

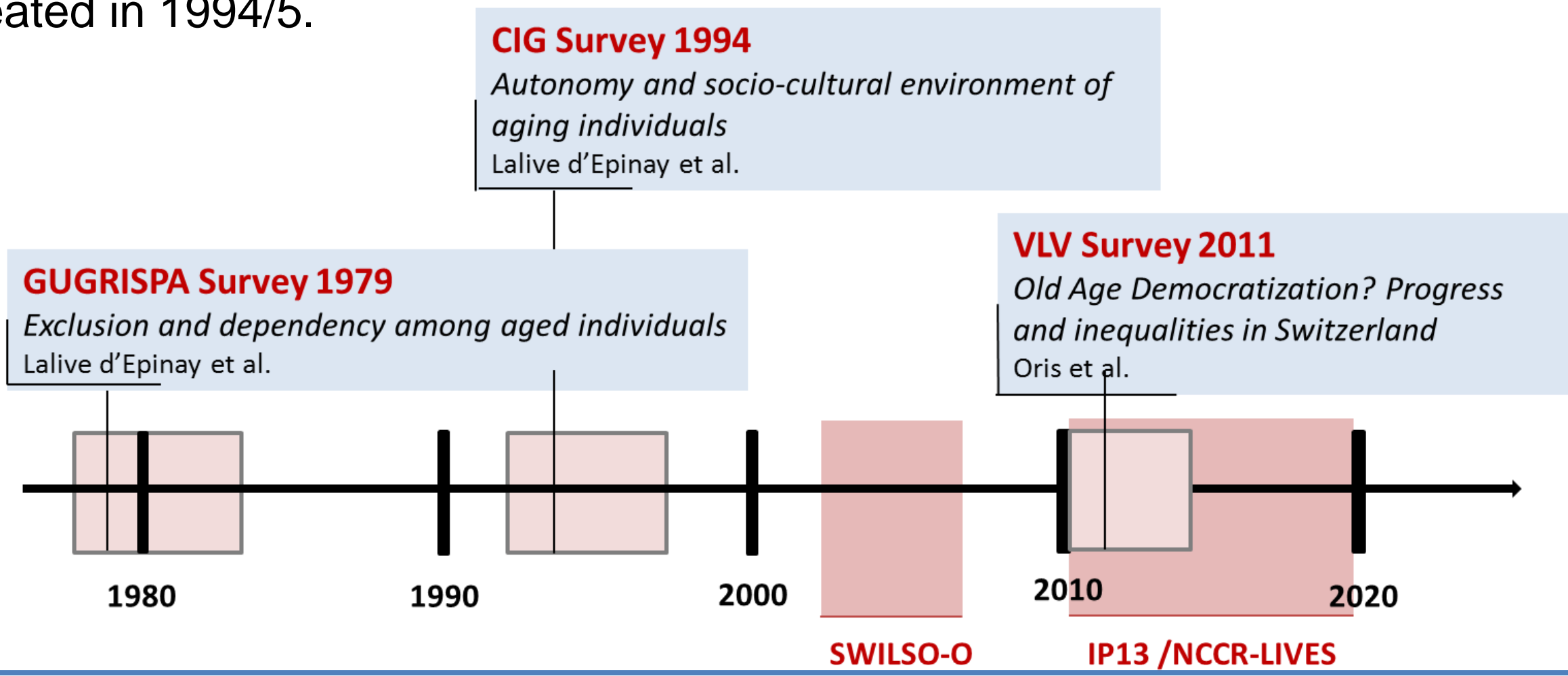
SURVEYING THE ELDERLY IN SWITZERLAND

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Context

- During the last century, life expectancy at birth has increased by over 30 years in Switzerland. The proportion of people aged 65 and older has tripled and the percentage of people 80 years and older has increased times eight.
- With a growing number of older individuals and a more heterogeneous elderly population, we need an updated description of:
 - Living conditions
 - Differences in access to and use of resources
- Analysis of the impact of life trajectories on the constitution of resources.
- An Interdisciplinary approach: *Geriatrics, Psychology, Sociology, Socioeconomics, Social Policy, Demography*.
- Vivre/Leben/Vivere (VLV) is also the third wave of a cross-sectional survey launched in 1979 and repeated in 1994/5.



How to approach elderly: experiences in Geneva and Valais

Contact attempts

- 31% of the completed questionnaires were obtained after the first contact attempt.
- One complete questionnaire out of five was obtained after five and more tentatives to establish the contact.

Visit at home

- 12,6% of respondents at Geneva and 42,3% at Valais have no public phone number. Whenever possible we visited them at their home. Home visits were also part of the strategy whenever people did not respond on the phone (n=508).
- 8% of the complete questionnaires were obtained after a visit.

Conclusion

It is costly to keep insisting **but** we increase the probability to capture more vulnerable people.

Reasons for refusing to participate in VLV 2011 (Geneva and Valais)

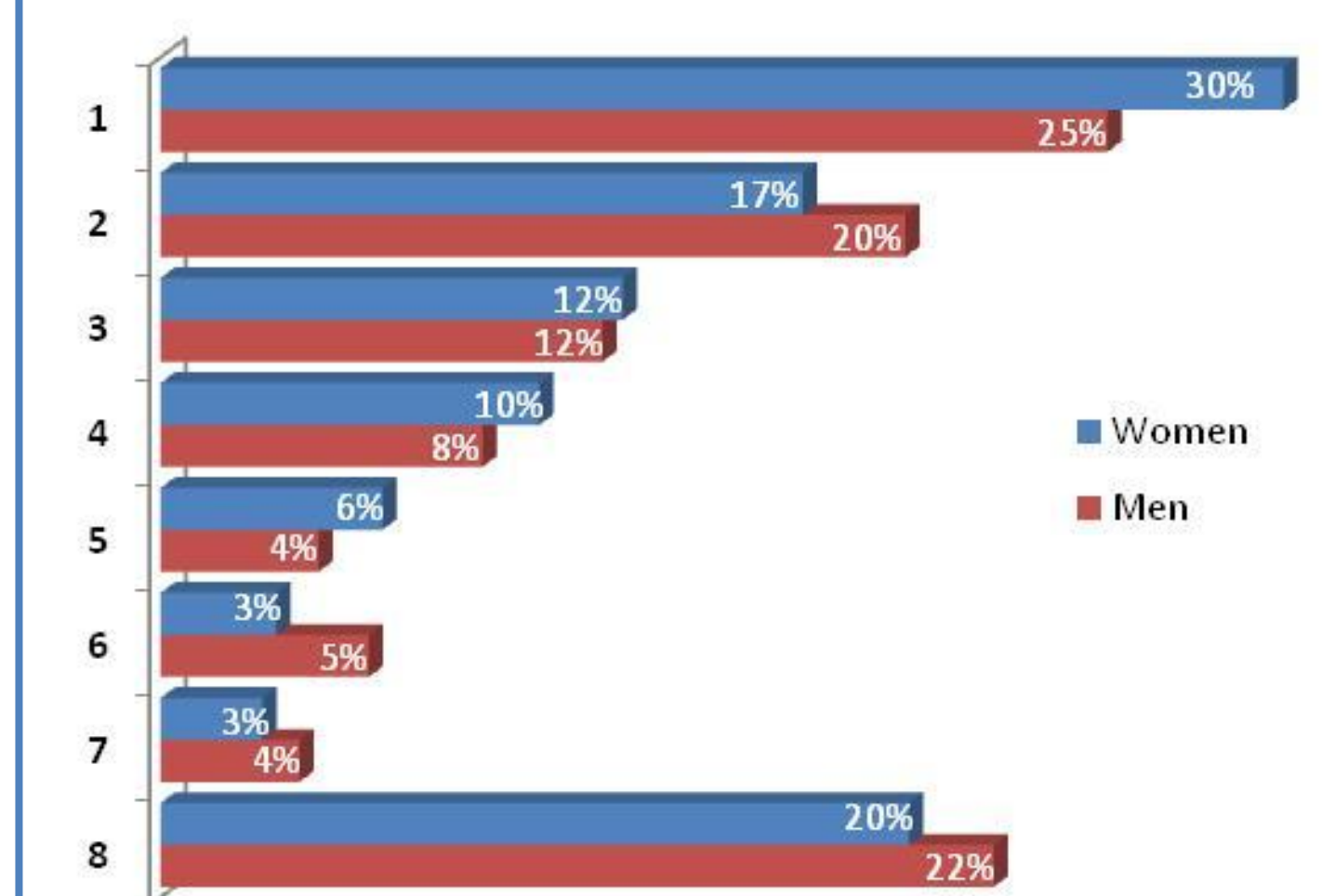
From 4105 individuals contacted, 47% refused to participate in VLV. Do reasons for refusing reflect situations of vulnerability?

- From the 1904 refusals, one out of four individuals (n=482) does not give any reason for refusing.
- The main reason for refusing is the lack of interest in the study. It is more frequent in Geneva and among women.
- Interestingly enough, this absence of interest decreases with age.

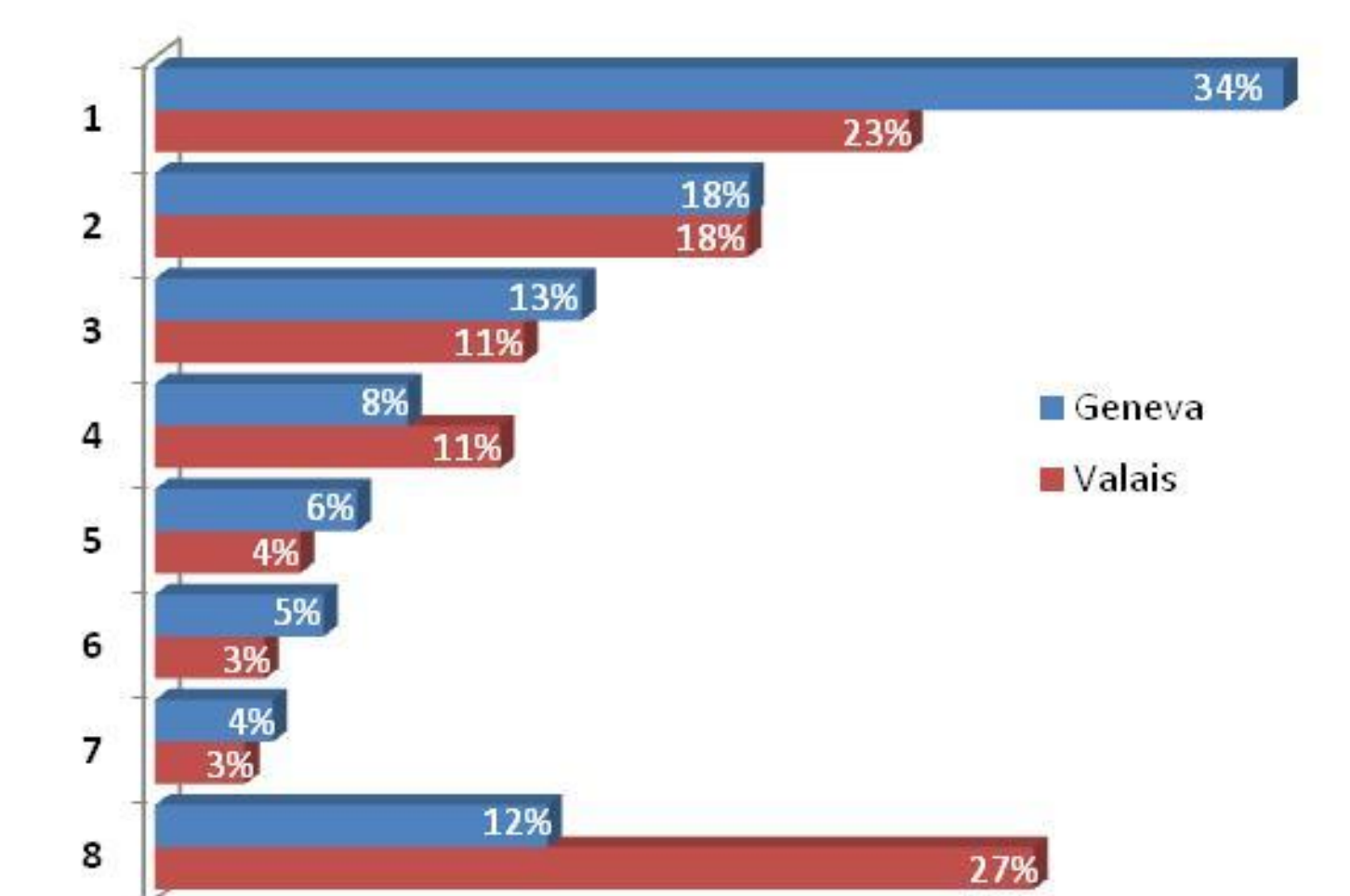
	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+
1 Not interested	31%	32%	31%	26%	23%	21%
2 Health reasons, too tired, too old	10%	9%	13%	21%	29%	34%
3 No time, holidays, work	24%	17%	12%	7%	6%	3%
4 Several reasons	8%	11%	10%	8%	10%	7%
5 Privacy, intimate questions	8%	5%	3%	5%	6%	4%
6 Refuse proxy	1%	2%	4%	4%	5%	12%
7 Personal, familiar reasons	2%	4%	4%	3%	4%	1%
8 OTHERS	17%	21%	23%	26%	18%	19%
N refusals	213	260	278	264	227	155

- Health reasons and excuses related to age are more frequent among men and the oldest old.
- Refusals related to a dynamic and busy life (no time, holidays, work) are the most important reason among the youngest old, as could be expected.

Reasons to refuse by sex



Reasons to refuse by canton



Old and New Methodological Challenges

Data collection

The sample was randomly drawn from the cantonal and federal Swiss administrative records. It is stratified by age and gender. The aim was to conduct 720 interviews in each area (Geneva, Valais, Bern, Basel, Ticino). After more than a year, we interviewed 3688 people.

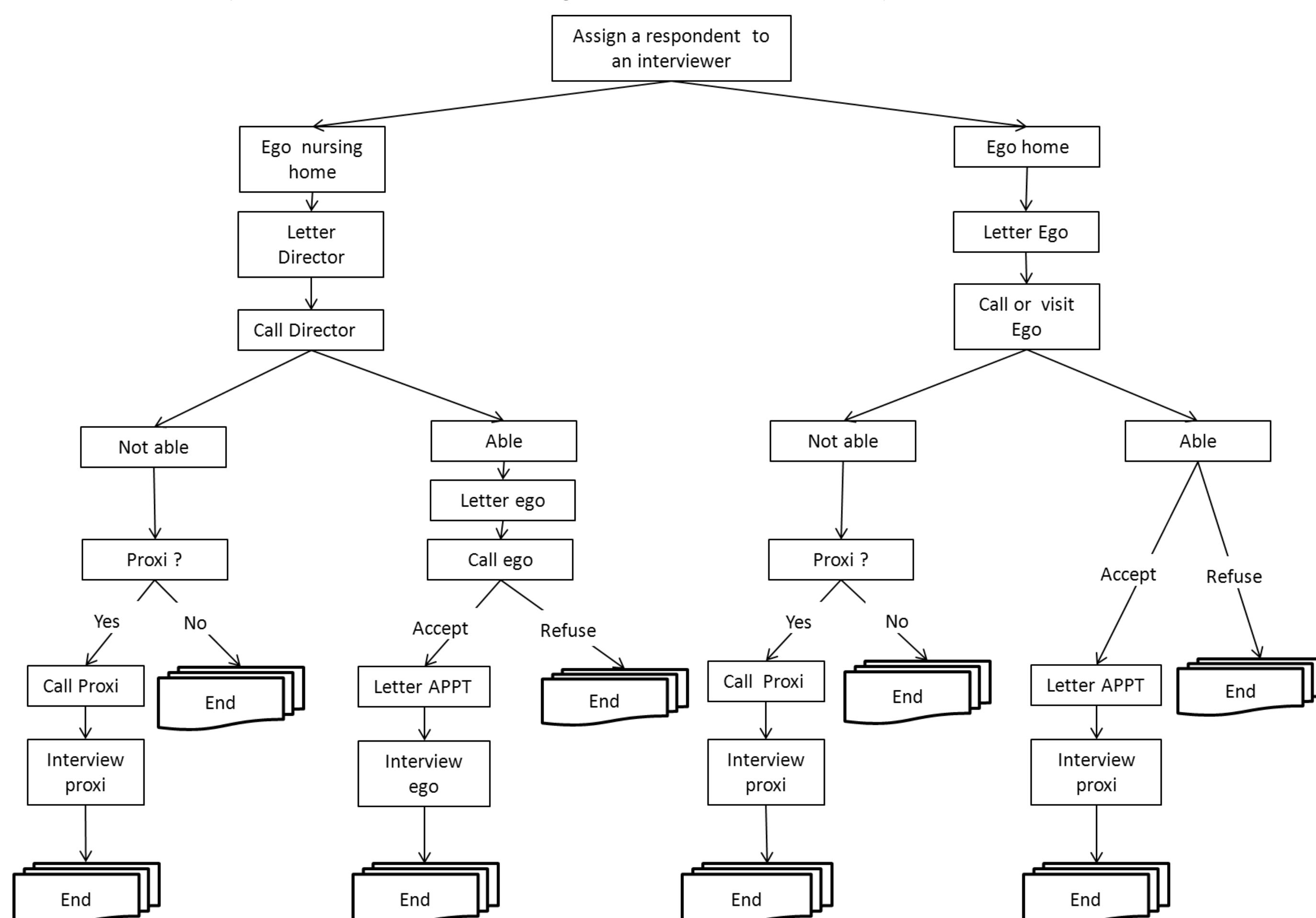
	Women						Men						Total
	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+	
Geneva	59	59	60	57	57	63	59	57	62	58	61	61	713
Valais	58	61	58	59	60	61	60	60	64	60	61	59	721
Bern	63	65	63	62	61	63	71	63	65	67	65	63	771
Basel	69	61	60	62	60	63	66	66	60	60	61	69	757
Ticino	61	57	57	55	61	65	60	69	59	60	61	61	726
Total	310	303	298	295	299	315	316	315	310	305	309	313	3688

The regions were selected on the basis of : a) reproducibility of the 1979 and 1994 surveys, b) diversity including different language (German, French and Italian) and geographical (urban, rural, alpine) areas and c) their potential to capture the effects of different social policy systems regarding the elderly in the complex Swiss Federal State.

Data were collected by :

- Self-administered questionnaire**
 - Containing 150 questions
- Life event history calendar**
- Face-to-face questionnaire** administered using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview)
 - Containing 459 questions
 - Filters adapt the questionnaire during the interview
- Proxi questionnaire** used for individuals identified as cognitively not able to be interviewed
 - Containing 64 questions

More than 150 interviewers were trained to collect the data. In each area, we used the same contact strategy, with various scenarios according to living (community dwelling / institution) or health status (ability to respond depending on mental or/and physical health).



VLV in comparison with other European studies

Response rates

- Response rates between cantons are similar (Geneva 36%, Valais 35%).
- Response rate of VLV 2011 (35%) is similar to SHARE 2004 (33%), but lower than the response rate in ESS 2004 (47%).

Refusal rates

	Geneva	Valais	Total sample CH
GUGRISPA 1979	29%	20%	25%
CIG 1994	33%	42%	37%
VLV 2011	42%	51%	47%
SHARE 2004	-	-	50%

- Refusal rate in VLV 2011 (47%) is close to refusal rates in other European studies as SHARE 2004 (50%).
- Among the elderly, refusal rates have increased across time from 25% in 1979 to 47% in 2011.

Among all the European populations, Swiss residents have the lowest rate of participation to surveys!