD students with other funding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doc.CH grantees are more "on their own", as compared to PhD students with other funding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doc.CH grantees are less integrated in the team, as compared to PhD students with other funding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doc.CH grantees are financially well-off/properly funded, as compared to doctoral students with other funding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the impact of Doc.CH?

	Do not agree at all				Fully agree
Doc.CH grantees enjoy a good status thanks to their grant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As holders of their own grant, Doc.CH grantees gain useful experience for the future (e.g. responsibility of their own budget)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doc.CH has a positive effect on careers in academia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doc.CH has a positive effect on careers outside academia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
By helping researchers to dedicate 80-100% of their work time to their dissertation, Doc.CH reduces the duration of the doctorate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your experience with Doc.CH?

	Do not agree at all				Fully agree
I very much like working on my own	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had no difficulties working independently on my project	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had enough time to work on my PhD	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I often felt on my own with problems related to my PhD	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe that Doc.CH had a positive impact on my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your experience with Doc.CH?

	Do not agree at all				Fully agree
I very much like working on my own	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have no difficulties working independently on my project	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have enough time to work on my PhD	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I often feel on my own with problems related to my PhD	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe that Doc.CH has a positive impact on my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

In your opinion, how important is it to change any of the following aspects?

[illegible]

The next questions concern the conception of Doc.CH in general.

In your opinion, how important is it to change any of the following aspects?

	Not important at all				Very important	Don't know
Improve the support/advice from the SNSF	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Extend the duration of the grant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Increase the salary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Increase the amount to cover additional costs (travel expenses, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relax regulations regarding submission up to two years after Master's degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relax regulations regarding submission before having obtained Master's degree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relax regulations regarding mobility (required change of higher education institution)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relax regulations regarding required supervisor and co-supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reduce evaluation procedure to one stage instead of two	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reduce time until notification of decision	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Are there other significant aspects which should be changed?

The following questions are about your career prospects and aspirations.

How important to you are the following aspects when looking for a job?

	Not at all important				Very important
To find work near to where I live	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To be able to work part-time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To be able to reconcile work and family life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To be able to reconcile my work with other activities (e.g. sport, travel etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To find a job with good career prospects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To find a secure job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To earn a high salary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To work for a prestigious company	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To be able to use my specialist qualifications at work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To find a job that enables me to further my academic career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Are you currently following an academic career?

Academic career is understood as following a path that leads to a permanent job at a university with the possibility of undertaking one's own research (e.g. as professor, tutor, lecturer).

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you aiming for an academic career in the future?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I do not know yet

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What would you aspire most?

- ☐ Professorship at a university
- ☐ Professorship at a university of applied sciences/university of teacher education
- ☐ Scientific post at a university/research institute
- ☐ Scientific post in private industry
- ☐ Scientific post in public service
- ☐ Senior management position outside of academia, science and research
- ☐ Senior management position within academia, science and research
- ☐ Self-employment
- ☐ Other, please specify:

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Since you completed your PhD, have you begun, continued or completed any of the following?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Post-doc at an institution of higher education or research institute
- ☐ Habilitation
- ☐ No, none of the above

The following questions are about your current work situation.

Are you currently gainfully employed (i.e. in paid employment or self-employed)?

- ☐ Yes, I am gainfully employed
- ☐ Yes, I am currently in an employment scheme offered by the employment office (RAV)
- ☐ No, I am looking for a job
- ☐ No, but I have a firm job offer or have been assured a contract
- ☐ No, because I am exclusively pursuing an education/training programme (e.g. second degree, post-graduate degree, scholarship holder)
- ☐ No, because I run the household or look after children
- ☐ No, because I am travelling
- ☐ No, because I have health problems
- ☐ No, for other reasons, please specify:

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Do you have one or several jobs?

- ☐ One job
- ☐ Several jobs

Since when have you been working in your current employment?

If you have more than one job refer to your main employment.

Month (e.g. 06):

Year (e.g. 2016):

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Are you gainfully employed in or outside Switzerland?

If you have more than one job refer to your main employment.

- ☐ In Switzerland
- ☐ Abroad

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What is your current occupational status?

If you have more than one job refer to your main employment.

- ☐ Trainee
- ☐ Legal trainee
- ☐ PhD student, assistant or lecturer without a PhD degree at an institution of higher education
- ☐ Junior/assistant doctor
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Employee without leadership/managerial responsibilities
- ☐ Employee with managerial responsibilities/junior manager (e.g. project manager)
- ☐ Employee with managerial responsibilities/middle manager (e.g. staff office)
- ☐ Employee with managerial responsibilities/senior manager (e.g. corporate management)
- ☐ Employee in your own family-owned business
- ☐ Self-employed without employees
- ☐ Self-employed with employees

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Are you gainfully employed at an institution of higher education or in a research institute affiliated with such an institution?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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In what capacity are you employed in the institution of higher education or affiliated research institute?

Check all that apply

- ☐ I am employed as a researcher
- ☐ I am employed as a lecturer (preparing and giving classes/lectures, supervising students etc.)
- ☐ I am employed in an administrative position in one of the following departments in the institution: accounting, personnel administration, marketing etc.

Which function do you have there?

- ☐ Professor (e.g. ordinary/extraordinary professorship, assistant professor, associate professor)
- ☐ Other lecturing and research position (e.g. private-docent, assistant lecturer, visiting professor, head of lecturing or research, chief assistant)
- ☐ Research assistant (requiring PhD)
- ☐ Research assistant (requiring university degree)
- ☐ Administrative member of staff
- ☐ Other, please specify:

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Are you employed on a fixed-term or a permanent contract?

If you have more than one job refer to your main employment.

- ☐ Permanent contract
- ☐ Fixed-term, contract duration (in months):

What is your work-time percentage?

Contractual work-time percentage: %

What is your work-time percentage?

in percentage (e.g. 80)

Contractual work-time percentage of your main employment:

Contractual work-time percentage in other (secondary) employments:

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What is your annual gross income (corresponding to your total work-time percentages)?

Contractual annual gross salary in your main employment (including 13th month salary, in Swiss francs):

Annual income from paid overtime in your main employment (in Swiss francs):

Premiums or end-of-year bonuses or gratuities from your main employment (in Swiss francs):

Annual gross income from other (secondary) employments (including 13th month salary, in Swiss francs):

What is your annual gross income (corresponding to your total work-time percentages)?

Contractual annual gross salary (including 13th month salary, in Swiss francs):

Annual income from paid overtime (in Swiss francs):

Premiums or end-of-year bonuses or gratuities (in Swiss francs):

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Regarding the time since the end of your Doc.CH, which of the following statements apply to you?

Check all that apply

☐

I have already changed my employment

☐

I have always had the same employment

☐

I have had a period of non-employment

☐

I have worked abroad

The last section contains questions about yourself and your life situation.

What is your current living situation? I live...

Check all that apply

- ☐ on my own
- ☐ with my spouse/partner
- ☐ with children
- ☐ at my parents'
- ☐ with other adults

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Do you have or share responsibility for children?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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For how many children do you have or share responsibility?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ >3

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When was this child born?

Birth year of the child (e.g. 2014):

When were these children born?

Birth year of the older child (e.g. 2014):

Birth year of the younger child (e.g. 2018):

When were these children born?

Please indicate the year of birth of the oldest and of the youngest child.

Birth year of oldest child (e.g. 2014):

Birth year of youngest child (e.g. 2018):

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Do you have any of the following care responsibilities?

Check all that apply

- ☐ Elder care
- ☐ Adult with disability
- ☐ Adult with illness
- ☐ No, I do not have any such caring responsibilities

☐ Other, please specify:

Feedback

If you have any final comments in relation to Doc.CH or explanations, please write them down below:

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE Constellation - Supervisors

Aims	Stimulus	Questions
Introduction		
Introduction - Comprehension of supervision	What do you understand by supervision/supervision of PhD students? What is your role as a supervisor?	
Rating Doc.CH		
Supervision - Doc.CH in comparison - Differences by phases	What is your supervisory relationship like with your Doc.CH student and in comparison with other PhDs?	- How often do you hear from/meet with your Doc.CH candidate? - How close is the candidate's research topic to you/your research? - How well informed are you about the status of the dissertation/Doc.CH project? - Has the supervision changed in different phases of the dissertation? - Do you see any differences in the supervision of PhD students with different funding? - Does it make a difference for you whether you supervise someone with a Doc.Ch grant or someone with project funding? Why (not)?
«Selection» - Selection - Doc.CH in comparison	Is there a difference in how PhD students are «selected» depending on the kind of funding? If yes, how?	- How did you get/find/chose your PhD students? (Differences depending on funding?) - How often do you have PhD students who had already worked for you before? (Differences depending on funding?)
Network/Integration - Doc.CH in comparison - Possibilities for networking - Integration in team	How do you rate the network (in research community, national/international) of Doc.CH PhD students compared to students with other funding? How do you rate their integration in the team compared to other students?	- What opportunities/possibilities do the PhD students have to exchange views/discuss their project with other researchers? - Do these opportunities differ depending on the kind of funding?
Independence/Autonomy - Writing the proposal - Working on the project	Doc.CH should allow PhD students to write a dissertation independently based on their own project idea. What is your	- How independently did you PhD students chose their topics?

- Differences depending on phases - Doc.CH in comparison	experience with this independence? Does it work well?	- How and with whom did they write their proposal? - How independently do they work on their project? - Does the degree of autonomy change in different phases? - Are there differences depending on the kind of funding? What kind of differences?
POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT		
Potential for improvement - Participation requirements - Evaluation procedure - Duration and salary	Now I am interested in how you rate Doc.CH in comparison to other forms of funding? What do you find positive/negative? Where do you maybe see potential for improvement?	- How do you rate the participation requirements? (2 years after diploma, + exceptions; 2 supervisors, change of university before or during doctorate) - How do you rate the evaluation procedure? (two phases, duration until notification) - How do you rate the duration and salary of Doc.CH? -
FUTURE: Benefits		
Benefits for career - In academia - Outside academia - Doc.Ch in comparison	How do you rate Doc.CH compared to other forms of funding with regard to an academic career? And for a non-academic career?	- What is the special benefit of Doc.CH for ad academic career? - Does Doc.CH prepare for a career outside academia? - How do you rate the benefits compared to other forms of funding? Are there differences?
END		
Final question	Would you like to add or further explain something?	

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE Constellation – Doctoral students with Doc.CH

Aims	Stimulus	Questions
BEFORE the dissertation: Application		
Attractiveness - How learned about Doc.CH - Motivation - Alternatives - Independence (own idea, own application)	Could you tell me how it came about that you applied to Doc.CH?	- How did you know about it? - What was your motivation for an application? - Why did you decide for Doc.CH? - Were there alternatives? If yes, what alternatives? - Why was Doc.CH (not) your first choice? - To what extent was it important to you that Doc.CH allows you to write your dissertation on a topic you chose yourself? - To what extent have you actually chosen your topic yourself? To what extent was it your own idea? - What were your criteria when choosing your supervisor? How did you find him/her? Was it difficult? - What was the supervision like during the preparation of the application (intensity, support etc.)?
DURING the dissertation		
Independence/Autonomy - Writing the proposal - Work during PhD - Different stages/phases - Doc.CH in comparison	Doc.CH should allow PhD students to work independently and autonomously on a dissertation that is based on their own idea. What is your personal experience with this autonomy? Does it work out?	- (How did you develop your dissertation topic?) - (How and with whom or with what support did you write our proposal?) - Were you able to work autonomously on your dissertation? - Did the extent of your autonomy and independence change over different stages/phases? - Have you experience differences between PhD students with different funding in this regard?
Time resources - Time for dissertation - Satisfaction - Doc.CH in comparison -	What were your time resources for your dissertation and how did you deal with your work time during your Doc.CH grant?	- (How much time was reserved for working on your dissertation? How much were you actually able to spend on work on your dissertation?)

		- How satisfied were you with your time (actually) available? (Would you have wished for more time? Or more time besides your work?) - Have you experience differences between PhD students with different funding in this regard?
Financial resources - Satisfaction - Lack - Doc.CH in comparison	How do you rate the financial resources available to you during your dissertation? (Salary, project costs)	- How satisfied were you with the salary? And with the financial means to cover additional costs of your project? - Were there costs that you could not cover with your Doc.Ch grant? - How do you rate the financial means provided by Doc.CH in comparison to other funding opportunities?
Supervision - Satisfaction - Different stages/phases - Difficulties - Doc.CH in comparison	Can you tell me about your supervision during your Doc.CH grant?	- How satisfied were you with the supervision? - How often did you exchange with your supervisor? - How interested was you supervisor in your research? - Did you feel supported in your research by your supervisor? - Did the supervision change during different stages or phases of your PhD? - Were there difficulties or negative aspects with regard to the supervision? - What would you have wished for in addition or as an alternative? - Do you see any difficulties in regard to the Doc.CH grant? - Did you experience any difference in supervision between different kinds of funding? - As a Doc.CH recipient, do you feel you are regarded differently as PhD students with different funding? If yes, who sees you differently (supervisor, other students, director) and in what way?

Network/integration - Networking opportunities - Doc.CH in comparison - Problems - Integration in the team	Who did you exchange with on your subject during your PhD and how did you network?	- What opportunities did you have to exchange with other researchers about your own research (conferences, publications, career planning)? - Do you think these opportunities differ depending on the kind of funding? - Were there moments when you wished for more exchange or support than you got? - Why did you not get that support? - Apart from the exchange on your subject, how did you experience the personal exchange in the team?
POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT		
Potential for improvement - Conditions of participation - Evaluation procedure - Duration and salary	We have talked about different aspects of Doc.CH and now I am interested how you rate Doc.CH in general? What did you find positive, what negative? Where do you maybe see potential for improvement?	- How do you rate the conditions of participation? (2 years after MA (exceptions possible), 2 supervisors, change of university/mobility) - How do you rate the evaluation procedure? - How do you rate the duration of Doc.CH and the salary?
FUTURE: Personal benefit		
Personal benefit - In academia - Outside academia - Doc.CH in comparison	How do you picture your professional future? Where do you see yourself in 2, 5 or 10 years and how do you rate Doc.CH as an instrument to reach your goals? What does Doc.CH prepare you for? And what does it maybe not prepare for?	- What benefits do you get from Doc.CH for a career in academia? - What benefits do you get from Doc.CH for a career outside academia? - How do you rate this benefit in comparison to other funding possibilities?
END		
Final question	We have reached the end of this interview. This is all from my side. Would you like to add anything, or do you have further comments regarding your experience with Doc.CH?	

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE Constellation – Doctoral students with SNSF project funding

Aims	Stimulus	Questions
BEFORE the dissertation: Application		
Attractiveness - Funding - Motivation - Alternatives	Could you tell me how it came about that you applied to Doc.CH?	- How did you know about it? - If application: What was your motivation for an application? - Why did you decide for this position/kind of funding? - Were there alternatives? If yes, what alternatives?
DURING the dissertation		
Independence/Autonomy - Writing the proposal - Work during PhD - Different stages/phases - Doc.CH in comparison	As a PhD student in a (bigger) project, to what extent were you able to bring in your own ideas and to influence the implementation of the dissertation? How autonomous and independent were you?	- How was the proposal developed? Who wrote the proposal? - Was your topic predetermined by the project from the beginning? - Were you able to work autonomously on your dissertation? - Did the extent of your autonomy and independence change over different stages/phases? - Have you experience differences between PhD students with different funding in this regard?
Time resources - Time for dissertation - Satisfaction - Comparison	Then I would like to talk about the time you had available for your dissertation. What were your time resources for your dissertation?	- How much time was reserved for working on your dissertation? How much were you actually able to spend on work on your dissertation? - How satisfied were you with your time (actually) available? (Would you have wished for more time? Or more time besides your work?) - Have you experience differences between PhD students with different funding in this regard?
Supervision - Satisfaction - Different stages/phases - Difficulties - Comparison	Can you tell me about your supervision during your Doc.CH grant?	- How satisfied were you with the supervision? - How often did you exchange with your supervisor? - How interested was you supervisor in your research? - Did you feel supported in your research by your supervisor?

		- Did the supervision change during different stages or phases of your PhD? - Were there difficulties or negative aspects with regard to the supervision? - What would you have wished for in addition or as an alternative? - Do you see any difficulties related to the project funding? - Did you experience any difference in supervision between different kinds of funding? - As a student with project funding, do you feel you were regarded differently as PhD students with different funding? If yes, who sees you differently (supervisor, other students, director) and in what way?
Network/integration - Networking opportunities - Comparison - Problems	Who did you exchange with on your subject during your PhD and how did you network?	- What opportunities did you have to exchange with other researchers about your dissertation (project team but also outside of the project) - Do you think these opportunities differ depending on the kind of funding (grant, project, assistant position) - Were there moments when you wished for more exchange or support than you got? - Why did you not get that support? - Apart from the exchange on your subject, how did you experience the personal exchange in the team?
FUTURE: Personal benefit		
Personal benefit - In academia - Outside academia - Comparison	How do you picture your professional future? Where do you see yourself in 2, 5 or 10 years? How well did your doctorate prepare you for what you are doing now and what you would like to do in the future?	- What benefits do you get from your doctorate for a career in academia? - What benefits do you get from your doctorate for a career outside academia? - How do you rate this benefit in comparison to other funding possibilities?

END		
Final question	We have reached the end of this interview. This is all from my side. Would you like to add anything, or do you have further comments regarding your experience with Doc.CH?	

APPENDIX IV

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE Experts

Evaluation procedure (for members of the Research/Evaluation Commissions only)

1. The evaluation procedure of Doc.CH proposals currently consists of two stages (1. Pre-selection by local research commissions; 2. Interview with evaluation commission). In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of this two-stage procedure? Are two stages necessary? In what ways could/should the evaluation procedure be changed?
2. How do you rate the composition and, consequently, the professional competence of the commission(s)?
3. What is the benefit of the interviews in the second phase? How do you rate their necessity?
4. How do you rate the evaluation procedure in general (perhaps in comparison to other instruments)?
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having two submission deadlines per year? Are two dates necessary? (resources, coordination etc.)
6. How do you rate the effort/work load of the commission(s)?
7. As of 2021, the local pre-selection shall be replaced by a national selection. In your opinion, what would be the best solution for the new evaluation procedure, e.g. regarding the quality of the evaluation, efficiency, work load for the commission, etc.?
8. Other/final comments on the evaluation procedure?

Conception

9. How do you view/rate the overall conception of Doc.CH (e.g., target group, participation requirements, duration of grants, etc.)?
10. Does Doc.CH fill the financing gap in the Humanities and Social Sciences in a meaningful way?
11. Does Doc.CH fulfil potential discipline-specific requirements (e.g., duration, field work, independent doctorate i.e. self-developed topics etc.)
12. Is an expansion/opening of Doc.CH to other disciplines desirable? Why (not)?
13. How do you view/rate Doc.CH in comparison to other funding instruments (particularly SNSF project funding, but also other funding instruments in Switzerland)? How attractive is Doc.CH in comparison to other instruments?
14. Does Doc.CH successfully/meaningfully complement SNSF project funding (i.e. individual career funding and project funding)?
15. How does Doc.CH fit/rank in the international context? Are there comparable/similarly attractive instruments?
16. Other/final comments on Doc.CH?