

SHARE Compliance Profiles - Wave 4

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Executive Summary

- All countries participating in SHARE wave 4 submitted the required input documentation and deliverables in full, with only two exceptions: Austria did not deliver a proper gross sample file for their refreshment sample, and Estonia did not conduct the generic, mandatory drop-off questionnaire.
- Data collection of wave 4 was achieved with a poorly synchronized schedule, which resulted - for the most part - from the different availability of national funding.
- Attendance of survey agency trainers was satisfactory for most countries and training content of national training sessions compared very favorably to the SHARE templates in all countries.
- Data deliveries during fieldwork and follow-up controls of conducted interviews met the required standards in all countries.
- Contact rates of households were satisfactory ($\geq 90\%$) in almost all countries, both in panel and refreshment samples.
- Refusal rates ranged from 22% to 49% and were the prime reason for sampled households not providing an interview.
- No country reached the target household response rate of 70% in refreshment or baseline samples. Seven out of 13 countries reached or exceeded the minimum household response rate of 50%.
- No country reached the individual-level target retention rate of 90% in the panel sub-sample A-B. Four out of 13 countries reached or exceeded the minimum individual-level target retention rate of 80%. All countries reached an individual-level target retention rate of at least 70%.
- Four out of 18 countries reached a drop-off match rate of 90% or more. Eight countries had a match rate between 80% and 89% and four countries exceeded a match rate of 50% but remained under 80%.

1. Introduction

The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) is an ex-ante harmonized, longitudinal and multi-disciplinary survey infrastructure aimed at filling the gap of much-needed comparative data on population ageing across Europe. Ex-ante harmonization means that not only the questionnaire design (electronically realized as CAPI instrument) but also fieldwork procedures (most of them realized electronically in form of the SMS) are standardized across countries. This approach fundamentally differs from the Eurostat approach (e.g., in EU-SILC) where survey execution is a national matter. The ex-ante harmonization approach has been chosen by SHARE for scientific reasons as it minimizes those artifacts in cross-national comparisons that are created by country-specific survey design.

While national operations in all participating countries are coordinated by university-based groups of researchers, the actual interviewing is - in most countries - subcontracted to for-profit survey organizations which have the expertise, staff and logistics available to conduct large-scale operations like SHARE with high quantities of face-to-face interviews. A major challenge is to ensure the ex-ante harmonization of the survey in such a decentralized environment. To this effect, SHARE employs three instruments: the SHARE Model Contract provides the legal framework for standards and quality control; the SHARE Survey Specifications define the quality standards of the survey ex ante; and the SHARE Compliance Profiles report adherence to those standards ex post. This legal and scientific framework is to be adopted by all participating countries without modifications: all for-profit contractors are mandated to comply with the SHARE-specific quality standards laid out in the SHARE Survey Specifications which are legally framed as an annex to the SHARE Model Contract (survey specifications can be obtained per email request to info@share-project.org).

The SHARE Compliance Profiles consist of a set of quality control indicators based on the SHARE Survey Specifications. All participating countries are evaluated on these indicators uniformly, although the environments for conducting the survey differ among European countries. As an ex-ante harmonized endeavor like SHARE cannot afford to set country-specific standards on what qualifies as good performance the combination of ex-ante Survey Specifications and ex-post Compliance Profiles levels the playing field for all participating countries and allows for a fair comparison of national survey quality.

This document reports how SHARE quality standards were adhered to in Wave 4. Section 2 lists the survey agencies involved in Wave 4. Section 3 describes the data input for this evaluation. Section 4 reports the results in form of the various indicators. It is important to note that Wave 4 of SHARE was a difficult wave since it was the first wave under the new decentralized funding scheme. As opposed to the three earlier waves, survey operations in each country were financed nationally and not centrally by the EU Commission. This has put the ex-ante harmonization approach under additional pressure, not the least due to the difficulties of some countries to provide the necessary funds in time. The compliance profiles in this report therefore do not only reflect differences in survey agency performance but also the pressures of time and money in the SHARE member countries.

3. SHARE Survey Agencies

The organizations in the table below conducted the fieldwork in each wave. As can be seen in Table 1 below, there has been high stability of contracted survey agencies over time in most countries.

Table 2. Survey agencies from wave 1 to 4 of countries participating in wave 4

Country	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4
Austria, AT	IMAS	IMAS	IFES	IFES
Belgium, French, BE(fr)	PSBH, University of Liège	PSBH, University of Liège	PSBH, University of Liège	PSBH, University of Liège
Belgium, Dutch, BE(nl)	PSBH University of Antwerp	PSBH University of Antwerp	CELLO - Antwerp Univ.	CELLO - Antwerp Univ.
Czech Republic (CZ)	-	SC&C	SC&C	SC&C
Denmark (DK)	SFI Survey	SFI Survey	SFI Survey	SFI Survey
Estonia (EE)	-	-	-	Statistics Estonia
France (FR)	INSEE	INSEE	INSEE	INSEE (FR-p)/ GFK-ISL (FR-r)
Germany (DE)	infas GmbH	infas GmbH	infas GmbH	infas GmbH
Hungary (HU)	-	-	-	TARKI
Italy (IT)	DOXA S.p.A.	DOXA S.p.A.	DOXA S.p.A.	DOXA S.p.A.
Poland (PL)	-	TNS -OBOP	TNS -OBOP	TNS -OBOP
Portugal (PT)	-	-	-	GfK Metris
Spain (ES)	TNS Demoscopia	TNS Demoscopia	TNS Demoscopia	TNS Demoscopia
Slovenia (SI)	-	-	-	CJMMK
Sweden (SE)	Intervjubolaget IMRI	Intervjubolaget IMRI	Intervjubolaget IMRI	Intervjubolaget IMRI
Switzerland (CH)	MIS Trend	LINK	LINK	LINK
The Netherlands (NL)	TNS NIPO	TNS NIPO	TNS NIPO	TNS NIPO

4. Indicators

4.1. Fieldwork Periods

A synchronized execution of fieldwork in all participating countries is a crucial requirement for an ex-ante harmonized survey like SHARE for at least three reasons. First, from a scientific point of view, synchronicity of interview dates allows cross-country comparisons of effects of seminal events, such as the financial crisis in 2008/2009. Second, limited resources at central coordination make simultaneous monitoring of fieldwork necessary. Likewise, post-data collection processing of data, which ultimately yields public data releases to the scientific community, relies on availability of all interview data at the same point in time. Data are never processed for countries individually, but always enter cross-country processing procedures at the same point in time. In other words, one country being late has negative externalities in terms of monetary and logistic terms for everybody else.

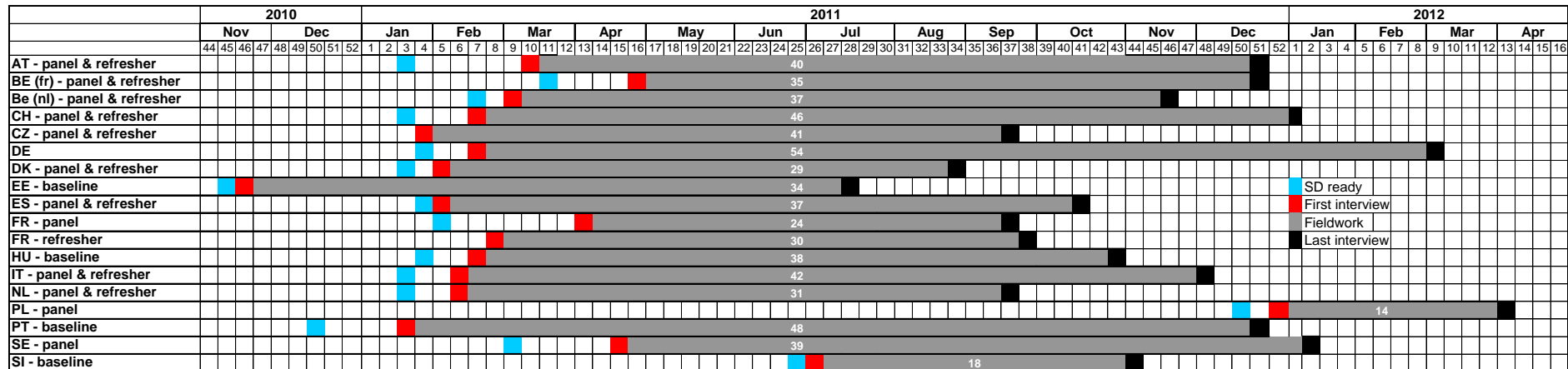


Figure 1. Fieldwork periods in SHARE wave 4

It can be seen that in wave four, fieldwork periods as indicated by three crucial milestones (receiving the survey software “SD ready”, first interview, last interview) were highly asynchronous, mostly as a result of the funding issues mentioned in the introduction, most prominently Poland and Slovenia.

4.2 Interviewer Training, Management & Quality Control

4.2.1 Attendance at the Train-The-Trainer sessions

SHARE uses a multiplier approach to conduct study-specific training. A centralized train-the-trainer (TTT) event is held before every pilot phase, the pretest and the main data collection with the goal of teaching head trainers of each country who then multiply this knowledge in their home country by teaching the actual field interviewers. Attendance of (at least) two representatives of the contracted survey organization is crucial to ensure proper relaying of training content at the national level. While it is understood that funding restrictions on the national level may restrict travel budgets to one person attending, two or more persons are preferable because this permits specialization according to survey domains and subsequent professionalization. The table below shows the number of survey agency staff attending each TTT. We consider attendance of two agency representative as sufficient, one person attendance as necessary and absence of agency staff from the TTT as posing a serious problem.

Table 3. Survey agency attendance at wave 4 TTTs

	AT	BE (fr)	BE (nl)	CH	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FR (p)	FR (r)	HU	IT	NL	PL	PT	SE	SI
Pilot TTT	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	1
Pretest TTT	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1
Main TTT	2	3	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	4	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	1

4.2.3 Re-Employment of SHARE Interviewers

The SHARE model contract demands that as many interviewers as possible from previous waves should be employed again for the upcoming wave. It is well-documented that interviewer stability increases the target persons' willingness to cooperate again¹. We considered a re-employment rate of 50% and higher as a good outcome and below 20% as poor outcome. Naturally, this rate only applies to countries with a panel sample, i.e. not those which joined SHARE in wave 4².

Table 5. Re-employment of interviewers who worked for SHARE in previous waves

	AT	BE (fr)	BE (nl)	CH	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FR (p)	FR (r)	HU	IT	NL	PL	PT	SE	SI
Re-employment rate in percent	51	26	45	35	14	22	80	na	35	100	na	na	59	50	70	na	20	na

4.2.4 Number of Interviews per Interviewer

A considerable body of evidence shows that interviewer effects have strong influence on survey responses. As a consequence, SHARE seeks to limit excessive clustering of interviews within individual interviewers (i.e. a high number of interviews per interviewer) by stipulating no more than 50 interviews per interviewer.

Table 6. Average (median) number of interviews per interviewer

	AT	BE (fr)	BE (nl)	CH	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FR (p)	FR (r)	HU	IT	NL	PL	PT	SE	SI
Median number of interviews per interviewer	40	31	44	28	16	15	42	70	41	13	22	58	36	21	26	24	39	39

¹ Behr A., Bellgardt E., Rendtel Ulrich. 2005. "Extent and Determinants of Panel Attrition in the European Community Household Panel." European Sociological Review 21(5)

² The rate is not conditioned on interviewers of wave 3. Many countries had to hire new interviewers due to refreshment samples.

4.2.5 Interview Back-Checks

SHARE mandates that at least 20 percent of all interviewed households are being followed up on to verify that an interview has taken place and that it was done properly. The goal is to make interviewers before the start of fieldwork aware that there will be a good chance their work will be inspected for falsifications and professional properness. Survey agencies were free to apply their own organization's procedure to verify conducted interviews (i.e. if responding households were contacted by mail or telephone, etc.). Unfortunately, the lack of standardized back-check procedures prohibited a consistent quantitative assessment for this evaluation report. The table below simply shows if any kind of back-checks with interviewed households was performed. All countries performed some kind of back-check.

Table 7. Interviewer quality control ("back-checks")

	AT	BE (fr)	BE (nl)	CH	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FR (p)	FR (r)	HU	IT	NL	PL	PT	SE	SI
Back-checks performed	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

4.3 Timely Data Uploads

Proper fieldwork monitoring is premised on synchronous availability of fieldwork data from all countries. SHARE specified upload dates for the entire fieldwork period up-front. The table below shows the rate of timely uploads of the countries' Sample Distributor with Centerdata servers. We rated "on time" any upload received within a three-day period of the specified day (e.g., if an upload was scheduled for the 20th, we rated the receipt of data "on time" if it arrived anywhere between the 17th and 23rd of the month). A rate of less than 85 percent was considered insufficient.

Table 8. Timely data uploads

	AT	BE (fr)	BE (nl)	CH	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FR (p)	FR (r)	HU	IT	NL	PL ³	PT	SE	SI
Timely data uploads in percent	95	100	100	86	100	96	100	93	95	100	100	100	100	100	na	100	89	100

³ Poland's fieldwork was entirely out of the wave 4 schedule so this indicator does not apply to them.

4.4 Fieldwork Outcomes

Good fieldwork is characterized by high contact rates and high cooperation rates. Together, this results in high response rates for baseline and refresher samples and high retention rates for panel samples. Due to the eligibility of partners of drawn respondents in SHARE, rates regarding contact and cooperation are mostly relevant on the household (HH) level. Rates pertaining to completed interviews relative to the gross sample were calculated both on the household and individual level. Conceptual and computational details of these rates can be found elsewhere⁴.

4.4.1 Baseline and Refreshment Samples

4.4.1.1 Household Contact, Cooperation and Response Rates

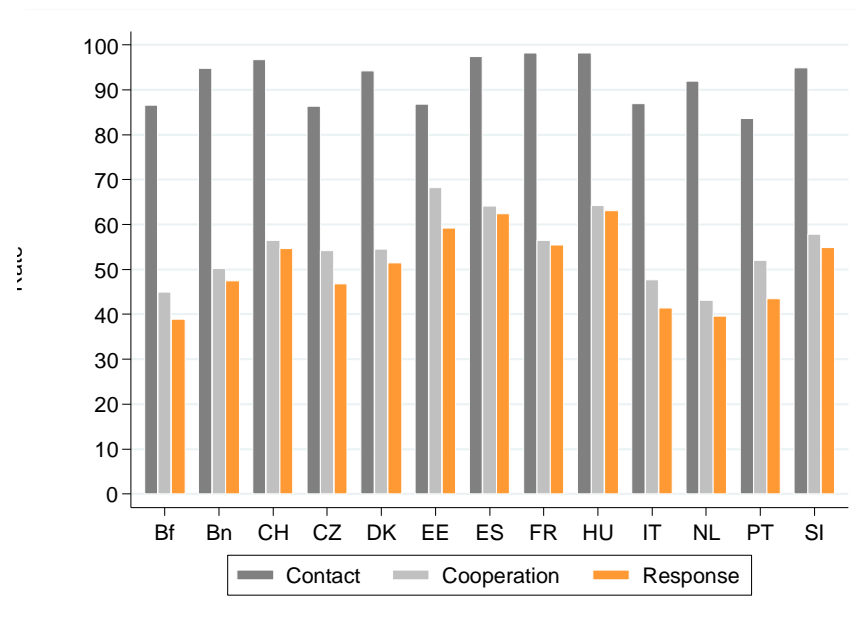


Figure 2. HH contact, cooperation and response rates

⁴ For details see Malter, F. & Börsch-Supan, A. (2013). Innovations and Methodology of SHARE Wave Four. Munich: Max Planck Institute for Social Law and Social Policy

Figure 2 shows household contact, cooperation, and – as a result – response rates for all countries with sufficient information (i.e. all except Austria⁵). In most countries, establishing a first contact was rather unproblematic for interviewers as reflected by contact rates well above 90 percent. There were some exceptions, though: Contact rates are rather low in the Czech Republic and Portugal – two countries which had to engage in a screening phase due to lacking register information. Contact rates were also below 90 percent in Wallonia (Bf), Estonia, and Italy. Cooperation rates ranged from about 43 percent (NL) to 68 percent (EE). Household response rates varied between about 39 percent for Wallonia (Bf) and about 63 percent for Hungary.

4.4.1.2 Household Non-Cooperation Rates

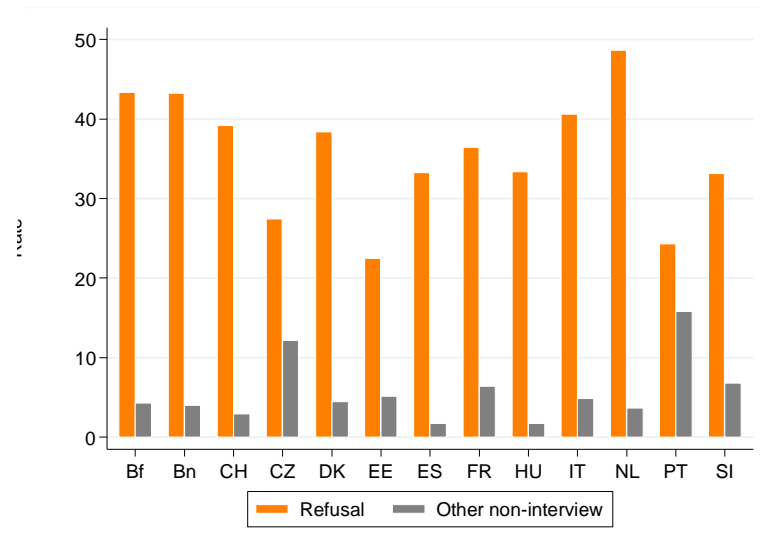


Figure 3. HH non-cooperation

⁵ Austria participated in SHARE wave 4 and conducted interviews among panel respondents and baseline respondents, i.e. target persons to be interviewed for the first time. Due to legal restrictions, it was not possible to draw randomized samples from the Austrian population register. The sample was drawn from a register containing all housing-units in the country. In the management of fieldwork some irregularities have then occurred regarding eligibility screening of randomized drawn housing-units. This opens the possibility for response biases.

This has two implications: First, it necessitates the application of statistical procedures to account for the possibility of response bias. Second, since some crucial details of the sampling process cannot be recovered anymore, it is not possible to construct proper design weights.

Household non-cooperation can be further classified into refusal versus other reasons leading to non-interview. Refusal was the predominant reason for non-cooperation, yet with a considerable variation in refusal rates among countries ranging from about 22 percent in Estonia to about 49 percent in the Netherlands (see figure 2). For some countries, also other non-interview reasons than refusal account for a part of non-cooperation. Non-eligible households are categorized as other non-interview if they have been successfully contacted without ever refusing cooperation. One instance would be an appointment for an interview that then fell through for any number of reasons (i.e. not result in a completed interview during the field period). This occurred particularly often in Portugal, where the other non-interview rate was about 16 percent. It was lowest (<2%) for Spain and Hungary and averaged about 6 percent.

4.4.1.3 Household Response Rates

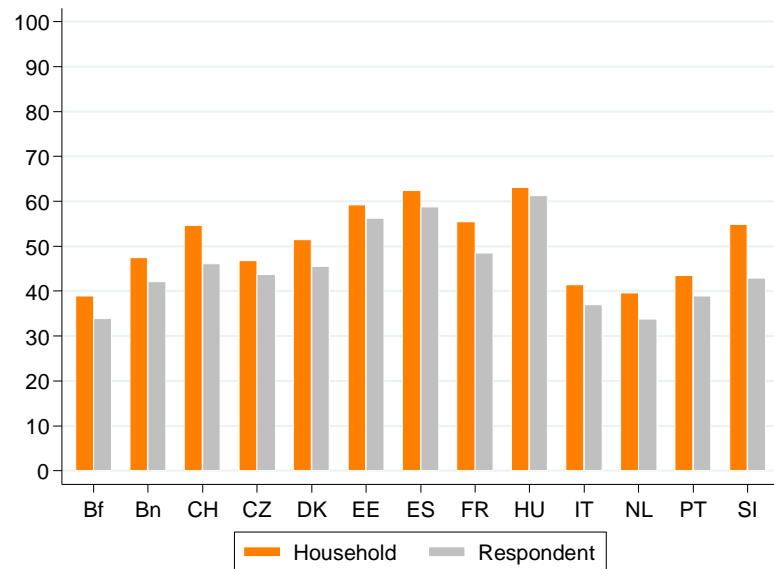


Figure 4. Household response rates

The household response rate gives the logical upper boundary of the individual response rate. If all eligible persons in participating households actually participated, both rates would coincide. As figure 4 shows, individual response rates are in fact very close to household response rates, indicating that the study managed to interview all eligible persons within a household in a large proportion of cases. On average, 89 percent of all eligible persons in eligible households could be interviewed. This ratio was highest in Hungary (97%) and lowest in Slovenia (78%). The resulting individual response rates for the baseline/refreshment samples range from about 34 percent in Wallonia (Bf) and the Netherlands to about 61 percent in Hungary.

4.4.2 Panel Samples

4.4.2.1 Household Contact, Cooperation and Retention Rates

This subsection reports contact, cooperation and retention rates for all households in wave 4, given that the household has been successfully interviewed in at least one previous wave, not necessarily wave 3. This is different from the simple retention rate between wave 3 and wave 4 as it includes households which have been lost after waves 1 and 2 as well as households which have been recovered in wave 4 although they did not participate in wave 3. Simple wave 3 to 4 retention rates are reported in subsection 4.5.2.4 and considerably higher.

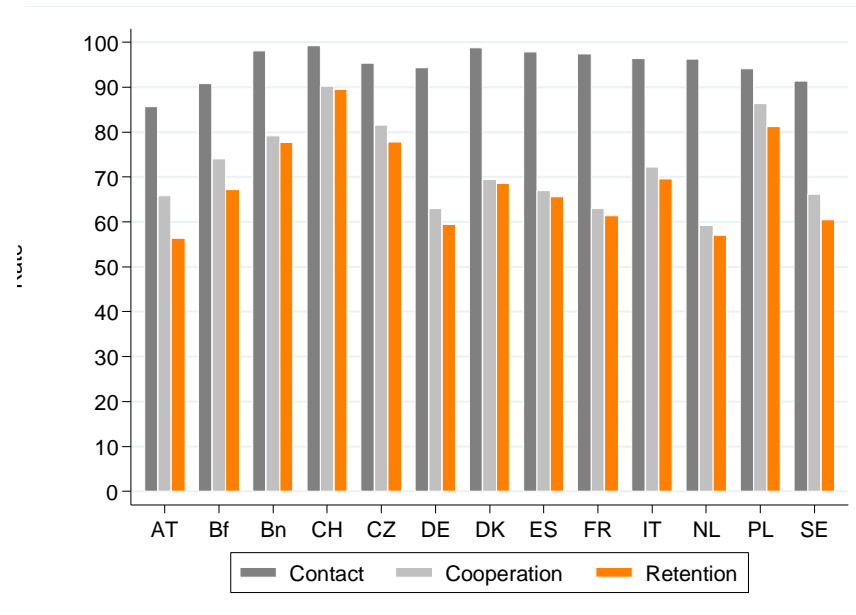


Figure 5. Contact, Cooperation & Retention

As can be seen in figure 5, interviewers' first task of establishing contact was well accomplished in most countries. Apart from Austria, contact rates were consistently above 90 percent with an average of about 95 percent. Household cooperation showed greater variation across countries than contact. Cooperation rates varied between about 60 percent in the Netherlands and about 90 percent in Switzerland. Hence, retention rates, which combine contact and cooperation, varied between below 60 percent (AT, DE, NL) and about 90 percent (CH). As this retention rate refers to the participation in wave 4, given that the household

has been successfully interviewed in at least one previous wave, not necessarily wave 3, some of the differences among countries are due to differences in sample composition with regard to participation behavior in previous waves. These, in turn, are a consequence of SHARE's general aim to re-attempt households not participating in a previous wave. Naturally, this only applies if legal restrictions in the participating countries allow for such re-attempts.

4.4.2.2 Household Non-Cooperation

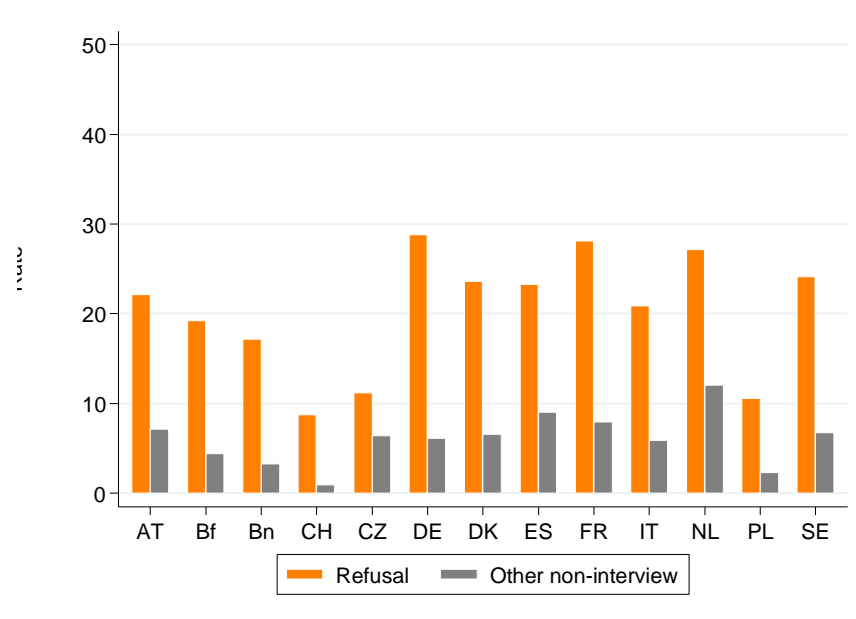


Figure 6. HH non-cooperation

As in the baseline/refreshment samples, the main reason for non-cooperation of longitudinal households was refusal to participate. On average this applied to about 20 percent of all longitudinal households but with large differences across countries (see Figure 10.8). Refusal rates in the longitudinal sample were lowest in Switzerland (about 9%) and highest in Germany (about 29%). However, for most countries non-response was also due to other non-interview reasons. Again, other non-interview reasons were most uncommon in Switzerland (about 1%); they were most frequent in the Netherlands (about 12%). On average, the other non-interview rate for longitudinal samples was about 6 percent.

4.4.2.3 Household and Respondent Retention Rates

Retention rates at the individual level were in general close to those at the household level. Thus, like in the baseline and refreshment samples, most often all eligible members in cooperating households could be interviewed. On average, cooperation was gained from 93 percent of respondents in participating households. The ratio was highest in Poland (about 99%) and lowest in Sweden (about 87%). The resulting individual retention rates ranged from about 50 percent in the Netherlands to about 80 percent in Switzerland and Poland (see figure 7 below).

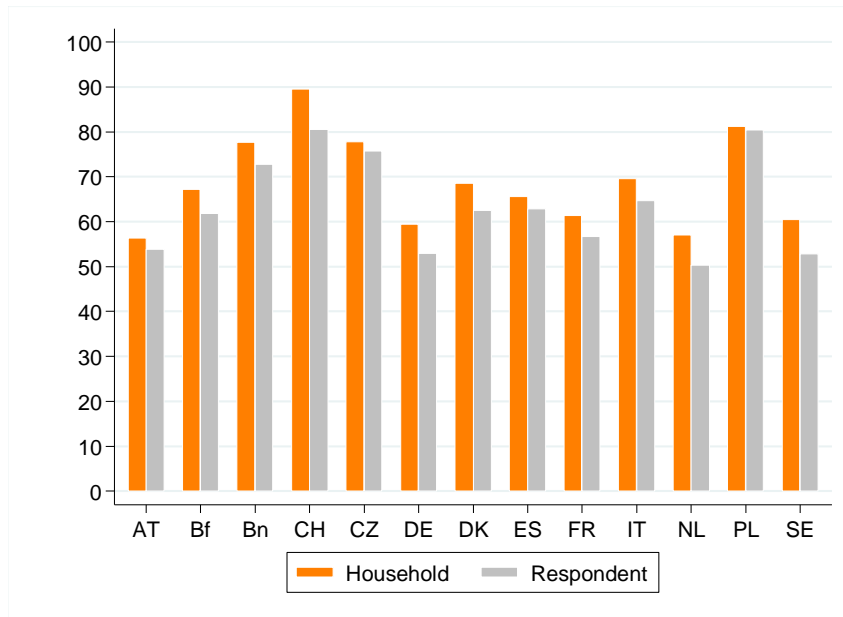


Figure 7. Retention rates

4.4.2.4 Retention Rates in Panel Subsamples

Panel participants can be part of four mutually exclusive subsamples. Subsample A contains all wave 4 respondents who also participated in wave 3. Subsample B contains all respondents who participated in wave 1 or 2, but not in wave 3, and live in a household where at least one household member participated in wave 3. Subsample C contains all respondents who participated in wave 1 or 2, but not in wave 3, and do *not* live in a household where at least one household member participated in wave 3. Subsample D contains all missing who have not participated in SHARE so far.

The individual retention rate in subsample A was considerably higher than individual retention with respect to all eligible household members in the longitudinal sample, irrespective of previous participation behavior (see figure 8 above). Even in Austria, where subsample A retention was lowest, it amounted to about 74 percent. It is highest in Switzerland and Poland, where about 89 percent of respondents from wave 3 could be re-interviewed. For subsample B, retention rates varied between about 9 (DK) and 59 percent (PL), the average was about 31 percent. It has to be noted, however, that national subsamples B contained on average only 18 individuals. For subsample C, retention rates ranged from about 15 (IT) to 71 percent (CZ) with an average of about 28 percent. The average sample size in subsample C was 160 individuals per country. For subsample D, retention – or rather response – rates varied between about 7 (DE) and 53 percent (CZ) with an average of about 19 percent. The average sample size was 33 individuals per country and thus again rather small.

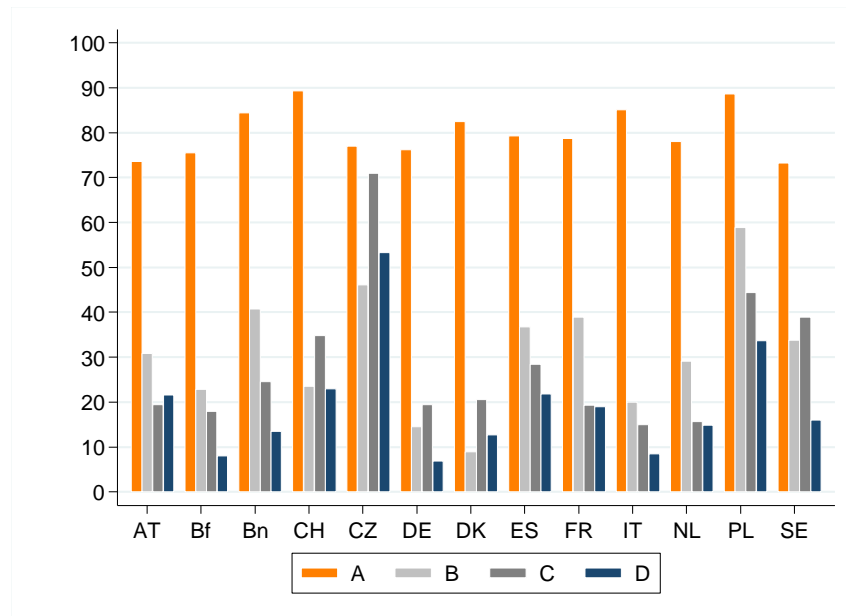


Figure 8. Retention rates in panel subsamples

4.5 Average Number of Contact Attempts in Households Without Interview

The SHARE Model Contract stipulates eight contact attempts before a household can be assumed a final non-interview household not to be further followed. The table below shows the median number of contact attempts in eligible households where there was no interview at the end of fieldwork. This includes households where a refusal happened. While eight contact attempts were prescribed as norm, we regard values of 6 or more contact attempts as acceptable.

We analyzed all SMS codes that indicate potential for an interview in a given household. To that end, we looked at SMS codes at the household and respondent level (because they can contradict each other). We then counted every household where either the entire household or at least one eligible person within the household had a code out of the three code categories listed below:

- HH/ individuals with unsuccessful contact attempts, i.e. where no one answered (SMS code 201)
- HH/ individuals with successful contacts but without interviews (SMS codes 202-204)
- HH/ individuals with soft refusal codes (SMS codes 205-208)

We assumed that SMS data reflects the true state of affairs, i.e. we cannot account for contact codes recorded outside of the SMS. Note that the findings below do not include households without any contact attempts or contacts where the potential for interviews is very likely but not completely clear.

Table 9. Average number of contact attempts in households without interview

	AT	BE (fr)	BE (nl)	CH	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FR (p)	FR (r)	HU	IT	NL	PL	PT	SE	SI
Median number of contact attempts	2	2	3	7	3	2	3	3	5	2	6	2	3	3	2	8	2	3

4.6 Drop-off Match Rate

A complete SHARE wave 4 interview consisted of two parts: a completed CAPI interview and a completed paper-pencil, self-completion questionnaire (“drop-off”). This indicator measures the rate of completed and publicly released CAPI interviews per country for which publicly released drop-off data could be matched. The target rate of 90 percent or higher was considered sufficient.

Table 10. Drop-off match rate

	AT	BE (fr)	BE (nl)	CH	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FR (p)	FR (r)	HU	IT	NL	PL	PT	SE	SI
Percent of CAPI interviews with a merging drop-off	86	89	61	99	76	85	90	0	96	83	93	95	91	92	87	86	87	96