**Representation in Swiss political and social surveys and its implications for electoral participation and party choice research**- Nursel Alkoç

*Sous la direction de Georg Lutz*

Surveys are indispensable for politics because they help to create a kind of descriptive political representation of the public through random samples and understanding its political attitudes, preferences, and behaviours. Surveys also matter because they help to compensate for inequalities elsewhere in politics. Surveys may have lost these opportunities, as research shows strong evidence that they disproportionately sample individuals who are more interested, more informed, and more participatory in society. The usefulness of surveys in politics depends on how well they capture and represent the characteristics and attributes of the entire population. The problem of nonresponse can make surveys less representative than they appear or are hoped to be and reduce our confidence in survey-based political research. Political scientists often draw conclusions about political opinions, attitudes, preferences, and behaviours based on a single survey, usually a postelection survey. However, measures of these concepts are often also available in social surveys. Although some political scientists use those social surveys, it is not known whether there is a difference in representation between surveys that are purely about politics and those that are about more general and social topics. In this thesis, I pursue the questions of who is represented in Swiss political and social surveys and what are the consequences of their representativeness for the survey estimates of voter turnout and party preference. This study is important because it can help us understand the extent to which surveys can ensure political representation in a country like Switzerland, which is notorious for low turnout rates and thus political inequalities. Moreover, Switzerland is a country that invests heavily in social and political scientific research at national and international level through its social sciences infrastructure, the Swiss Centre of Expertise in Social Sciences (FORS), so this study will shed comparative light on the data quality of different Swiss surveys and give political scientists an insight into which surveys they should rely on.