



Hope Barometer 2024

Hope between anxiety and trust

Results for Switzerland

Dr. Andreas M. Krafft

December 2023

In cooperation with:

swissfuture

Schweizerische Vereinigung für Zukunftsforschung
Société Suisse pour des études prospectives
Swiss Society for Futures Studies

The Hope Barometer has been conducted annually since 2009 for the coming year in a large internet survey with the support of the daily newspaper 20 Minuten. Starting in Switzerland, the survey is now also conducted in cooperation with renowned universities in Australia, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, France, India, Israel, Italy, Nigeria, Poland, Portugal, Spain and South Africa. This report presents the latest results of the November 2023 Hope Barometer in Switzerland. The public was asked about their expectations for the future in various areas, about long-term social future scenarios, about their personal hopes, about the sources of hope and about their values, worldviews and self-image.

swissfuture is the Swiss Association for Futures Studies which was founded in 1970. As a politically neutral association and member of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW), it promotes futures research in Switzerland and makes its findings accessible to the public. swissfuture organizes conferences, seminars and studies and expresses its views on future issues in the media. See www.swissfuture.ch

Author:

Dr. Andreas Krafft, Research Associate for Future Studies at the Institute for Systemic Management and Public Governance at the University of St.Gallen and Co-President of swissfuture

E-mail: andreas.krafft@unisg.ch

Mobile: +41 79 403 06 13

All rights reserved

Copyright© 2023 by IMP-HSG / swissfuture

Institute for Systemic Management and Public Governance of the University of St.Gallen, St. Gallen

Any form of reproduction without the publisher's permission is prohibited.

www.imp.unisg.ch, www.swissfuture.ch

The most important facts in brief

The results of the Hope Barometer 2024 lead to the following findings:

1. Satisfaction and confidence in one's own life are relatively pronounced and in clear contrast to dissatisfaction and pessimism regarding social developments.
2. Young people are more dissatisfied, less hopeful, believe to a lesser extent in the good, have lower self-worth, feel to a smaller amount emotionally and socially comfortable and value sustainability not as much than older people.
3. The outlook for the quality of life in 20 years' time has become gloomier year after year. The threat of a long-term crisis scenario has increased in recent years and the belief in a long-term flourishing scenario has decreased.
4. Despite these negative prospects, personal hope has remained almost constant at a medium-high level over the last six years, particularly in German-speaking Switzerland.
5. The most important personal hopes are good health, a happy family, marriage or partnership, harmony in life, personal self-determination, good relationships with other people and a meaningful task. Money, career and sex are the least important.
6. The most important sources of hope are good experiences in nature and the support of family and friends, followed by personal strengths and social care.
7. Belief in people's helpfulness and kindness has increased significantly. At the same time, belief in a good and just world has decreased. Self-worth has remained constant at a high level.
8. To many people, personal growth, community and security are slightly more important than sustainability. Religious or spiritual faith is only important to a minority.
9. While physical health declines with age, mental health and emotional, psychological and social well-being increase with age.
10. There is a positive relationship between hope, meaning in life, the desire for personal growth, community, sustainability, self-worth, the belief in the good and personal well-being.

Based on our many years of research, we can derive the following three hypotheses and put them up for discussion:

1. As long as concerns about a future full of crises and conflicts have a stronger impact than the desire and longing for a sustainable, peaceful and just world, this will lead to increasing social and political unrest and polarization.
2. However, it is not that much the fear of an uncertain future, but a lack of belief in a better social future that is increasingly causing helplessness, a lack of prospects and indifference, particularly among young people.
3. For this reason, new positive narratives of desirable visions of the future must be created in both personal and social life so that people are more committed to common goals in their private, professional and social lives.

Table of contents

- 1 Introduction 6
- 2 Satisfaction in 2023 and expectations for 2024 7
 - 2.1 Satisfaction in 2023 7
 - 2.2 Expectations for the year 2024 9
- 3 Long-term future scenarios 13
 - 3.1 Quality of life in 20 years' time 13
 - 3.2 Probable future scenarios 13
 - 3.3 Desirable future scenarios 14
- 4 Personal hope 17
 - 4.1 Personal hope level 17
 - 4.2 Personal hopes for 2024 19
 - 4.3 Sources of hope 20
- 5 Worldviews, values and meaning in life 22
 - 5.1 Basic beliefs: Worldviews and self-images 22
 - 5.2 Personal Values 26
 - 5.3 Meaning and crisis of meaning in life 29
- 6 Health and well-being 31
 - 6.1 Physical and mental health 31
 - 6.2 Emotional, psychological and social well-being 31
- 7 Summary and conclusions 34
- 8 Key figures on the structure of the study 36
- 9 References 38
- Books 39

List of figures

- Figure 1: Satisfaction in the year 20237
- Figure 2: Satisfaction with personal life in 20238
- Figure 3: Satisfaction in 2023 by Swiss region8
- Figure 4: Satisfaction in 2023 across age groups.....9
- Figure 5: Expectations for the year 2024 10
- Figure 6: Expectations in personal life for the year 2024 10
- Figure 7: Expectations for the year 2024 by Swiss region..... 11
- Figure 8: Expectations for the year 2024 across age groups 12
- Figure 9: Expected quality of life in 20 years’ time..... 13
- Figure 10: Comparison of probable future scenarios in 20 years’ time 2019-2023 14
- Figure 11: Comparison of desirable future scenarios in 20 years’ time 2019-2023 15
- Figure 12: Desirable future scenarios in 2043 across Swiss regions..... 16
- Figure 13: Personal hope level 2018-2023 in comparison..... 18
- Figure 14: Personal hope level 2019-2023 by Swiss region..... 18
- Figure 15: Personal hope level across age groups 19
- Figure 16: Personal hopes for the year 2024..... 20
- Figure 17: Sources of hope 21
- Figure 18: Basic beliefs 23
- Figure 19: Comparison of basic beliefs in the years 2017 and 2023 24
- Figure 20: Basic beliefs on the benevolence of people and the world across age groups 25
- Figure 21: Self-worth across age groups..... 25
- Figure 22: Luck across age groups 26
- Figure 23: Personal values 27
- Figure 24: Personal across genders..... 28
- Figure 25: Values of sustainability and personal growth across age groups 28
- Figure 26: Relationship between the value of sustainability and hope..... 29
- Figure 27: Meaning and crisis of meaning across age groups 30
- Figure 28: Relationship between meaning in life and hope..... 30
- Figure 29: Physical and mental health across age groups..... 31
- Figure 30: Emotional, psychological and social well-being across age groups..... 32

I Introduction

What people do in everyday life and how they shape their lives depends to a large extent on what ideas they have about the future, what goals they set themselves and what means they use to achieve them. In times of increasing crises and threats, people increasingly want to know what the future will look like. Most thoughts and discussions about the future focus on the question of what will happen and how the world will probably look like in the future. However, the complexity, interconnectedness and dynamics of our modern world make it impossible to "calculate" the future.

We can change our perspective and approach by making a virtue of uncertainty and unpredictability and encouraging people to imagine alternative futures. From a scientific point of view, this corresponds to the approach of humanistic future studies, where research about the future is not directed to predict the future, but aims at gaining insights into how people think about the future and how this thinking influences their lives in the here and now (see Krafft, 2022).

For this reason, we must fundamentally deal with three different categories of the future, namely probable, possible/alternative and desirable images of the future and ways for shaping it. We can develop a number of alternative images of the future through a systematic analysis of current and expected trends, a visionary examination of the possible and a moral assessment of the desirable.

The main objective of the Hope Barometer is to gain open and unbiased access to people's experiences and ideas in connection with the phenomenon of hope. It examines how people themselves experience hope, what basic assumptions, attitudes and worldviews are behind it, what personal hopes arise from it, what people do to remain hopeful and to fulfill their hopes, what experiences in their lives give them hope and what they can do when they feel hopeless in life. In addition, the aim of the Hope Barometer is to provide insights of what people can possibly do to grow personally, to overcome challenging or difficult situations and perhaps even surpass themselves. People can experience hope very differently due to their different life experiences, personal values and beliefs, their current life situation and their social environment.

The current survey is made up of various topics and questions. Around half of the questions represent the recurring core of the questionnaire in order to enable year-on-year comparisons. These include questions on the general feeling of hope, satisfaction and prospects in the economic, political, environmental and social areas, on the most important personal hopes and on the sources of hope. The other topics that we examined as part of the 2024 Hope Barometer relate to how people in Switzerland see the world in the future, which trends they perceive, which scenarios they consider probable and desirable and which worldviews and values they consider important. What do people think about the future of the world? What fears and wishes do they have? Which future scenarios are seen as probable and which futures are considered desirable for a good life? These images and ideas of the future will influence people's expectations and hopes as well as their fears. In addition to presenting the survey results in the form of descriptive statistics, relationships between different phenomena are also examined and explained by calculating correlation coefficients.

Since the beginning of the Hope Barometer, our aim has been to reach as many people as possible, as the survey is also intended to encourage them to reflect personally on their own hopes, strengths and ideas for the future. The participation of many people in the survey was possible thanks to the cooperation with the daily newspaper "20 Minuten", for which we are very grateful. This year, 5,763 people between the ages of 18 and 87 took part in the survey (see appendix). This includes almost as many women as men from the three largest language regions in Switzerland (German, French and Italian). By making the research results accessible to a wide audience, the aim is to promote thinking and action characterized by a sense of hope.

2 Satisfaction in 2023 and expectations for 2024

The first part of the Hope Barometer looks at people's satisfaction in various areas and their expectations for 2024. The survey focuses on the immediate past and the short-term future.

2.1 Satisfaction in 2023

At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to look back and rate their satisfaction in 2023 in various areas. Satisfaction is not to be equated with joy, happiness or well-being, but is the subjective perception of the extent to which personal expectations regarding one's own life and the political, economic and social environment have been fulfilled. Crises can impair satisfaction, but they can also reinforce it if you have been able to deal with them constructively and have mastered the challenges that arise satisfactorily.

As in previous years, satisfaction with personal life is significantly higher than satisfaction with politics, the economy and other socially relevant areas (Fig. 1).

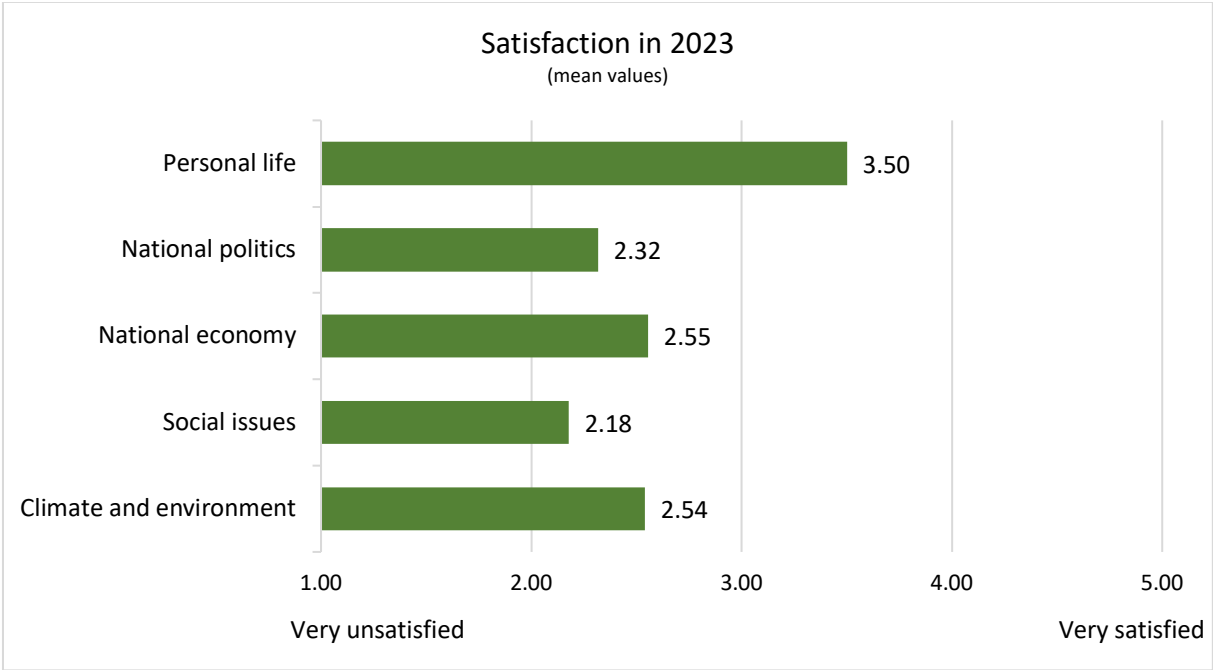


Figure 1: Satisfaction in the year 2023

A majority of respondents (58.1%) were somewhat to very satisfied with their lives in 2023 (Fig. 2), which is a slight improvement compared to 2022 (55.6%). The number of people who at the end of 2023 were somewhat to very dissatisfied with their lives was around 24.5%, compared to 25.7% in 2022. In between, there are 17.4% of respondents who were not dissatisfied with their lives, but not really satisfied either (in 2022 this were 18.6%).

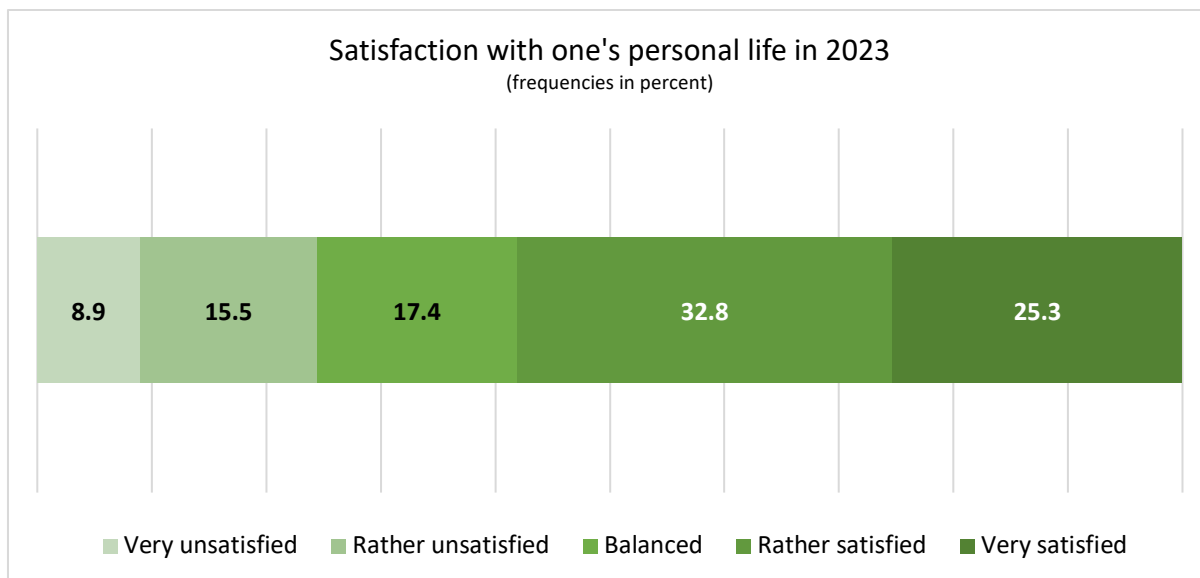


Figure 2: Satisfaction with personal life in 2023

A comparison of the results from the three Swiss regions reveals some significant differences (Fig. 3). While people in French-speaking Switzerland are slightly more satisfied with their personal lives and with politics compared to the other two language regions, respondents in German-speaking Switzerland were noticeably more satisfied with the development of the economy and in the area regarding the climate and the environment.

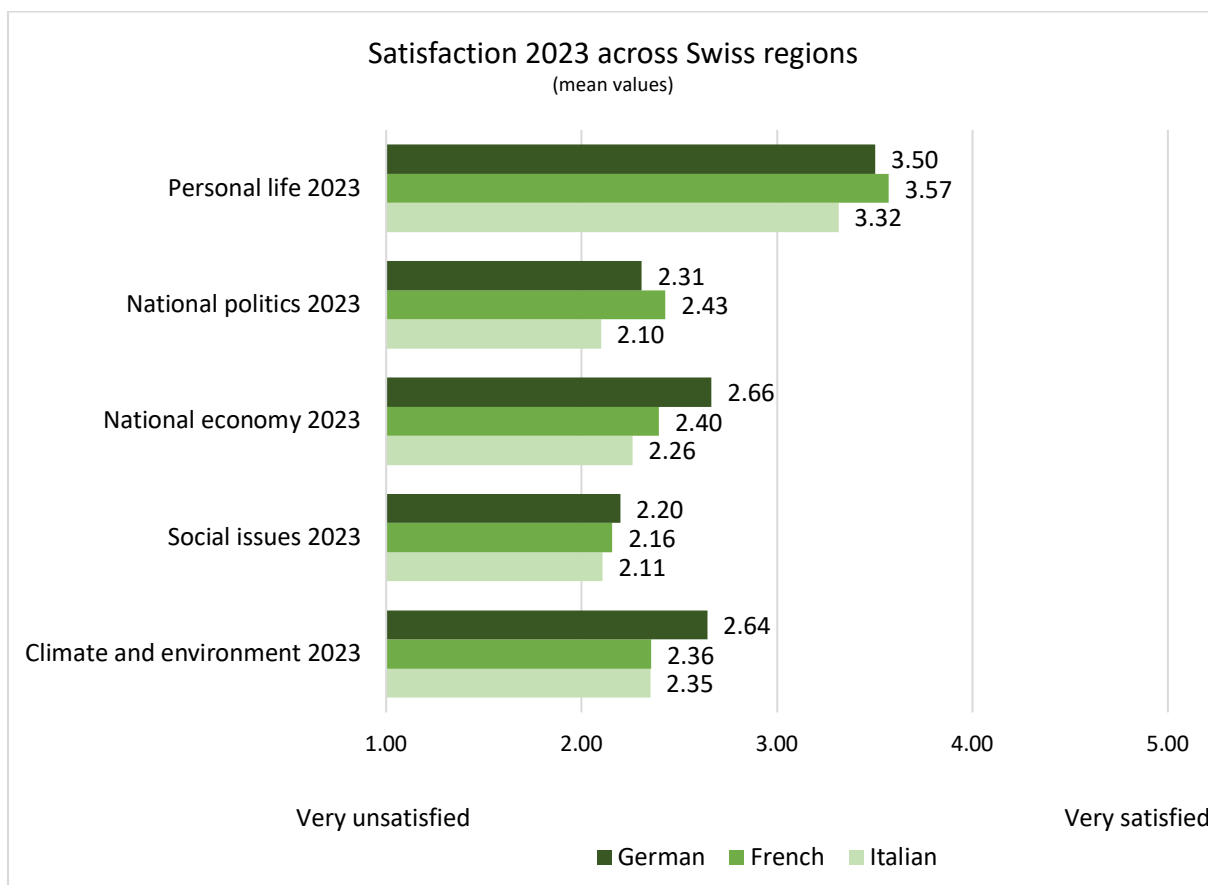


Figure 3: Satisfaction in 2023 by Swiss region

The differences between the age groups are remarkable (Fig. 4). Young people are significantly more dissatisfied than older people, both with their own lives and with the economy, as has already been noticed in previous years.

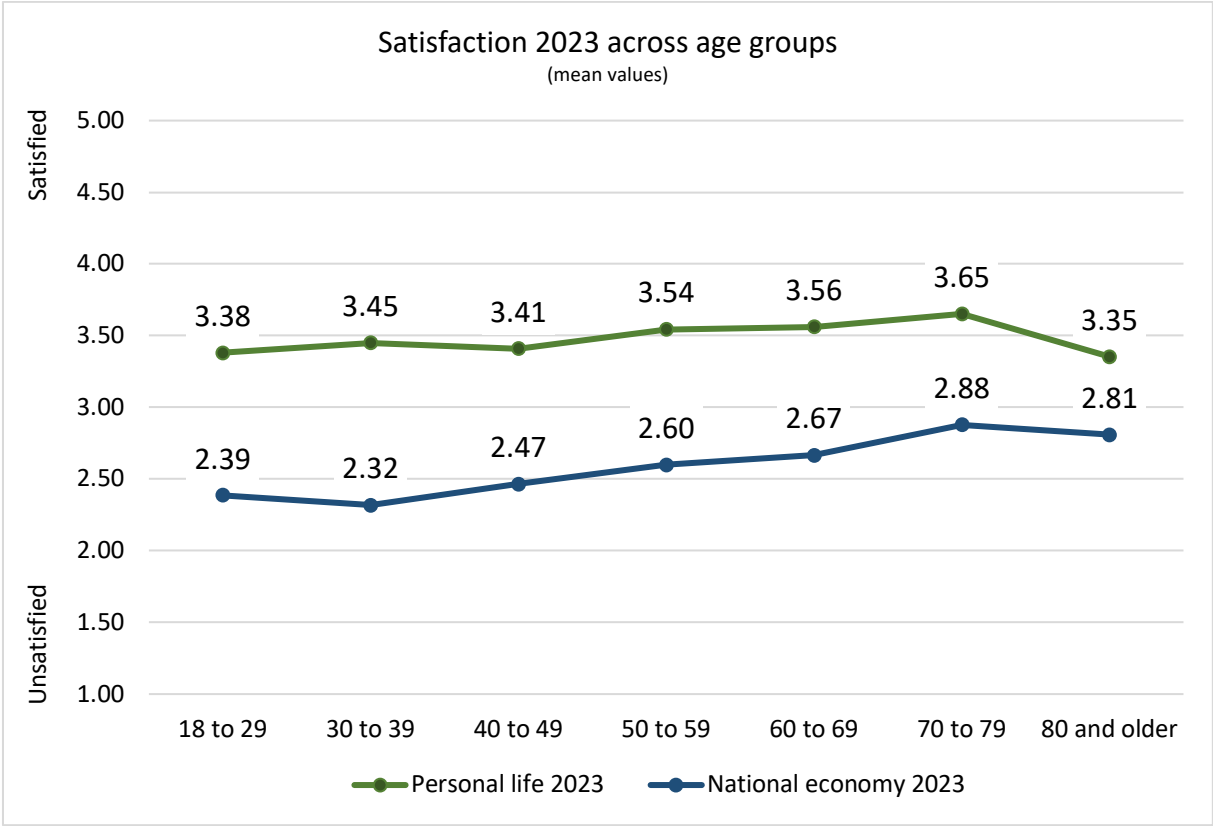


Figure 4: Satisfaction in 2023 across age groups

2.2 Expectations for the year 2024

Next, we wanted to find out the population's expectations for the year 2024 (Fig. 5). People are slightly more pessimistic about economic and social developments and global peace prospects in 2024 than they were a year ago and slightly more positive about the climate and the environment.

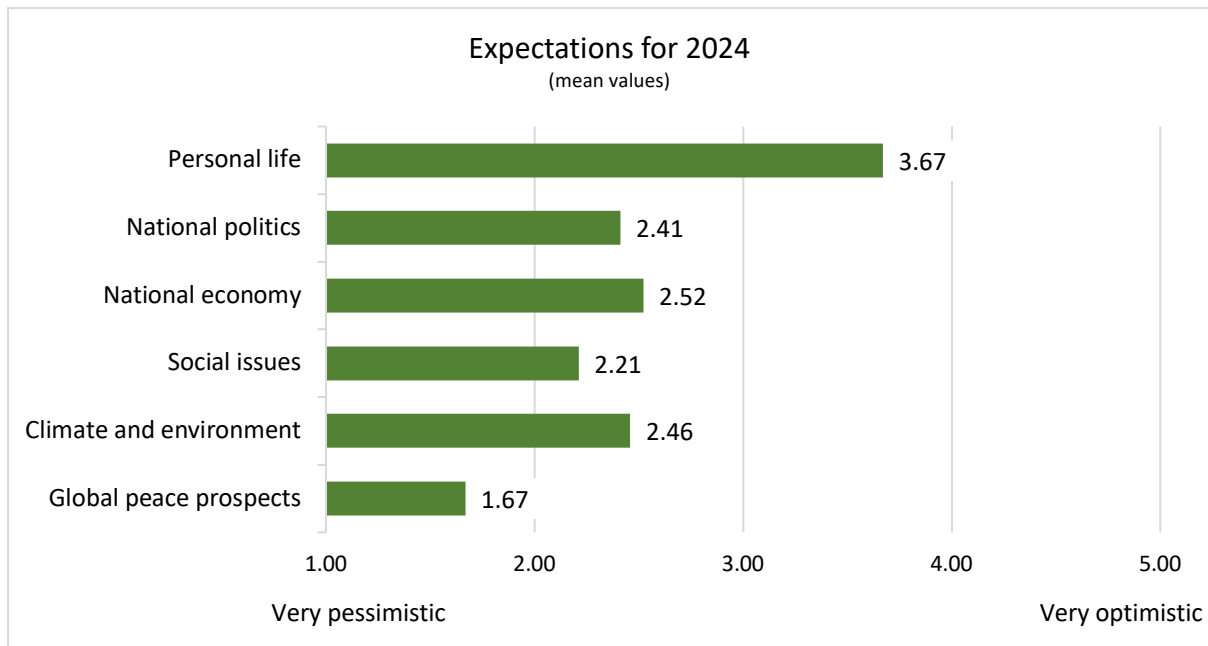


Figure 5: Expectations for the year 2024

As far as their own lives are concerned, a clear majority of the population (around 65%) are somewhat to very optimistic about their own future (Fig. 6). In contrast, just under 18% of respondents are neither optimistic nor pessimistic about their lives and around 17% are somewhat to very pessimistic. Compared to the previous year, these figures represent a significant improvement, as at the end of 2022 only 57.7% of respondents were rather to very optimistic and just under 25% were neither optimistic nor pessimistic.

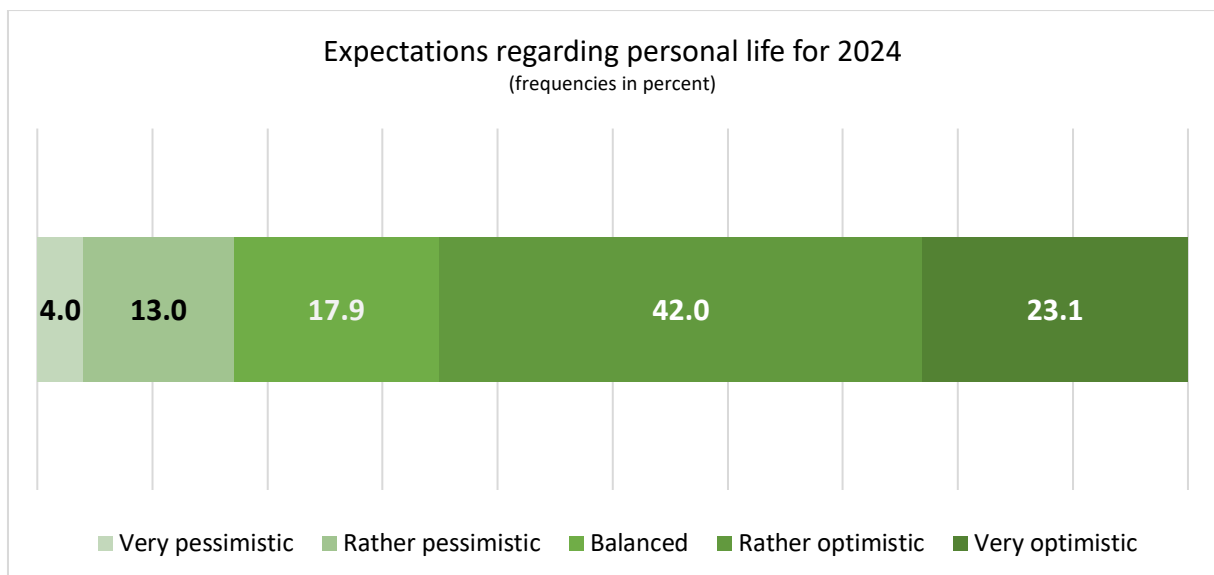


Figure 6: Expectations in personal life for the year 2024

People in German-speaking Switzerland are slightly but significantly more optimistic about their own lives and about the economy and environment than respondents in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland (Fig. 7).

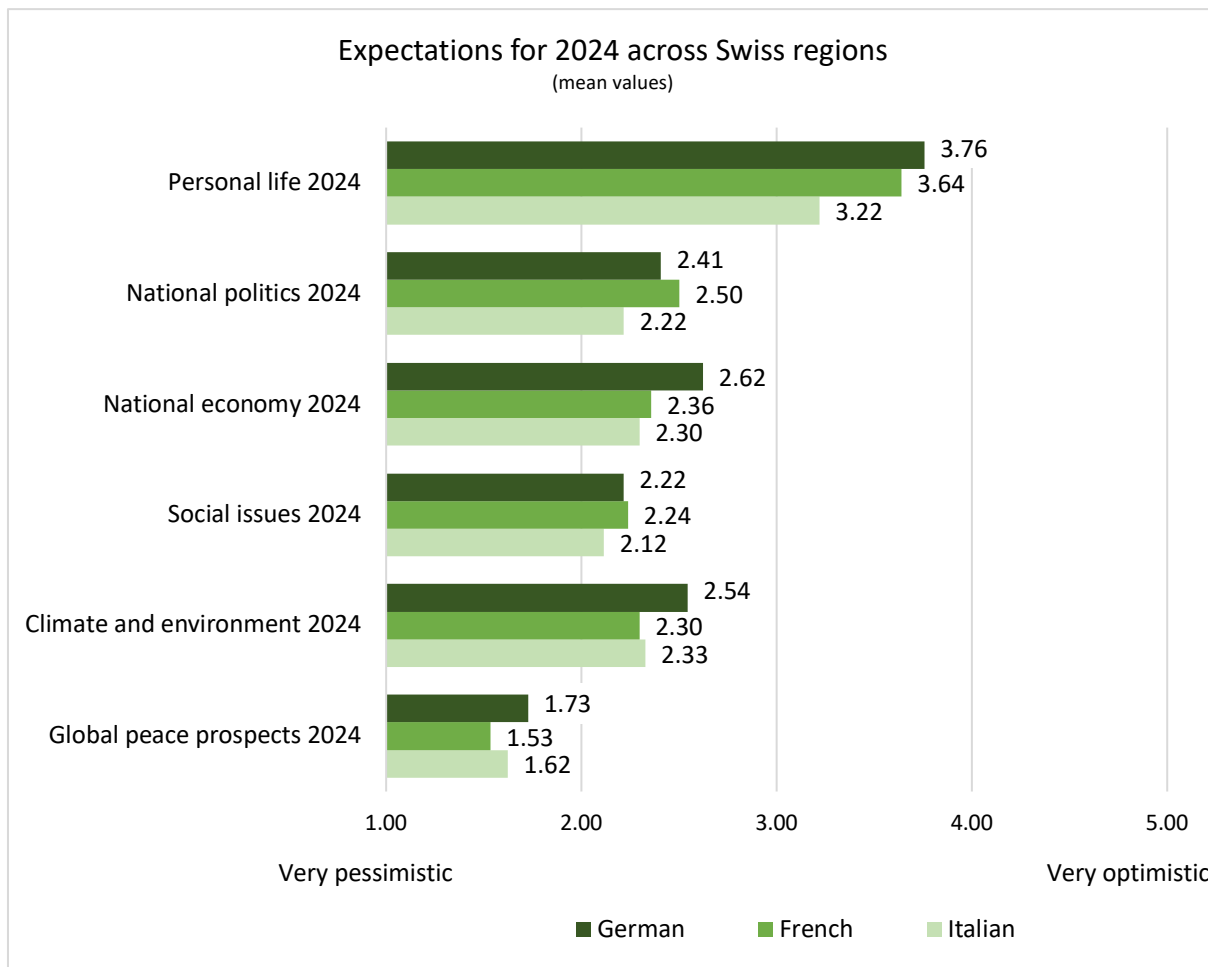


Figure 7: Expectations for the year 2024 by Swiss region

Looking at the similarities and differences between the age groups, the following is striking: There are no significant differences between the generations when it comes to expectations of their own individual future. In contrast, younger people are more negative about economic prospects than older people (Fig. 8).

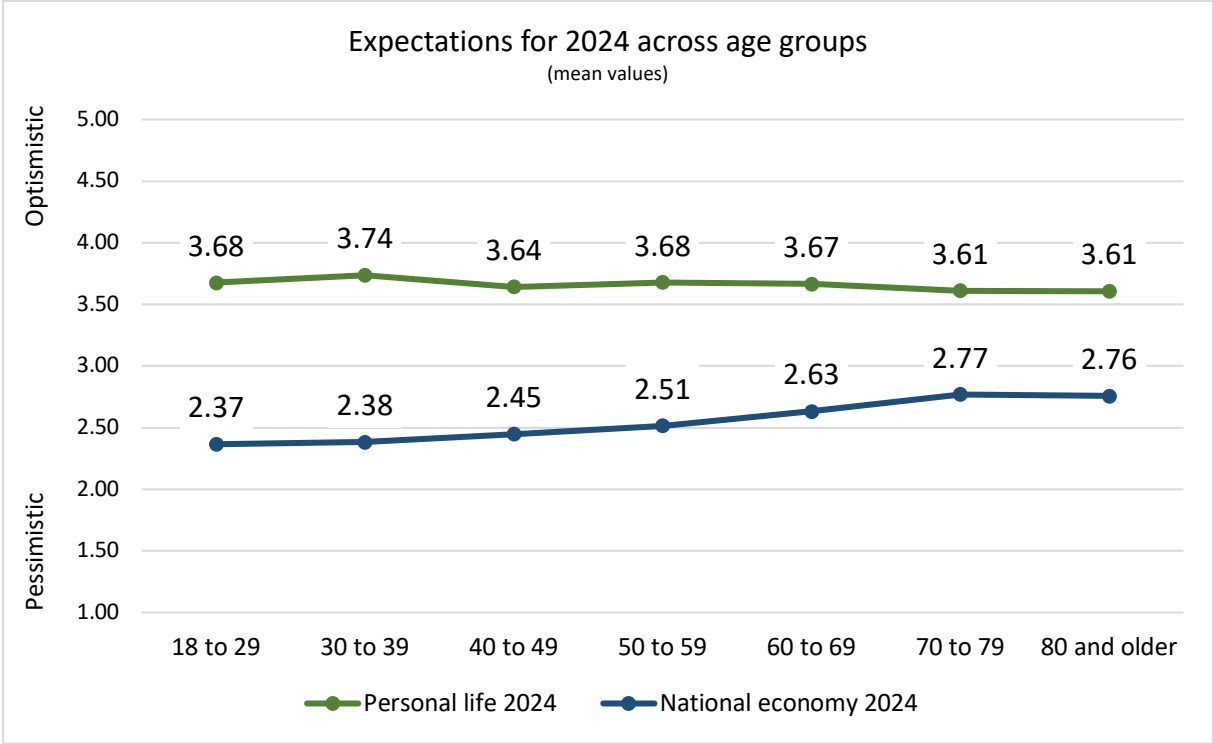


Figure 8: Expectations for the year 2024 across age groups

3 Long-term future scenarios

Against the backdrop of countless negative events around the world, we wanted to know how the population in Switzerland views long-term developments and future prospects. Various scenarios can be derived as a result of global trends. These can be assessed as more or less probable and more or less desirable. As in previous years, questionnaires from Australian futurologists Richard Eckersley (Eckersley et al., 2007) and Carmen Stewart (2002) were used for this purpose.

3.1 Quality of life in 20 years' time

The first question relates to the development of the general quality of life in Switzerland over the next 20 years, i.e. until the early 1940s. Over the last four years, long-term expectations have become markedly more negative (Fig. 9). Whereas in 2019, 58.7% of respondents predicted a deterioration in the quality of life, by the end of 2023 this figure had risen to 67.6%. Conversely, the number of people who expect their quality of life to improve has fallen below the 10% mark.

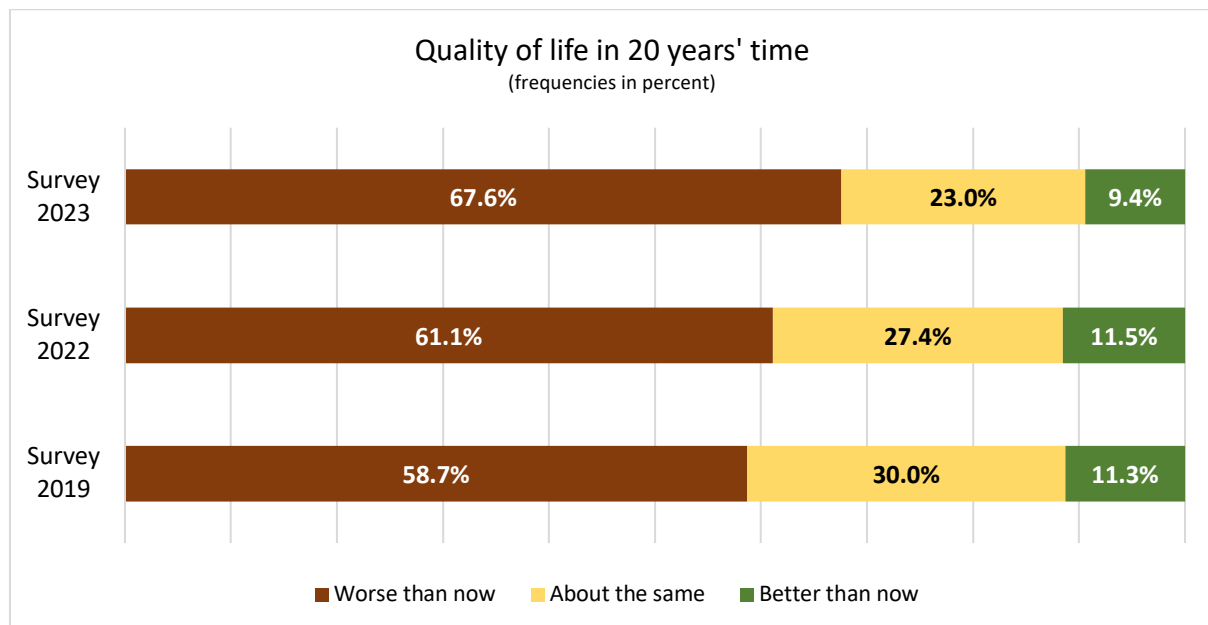


Figure 9: Expected quality of life in 20 years' time

3.2 Probable future scenarios

Afterwards, the respondents were presented with two global future scenarios for a period of 20 years, which could be assessed in terms of their probability:

I. Flourishing scenario

The flourishing scenario envisions a positive development towards a world of sustainability, peace and prosperity. In this scenario, humanity will be able to overcome the current problems thanks to economic and technological progress.

2. Crisis scenario

The crisis scenario describes a world characterized by crises and catastrophes, in which a growing population causes more environmental degradation and ethnic and regional conflicts as well as new diseases are prevalent.

Fig. 10 compares the mean values of the two future scenarios from the survey years 2019, 2022 and 2023. Over the years, the flourishing scenario is seen as increasingly unlikely and the crisis scenario as increasingly likely. In 2019, almost 70% of respondents rated the positive future scenario as somewhat to very unlikely. This figure rose to just under 75% in 2022 and again to around 77% by the end of 2023. In contrast, a large majority of the population considered the crisis scenario to be somewhat or very likely. In 2019, this was just under 80% of respondents, in 2022 around 82% and in 2023 now 85%.

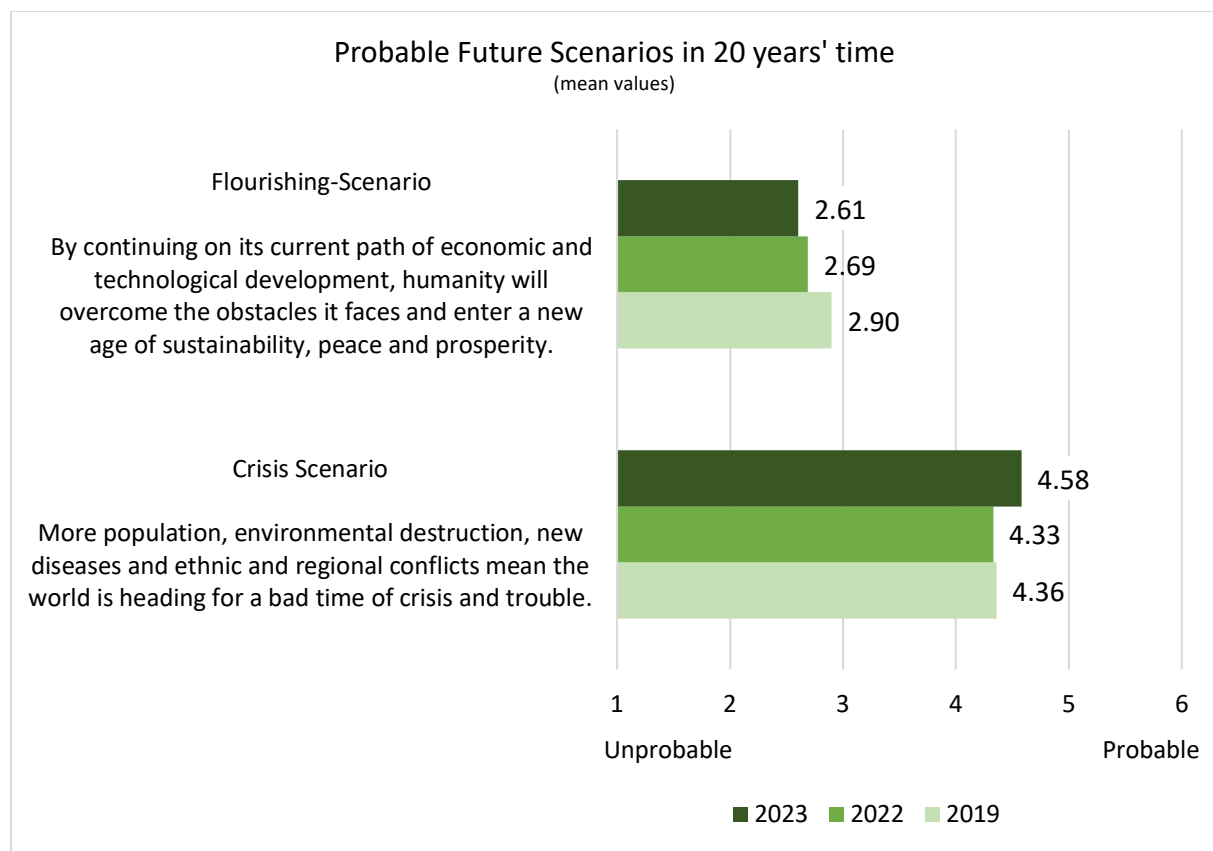


Figure 10: Comparison of probable future scenarios in 20 years' time 2019-2023

3.3 Desirable future scenarios

Thereafter, the respondents were asked to indicate how desirable or undesirable two further global future scenarios in the year 2043 are in their eyes.

I. Economic and technology scenario

The economic and technology scenario outlines a fast-moving, internationally competitive society with a focus on the individual, wealth creation and technological progress.

2. Sustainability scenario

The sustainability scenario portrays a greener, more harmonious society in which the focus is on cooperation, community and family, a more equal distribution of wealth and greater economic self-sufficiency.

The mean values in Fig. 11 show that the sustainability scenario continues to be rated as much more desirable than the economic and technology scenario. Almost consistently over the last five years, around 68% of respondents considered the economic and technological scenario to be somewhat to very undesirable. At a high level but slightly lower, almost 84% of people in 2019 and 80% in 2023 said they wish for the sustainability scenario.

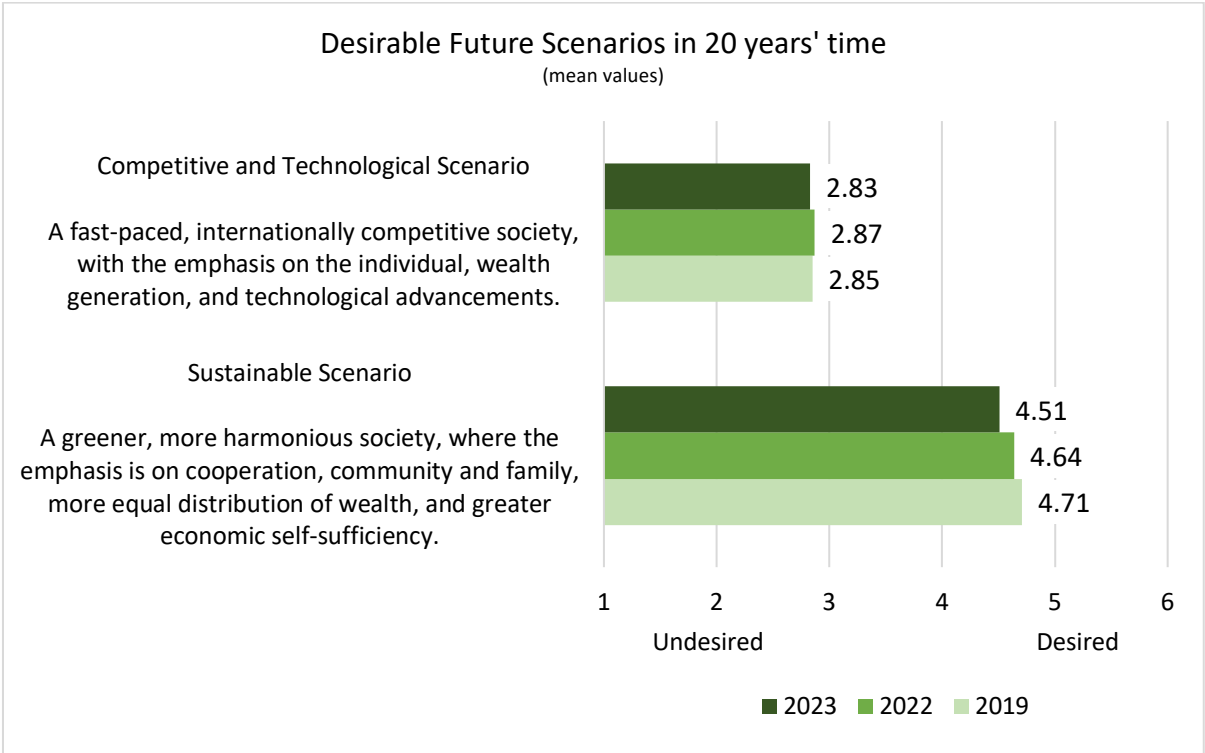


Figure 11: Comparison of desirable future scenarios in 20 years' time 2019-2023

There are striking differences in the results between the three Swiss regions (Fig. 12). In relation to the other two regions, the endorsement of the economy and technology scenario is strongest in German-speaking Switzerland. In contrast, the sustainability scenario is slightly less popular there. In Italian-speaking Switzerland, on the other hand, the economic and technology scenario is the least popular and the sustainability scenario the most popular.

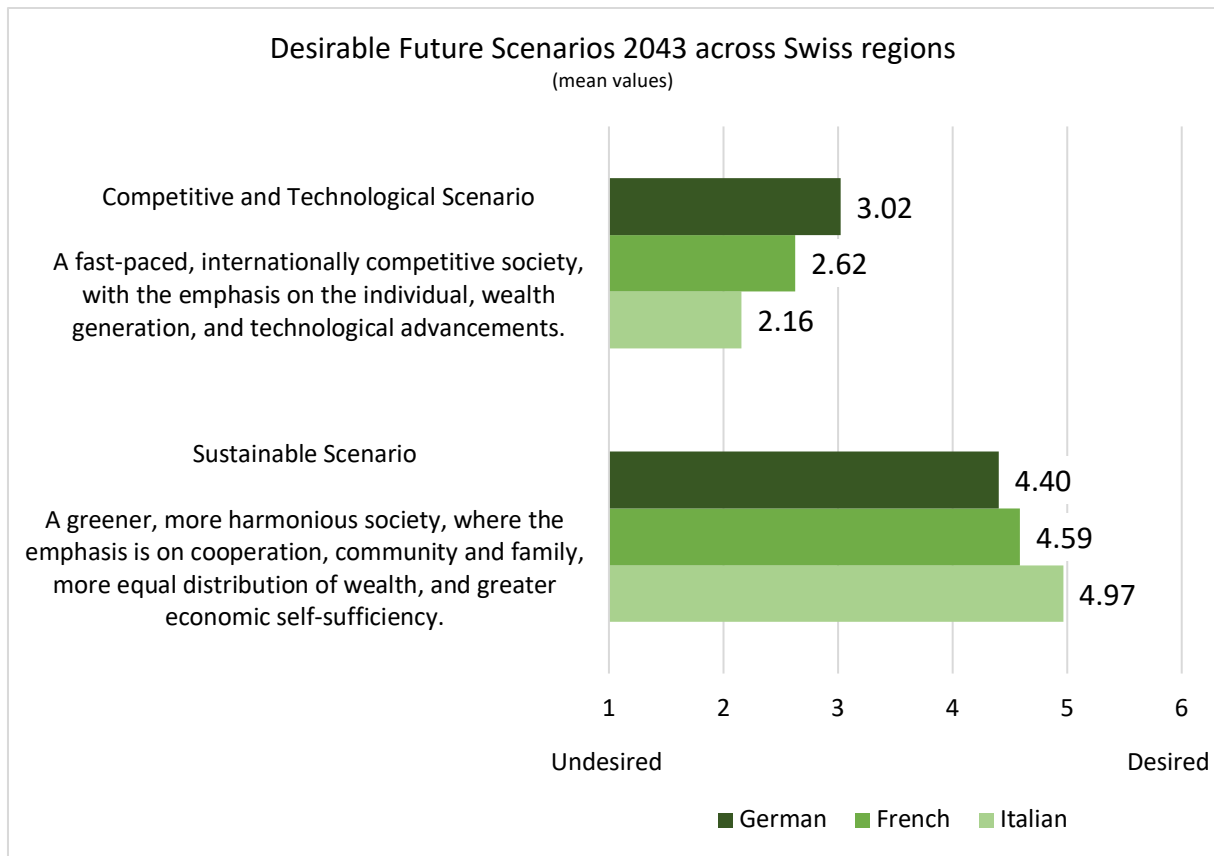


Figure 12: Desirable future scenarios in 2043 across Swiss regions

However, these two future scenarios should not be seen as opposites or contradictions. The question is whether and in what form new technologies such as artificial intelligence could contribute to a more sustainable economy and a more inclusive society and how negative developments can be avoided.

4 Personal hope

This chapter is dedicated to the phenomenon of hope. On the one hand, hope is the opposite of anxiety and worry about the future as well as apathy and dejection. On the other hand, hope is not only the opposite of anxiety and worry, but also the consequence of them, because in difficult situations it promotes belief and trust in the achievability of a better future.

Following Shade (2001), the phenomenon of hope can be divided into three dimensions:

1. The general level of hope

As a basic attitude and mood, hope is a phenomenon independent of specific goals and desires. Hope is a fundamental attitude of openness and a positive attitude towards the future that determines how we react to life's situations and trials.

2. Personal hopes

Personal hopes are special goals, wishes and ideals that we hope for and want to realize. Our hopes are the driving force in life and the source of motivation for shaping a better future.

3. Sources of hope

Sources of hope are the means and activities to realize our hopes and to strengthen our general ability to hope.

4.1 Personal hope level

Six questions to measure the level of hope assess in summarized form the extent of hope in one's life when experiencing difficult situations, the belief in the fulfillment of one's hopes, the intensity of hope compared to the feeling of anxiety and the extent to which hope improves one's quality of life (Krafft et al., 2017, 2021).

Over the last few years, the level of hope has remained almost constant, with a slight decline since 2021 (Fig. 13).

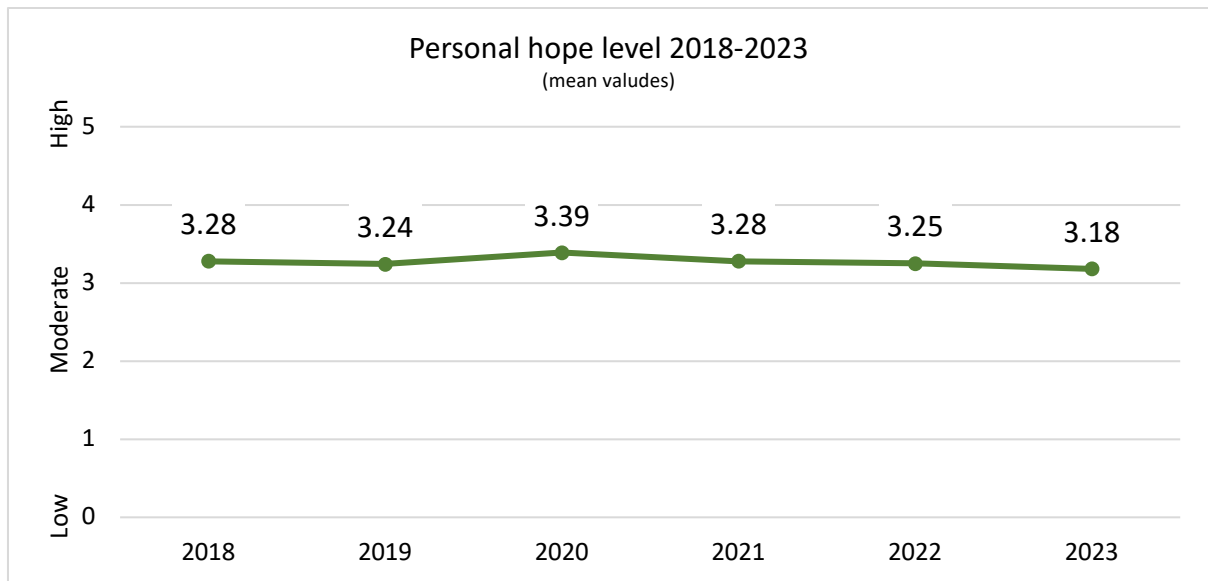


Figure 13: Personal hope level 2018-2023 in comparison

Hope is highest and most constant in German-speaking Switzerland and lowest in French-speaking Switzerland, where a slight decline has been observed in the last two years (Fig. 14).

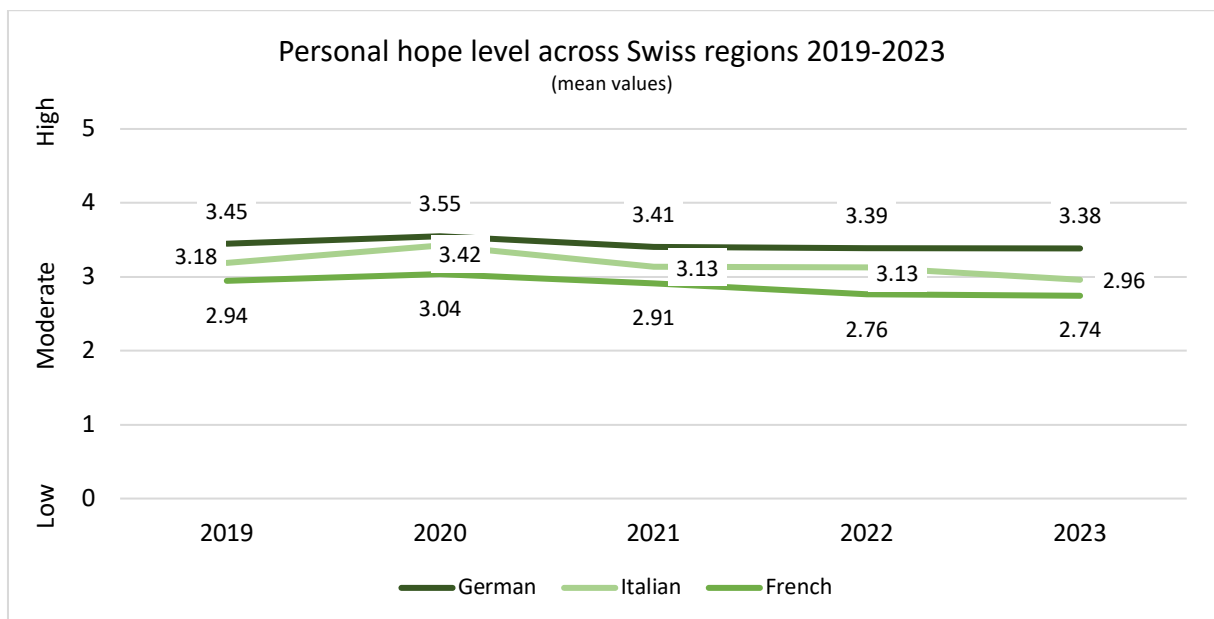


Figure 14: Personal hope level 2019-2023 by Swiss region

In terms of age groups, hope increases steadily up to the end of the 70s. This means that young people are less able to remain hopeful in difficult times and that worries often outweigh hope for them.

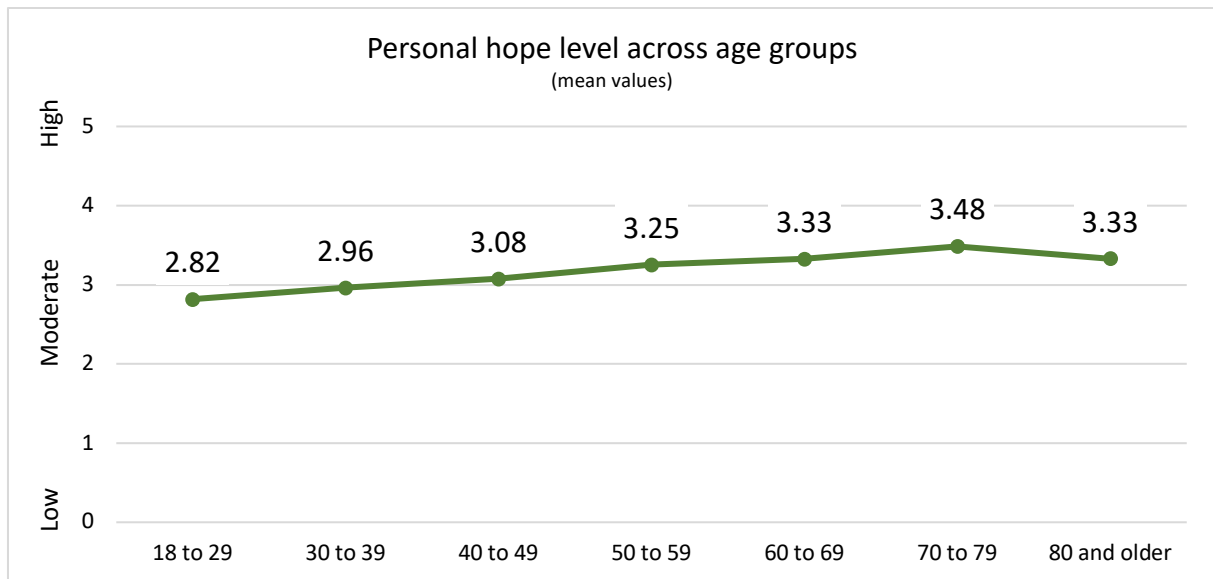


Figure 15: Personal hope level across age groups

4.2 Personal hopes for 2024

Concrete hopes say a lot about what people really want and what motivates them to behave in a certain way. Personal aspirations are goals or areas of life that are of particular importance to the individual and are considered desirable, regardless of whether their probability of occurrence is considered high or low. The focus is therefore on the importance of the hoped-for things in people's lives and not on the subjectively assessed expectation of their occurrence. In order to capture the centrality of various hopeful goals, we used a pool of 17 areas of life for the coming year (Krafft & Walker, 2018). The 17 areas of life comprise six different categories:

1. personal well-being (e.g. personal health, harmony)
2. social relationships (e.g. happy marriage, family, partnership)
3. success and material goods (e.g. more money)
4. pleasure (e.g. more sex, romantic experiences)
5. meaning and altruism (e.g. a meaningful task and the opportunity to help other people)

The ranking of important and less important personal hopes has remained remarkably constant over the last ten years. In first place for 2024 is once again health as an important condition for an active, fulfilled and happy life (Fig. 16). Another recurring hope relates to the desire for a happy marriage, family or partnership. Almost all people long for a loving and stable relationship or family. People's most important hopes continue to include a harmonious life and good and trusting relationships with other people. This emphasizes the need for inner and outer peace and harmony. Most people find daily stress, tension and conflict stressful and long for more independence and self-determination. Furthermore, the hope for a meaningful task is a universal need. In Switzerland, the desire for a meaningful task is generally more important than the desire for a secure job and more money.

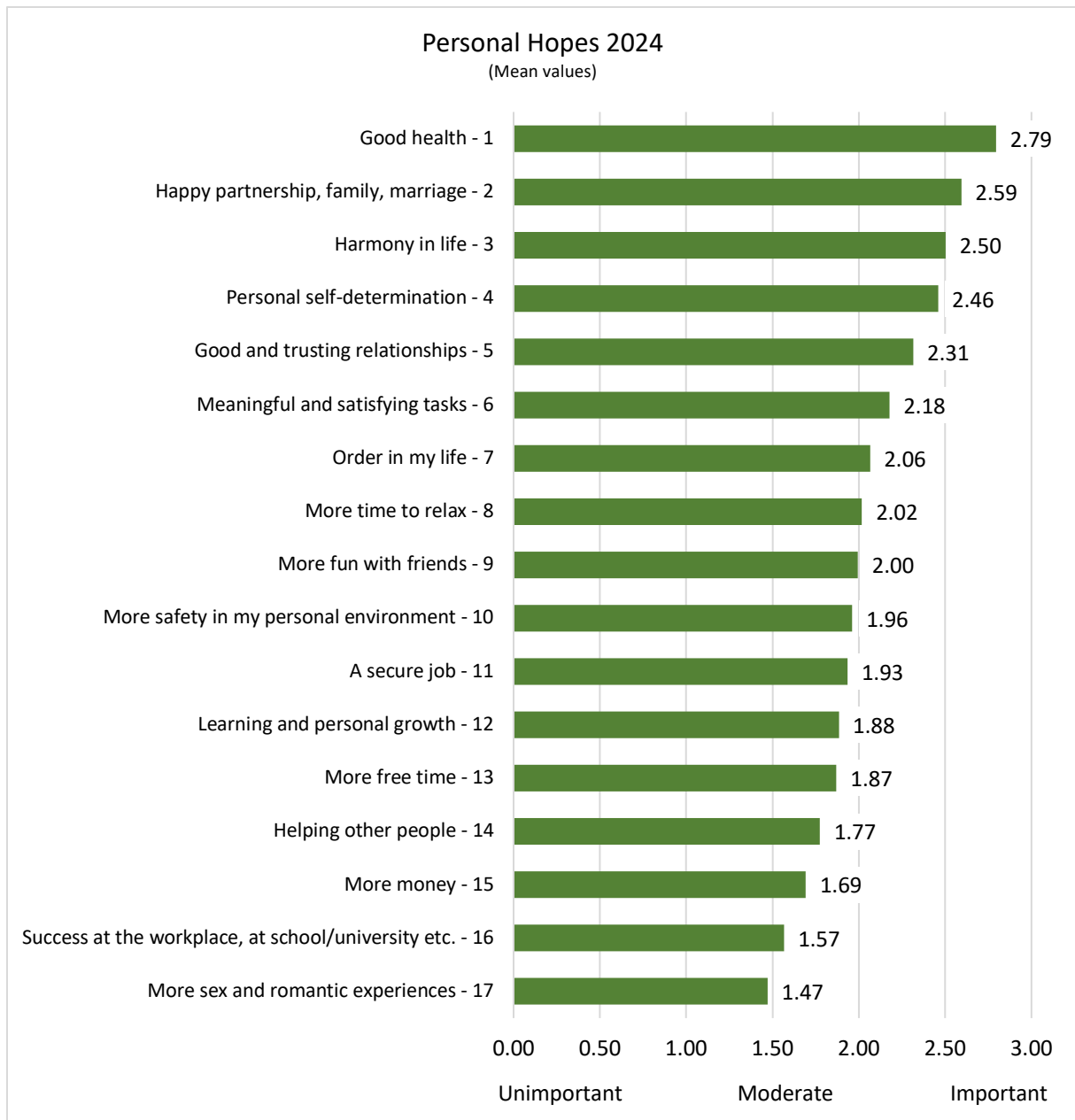


Figure 16: Personal hopes for the year 2024

4.3 Sources of hope

The wish to fulfill our desires and realize our ideals is part of the human nature. Therefore, we asked people which experiences strengthen their hope. To do this, respondents were presented with a list of 17 sources of hope and were asked to rank them in order of importance. Sources of hope consist of experiences in different areas such as personal achievement (e.g. "I am proud of (professional) successes and achievements"), coping (e.g. "I have solved difficult problems"), social (e.g. "Good relationships with friends"), religious (e.g. "I have felt God's closeness"), positive experiences (e.g. "I have had great concerts and parties") and luck (e.g. "I have always been lucky").

As in previous years, the two areas of "beautiful experiences in the free nature " and "support from family and friends" stand out as the population's most important sources of hope (Fig. 17). In addition to social sources and the experience of having done something good for a meaningful purpose, personal

skills and individual achievement are important sources of hope. Political and religious/spiritual experiences and activities as well as money and technology only have a positive influence on hope for a small number of people.

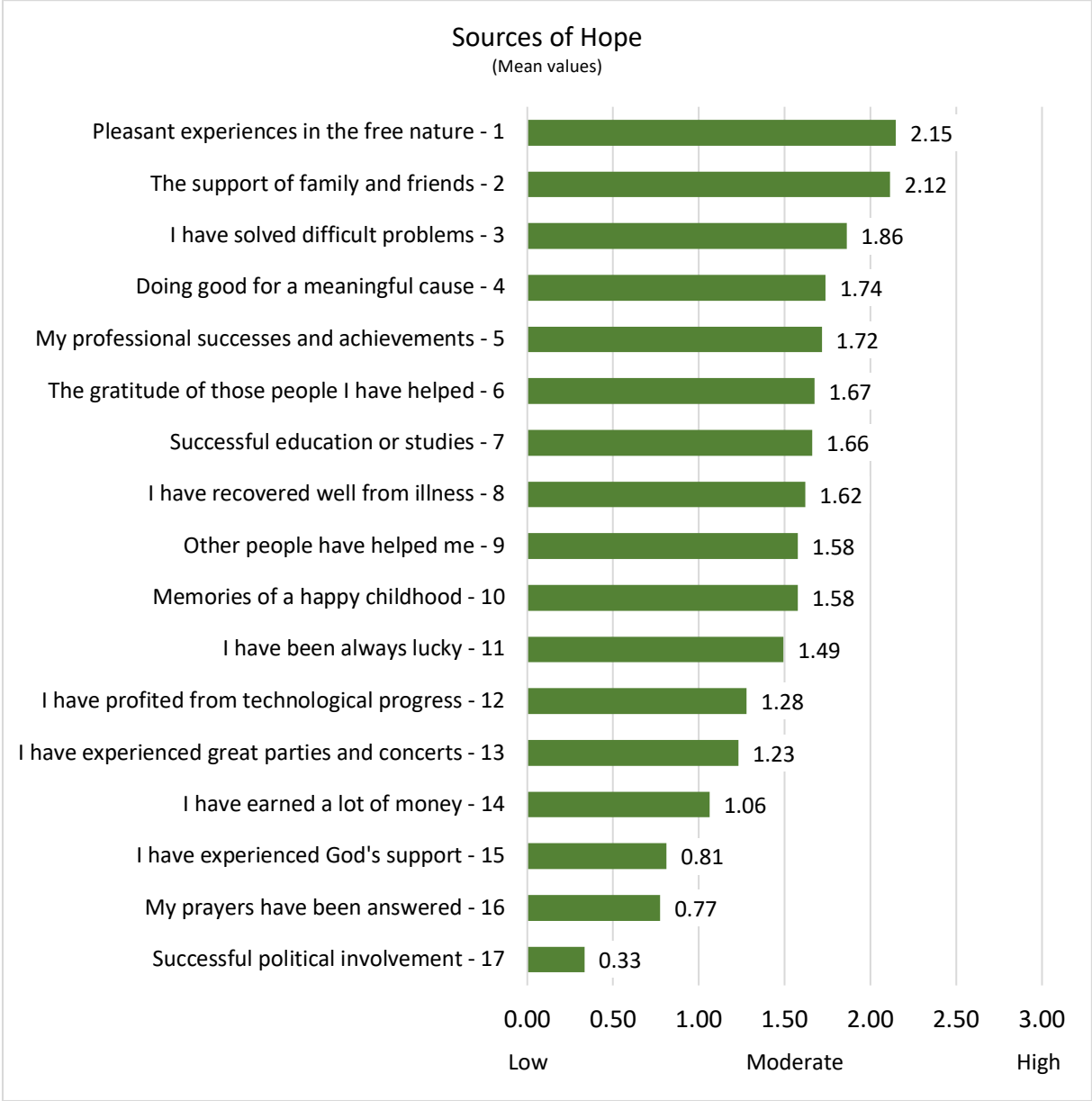


Figure 17: Sources of hope

In summary, it can be said that for most people, good human relationships within the family, with friends and with people they can help are the most common experiences that strengthen their hope. Experiences of personal achievement and overcoming difficult situations also contribute to hope. For a minority of the population, religious experiences are hope-boosting. Hedonic experiences and material things only contribute to strengthening hope for a small number of people.

5 Worldviews, values and meaning in life

Shaping one's own and the common future goes hand in hand with developing oneself, each individual, which automatically addresses the central importance of human values as well as worldview and self-images. It is about developing and unfolding one's own abilities and potentials in connection with shaping a good way of life that allows the entire world to flourish again.

5.1 Basic beliefs: Worldviews and self-images

Positive or negative attitudes can be traced back in part to certain assumptions about the nature and meaningfulness of the world as well as to one's own self-image (Krafft, 2019). In general, people behave on the basis of mostly unconscious and unquestioned ideas and basic assumptions about themselves and the world. Current situations are interpreted on this basis, future events are anticipated and the resulting actions are aligned.

According to Janoff-Bulman (1992), there are three basic categories of such world and self-images: (1) assumptions about the benevolence of the world; (2) about the meaningfulness of events in that world; and (3) the views of oneself.

1. Assumptions about the benevolence of the world:

People evaluate the world positively or negatively. This basic assumption includes two points of reference. The goodness of the world in general and the goodness of people in particular.

a. Benevolence of people

If someone is of the opinion that people are basically good, then he or she will see people as friendly, helpful and caring.

b. Benevolence of the world

The more someone believes in the goodness of the world, the more the person believes that the world is a good place to live and that one can be happy in this world.

2. The meaningfulness of the world:

This is about explaining why people have positive and negative experiences. This includes three basic assumptions.

a. Justice

On the one hand, people can believe in an implicit justice on earth. People who do good will also receive good in return. People who do bad things will have to bear the consequences of their actions.

b. Controllability

Secondly, one can be more or less convinced of the controllability or manageability of events. People can have the world and the events in it "under control" if they do the right things.

c. Randomness

The third assumption concerns the degree of randomness with which certain things happen. If events occur purely by chance, then you will feel at the mercy of them and there will be little that can be done for or against them.

3. View of oneself:

These include perceived self-worth, self-control and happiness.

a. Self-worth

The first assumption about oneself concerns the own self-worth. Do you see yourself as a good, worthy and decent person or, on the contrary, as unworthy, bad and guilty?

b. Self-control

In second place is the concept of self-control. This refers to the idea that one is doing the right thing in life and that one has one's own life under control.

c. Luck

The third basic assumption relates to the perception that one is more likely to be lucky or unlucky in life. Some people have the impression that life is particularly kind to them. Others, on the other hand, perceive themselves as unlucky.

In the Hope Barometer 2024 we surveyed these eight basic beliefs about the world and about oneself and related them to the individual sense of hope. The eight categories were assessed with a total of 32 items (4 items per category), which were rated on a scale from 0=low to 5=high (Janoff-Bulman, 1989). Fig. 18 illustrates the percentage distribution of the individual assessments.

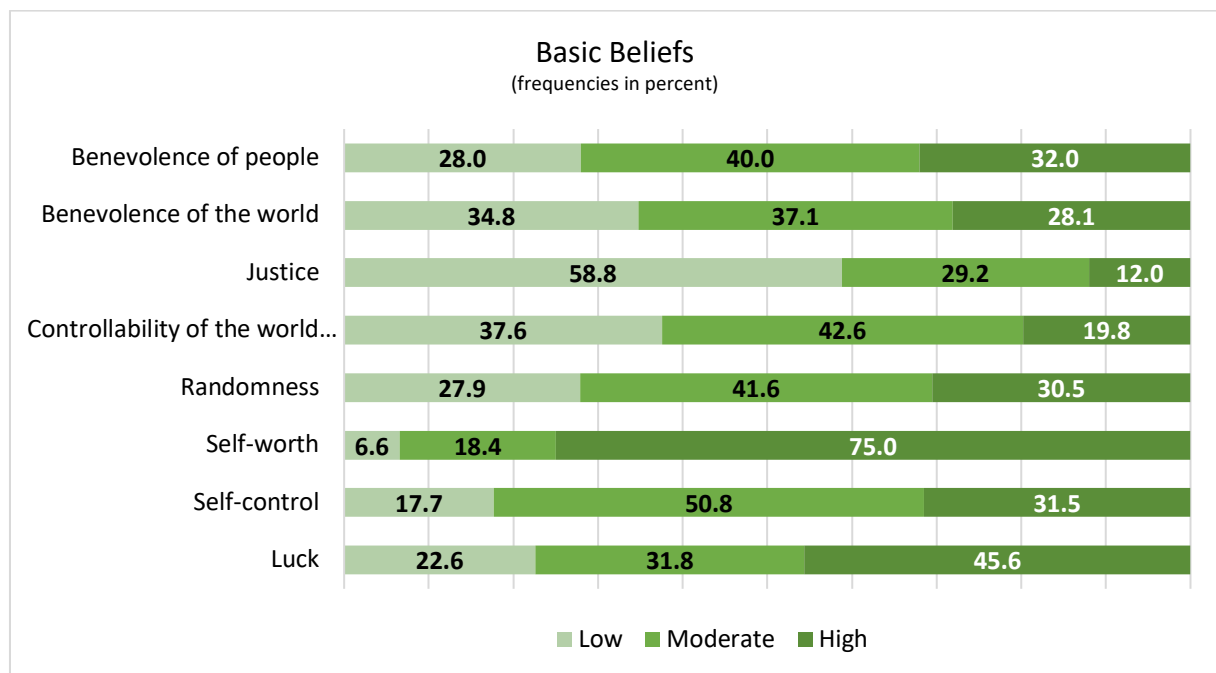


Figure 18: Basic beliefs

With regard to the assumptions about the goodness of people and the world, around 28% of respondents hardly believe, 40% of respondents rather moderately believe and 32% more strongly believe that people are naturally kind and helpful and that they care about what happens to others. In contrast, only 28.1% of respondents clearly agree with the statements about the goodness of the world. Whether there is more good than bad in this world and whether the world is a good place to live in was a rather moderate opinion for 37.1% of respondents and rather less so for just under 35%. Furthermore, around 60% of people tend not to believe in justice in the world and around 30% only partly. Most people (around 42%) rate the controllability of events and therefore also randomness in this world as moderate. Around 30% of respondents are strongly convinced that life is a matter of

chance. Fortunately, 75% of people are quite satisfied with themselves and have a healthy sense of self-worth. Some 31.5% of people have their lives fairly or completely under control and around 51% feel this to some extent. Finally, around 45% of respondents feel that they have been lucky in life, around 32% only partly lucky and around 22.6% rather less.

These worldviews and self-perceptions were already surveyed in German-speaking and French-speaking Switzerland in November 2017. A comparison of the values from 2017 and 2023 shows some similarities and also clear differences (Fig. 19). In the last six years, belief in people's kindness and helpfulness appears to have increased significantly, while belief in the goodness of the world has decreased slightly. Belief in justice in the world has also decreased. In all other areas, the values have remained almost constant.

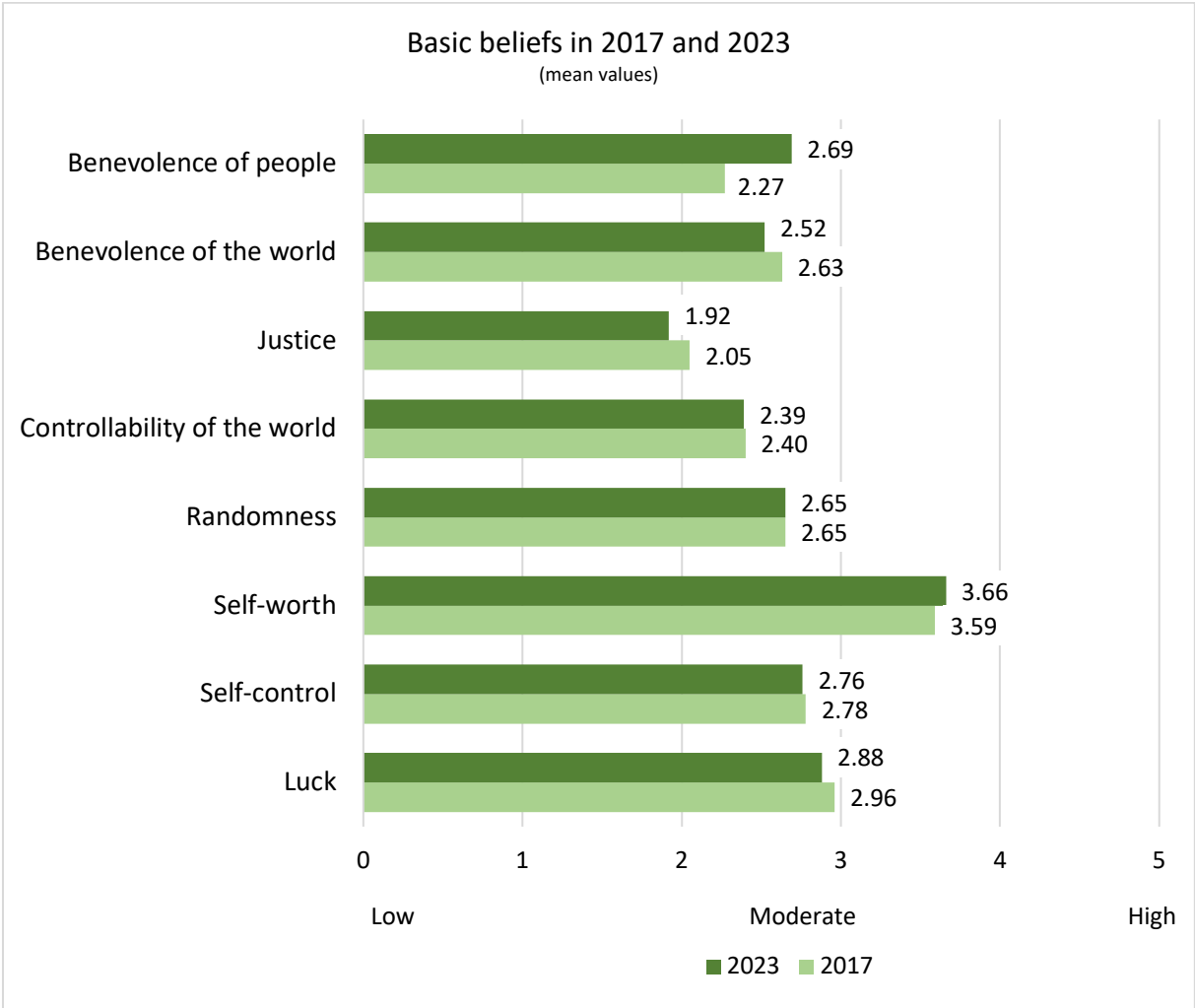


Figure 19: Comparison of basic beliefs in the years 2017 and 2023

A comparison of different age groups reveals some significant differences. Young people believe less in the kindness and helpfulness of people and in the goodness of the world (Fig. 20). These values increase continuously with age.

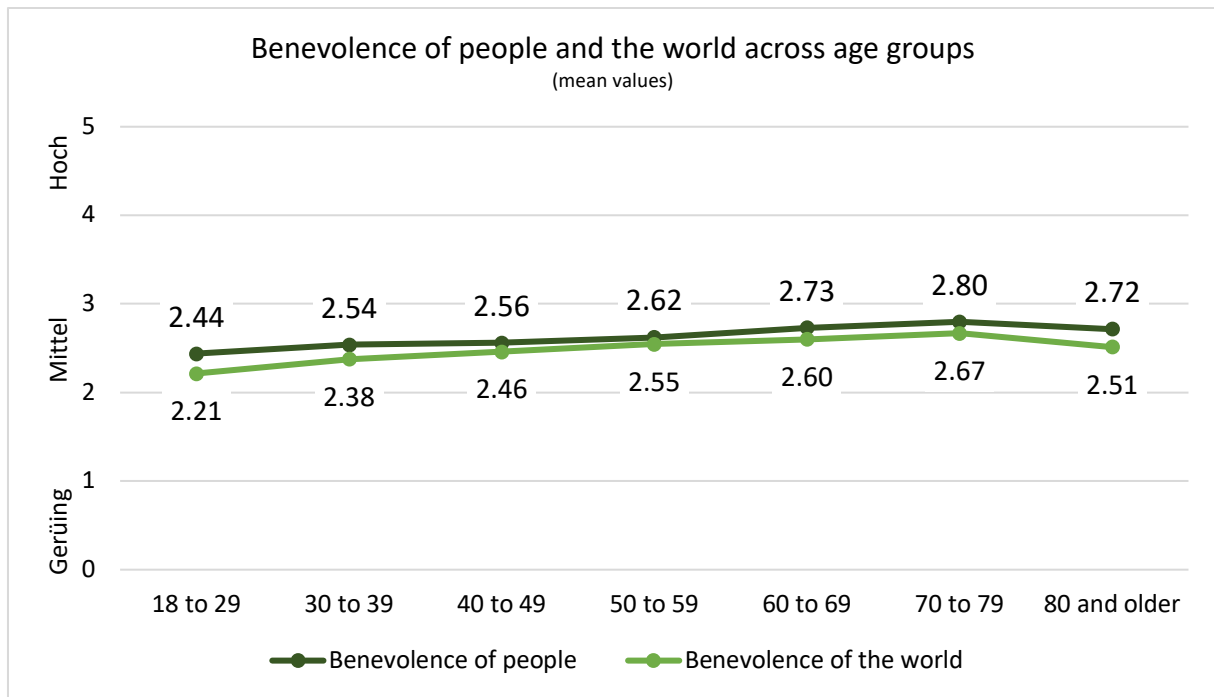


Figure 20: Basic beliefs on the benevolence of people and the world across age groups

Especially the belief in the goodness of the world ($r = 0.50$) but also the belief in the goodness, kindness and helpfulness of people ($r = 0.36$) have a positive correlation with the feeling of hope. The less (young) people believe in the good aspects of the world and people, the lower their capacity for hope will be.

Self-worth also tends to be more pronounced in old age than in younger years (Fig. 21). Younger people seem to be less satisfied with themselves than older people.



Figure 21: Self-worth across age groups

Like belief in the good, self-worth also has a positive correlation with hope ($r = 0.40$). People with healthy self-worth can generally remain hopeful even in difficult times.

The differences in the assessment of one's own luck in life are also significant (Fig. 22). Younger people only moderately believe that they are luckier than unlucky in life. This experience increases steadily with age until it becomes easy at the age of 80 and older.

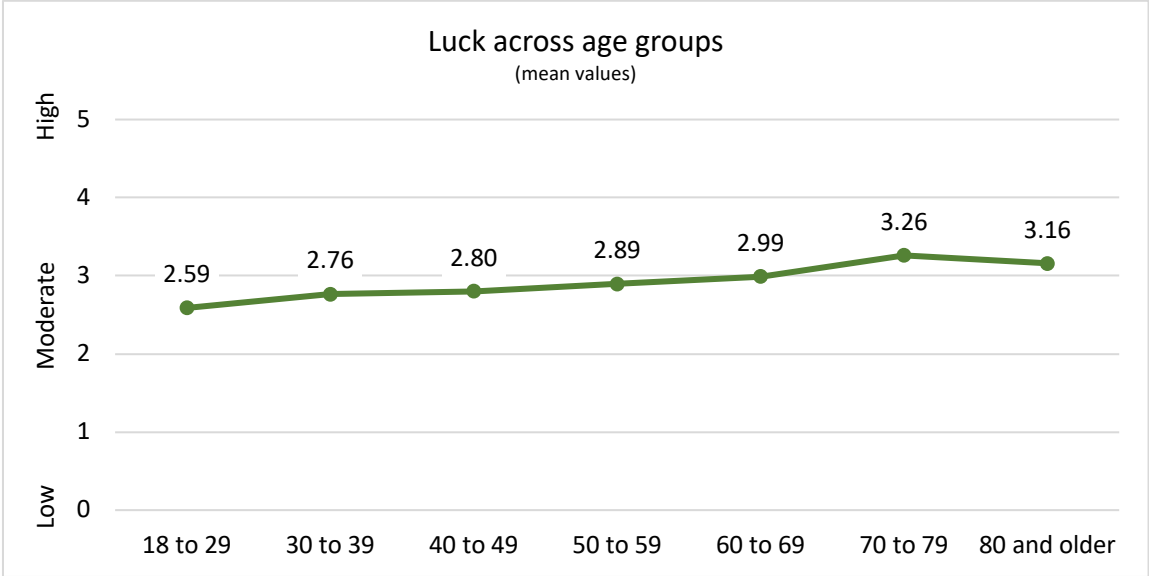


Figure 22: Luck across age groups

The feeling of having more luck than bad luck in life also has a strong correlation with hope ($r = 0.48$). Sometimes this is a question of personal attitude.

5.2 Personal Values

People are committed to different causes and pursue different goals in life. Values serve as a source of motivation and commitment and represent a variety of orientations that can give meaning to life (Schnell, 2016). Values belong to everything that is important to people, what seems significant to them, what matters to them or what gives their lives greater meaning and content. What people hope for and what they do to fulfill their hopes will usually be a result of their personal values.

As part of the Hope Barometer, we therefore wanted to find out which meaningful values are important to people and in what way values are relevant to the general sense of hope. To measure this, we used the MAPS questionnaire (Meaning and Purpose Scale) by Tatjana Schnell and Lars Danbolt (2023). The MAPS measures five central purpose dimensions that can give meaning to life:

1. Sustainability

The first dimension relates to the value of "sustainability", a sense of connection with all forms of life and the concern for a future worth living, especially for future generations.

2. Faith

The second dimension focuses on the religious/spiritual dimension "faith", a feeling of connection with something transcendent and the need for a spiritual life.

3. Security

The third dimension covers the value of "security", in the sense of the importance of shared norms and the desire for a secure and safe life.

4. Community

The fourth dimension stands for the social dimension "community", a feeling of connection with a familiar group and caring for one another.

5. Personal growth

The fifth dimension is referred to as "personal growth", a sense of connection with one's self and a concern for continuous learning.

Fig. 23 shows the different values for the dimensions between "not important" and "very important". The values of community and personal growth (around 54% fairly to very important) are the most relevant to people in Switzerland, followed by security (46.6%) and sustainability (39.7%). Religious and spiritual faith is only important to a minority of people.

Most people attach particular importance to developing and growing personally. Personal goals and interests are here at the forefront. At the same time, many people want to spend their lives in community with other people and look after the well-being of those around them. Rules and principles that give people a sense of security are also important. For many people, living in harmony with nature and leaving a world worth living in for the next generation is somewhat less vital, but still rather to fairly important.

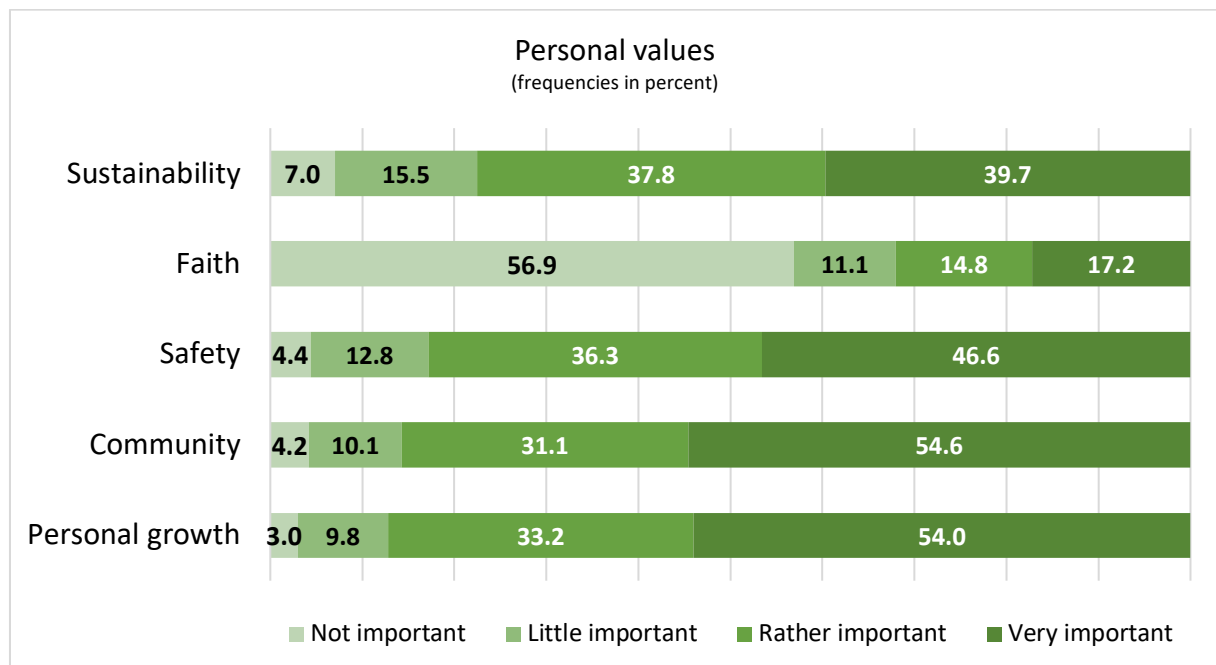


Figure 23: Personal values

In all of these areas, but particularly in the value dimensions of faith and sustainability, women have higher values than men (Fig. 24).



Figure 24: Personal across genders

A comparison of the age groups shows that personal growth is equally important in all age groups (Fig. 25). In contrast, the value of sustainability appears to become more important with age. For younger people, living in harmony with nature and caring for future generations is slightly less relevant than for older people.



Figure 25: Values of sustainability and personal growth across age groups

Of particular interest are the correlations between the 5 value dimensions and the general feeling of hope. On a scale from 0=no relationship to 1=perfect match, the correlation between hope and personal growth ($r = 0.364$), community ($r = 0.297$) and sustainability ($r = 0.282$) (independent of demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, education and professional situation) is moderately strong. The correlation between hope and faith is somewhat lower ($r = 0.204$) and between

hope and security ($r = 0.055$) is barely present (all values are statistically significant). This means that people for whom personal growth, community, sustainability and, to a lesser extent, religious/spiritual faith are important feel more hopeful than people for whom these values are less relevant. In contrast, people who strive for security are neither more hopeful nor less hopeful than people who do not.

Fig. 26 shows an example of the relationship between the value of sustainability and the expression of hope. People who want to live in harmony and in connection with nature and want to leave a world worth living in for the next generation are generally more hopeful in their lives than other people for whom nature and future generations are less important.

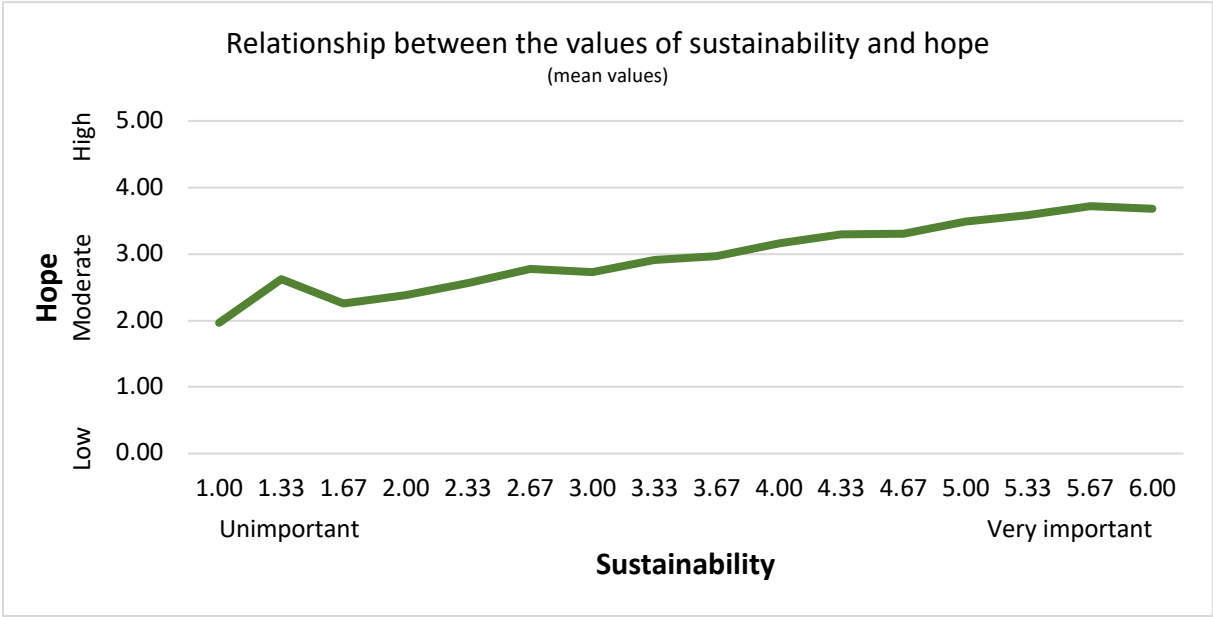


Figure 26: Relationship between the value of sustainability and hope

5.3 Meaning and crisis of meaning in life

With the findings from the last section, we come to the importance of a life filled with meaning, which is expressed as a basic feeling that life is worth living (Schnell, 2016). The feeling of meaninglessness is one of the greatest of all sufferings in life (Frankl, 1979). A crisis of meaning is defined as an assessment of one's own life as empty and worthless.

The values in Fig. 27 show how pronounced meaning and crises of meaning are in the lives of different age groups. The older people get, the stronger the sense of meaning they experience and the fewer the crises of meaning in their lives. Young people, on the other hand, generally experience significantly less meaning in their lives and have more often a crisis of meaning.

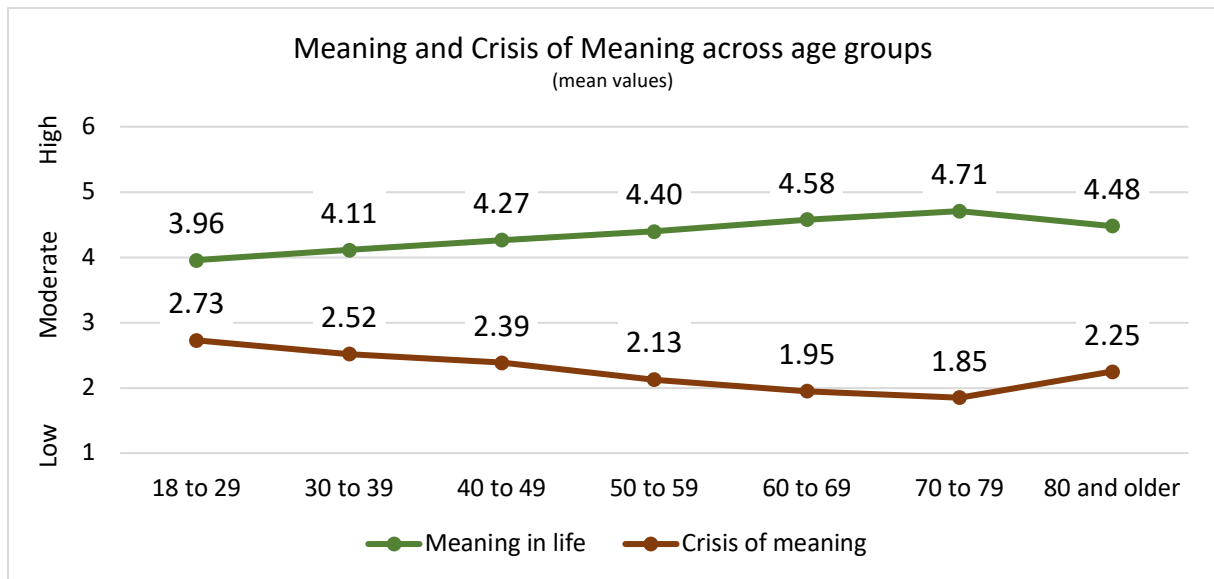


Figure 27: Meaning and crisis of meaning across age groups

As already assumed, the correlation between meaning in life and hope is particularly pronounced ($r = 650$; Fig. 28). Every person who hopes for a good future, hopes for something that seems meaningful and valuable to them. Only by experiencing a meaning in life can people remain hopeful even in difficult times.

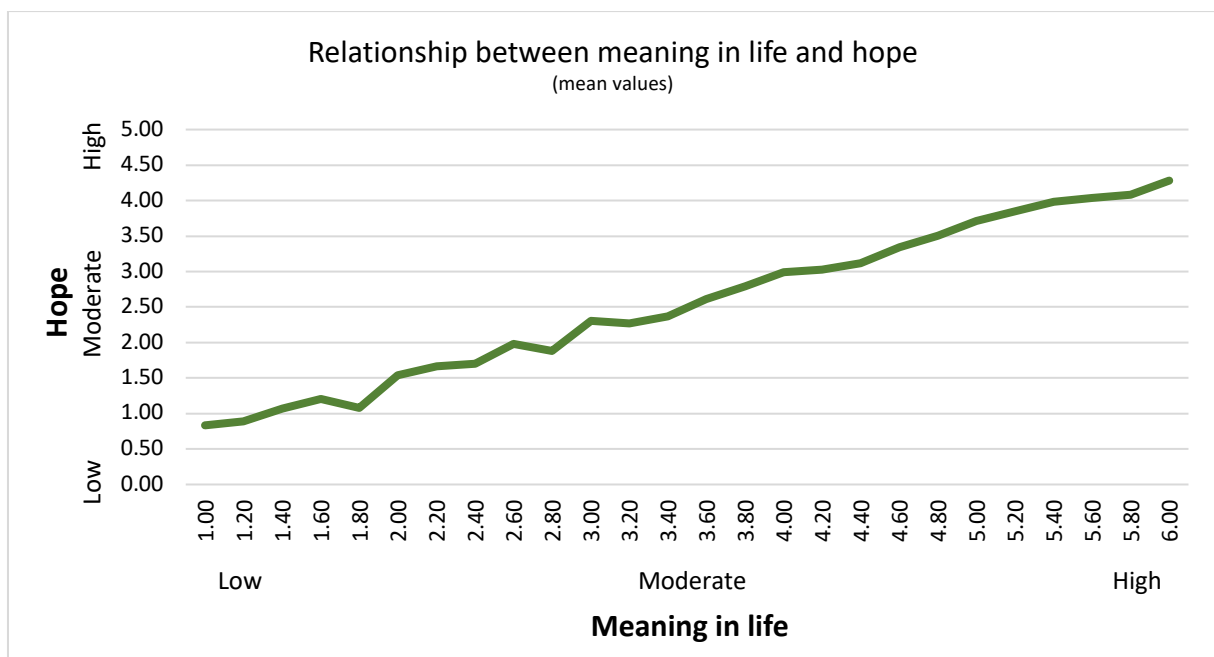


Figure 28: Relationship between meaning in life and hope

6 Health and well-being

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "... a state of complete mental, physical and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Towards the end of the Hope Barometer, we asked people how healthy they feel physically and mentally and how they rate their emotional, psychological and social well-being.

6.1 Physical and mental health

Physical and mental health were assessed with two questions: (1) "How would you rate your physical health?" and (2) "How would you rate your mental or emotional health?". Based on the health questionnaire of the "European Study of Adult Well-being", the questions could be answered on a six-point scale from "1 = I am seriously ill" to "6 = I am completely healthy" (Ferring et al., 2004).

Fig. 29 shows that the mean value for all age groups is between 4 "I have some health problems" and 5 "I am mostly healthy". Around 70% of respondents rated their mental health and just over 60% rated their physical health as largely to completely healthy. While physical health declines with age, mental health increases with age.

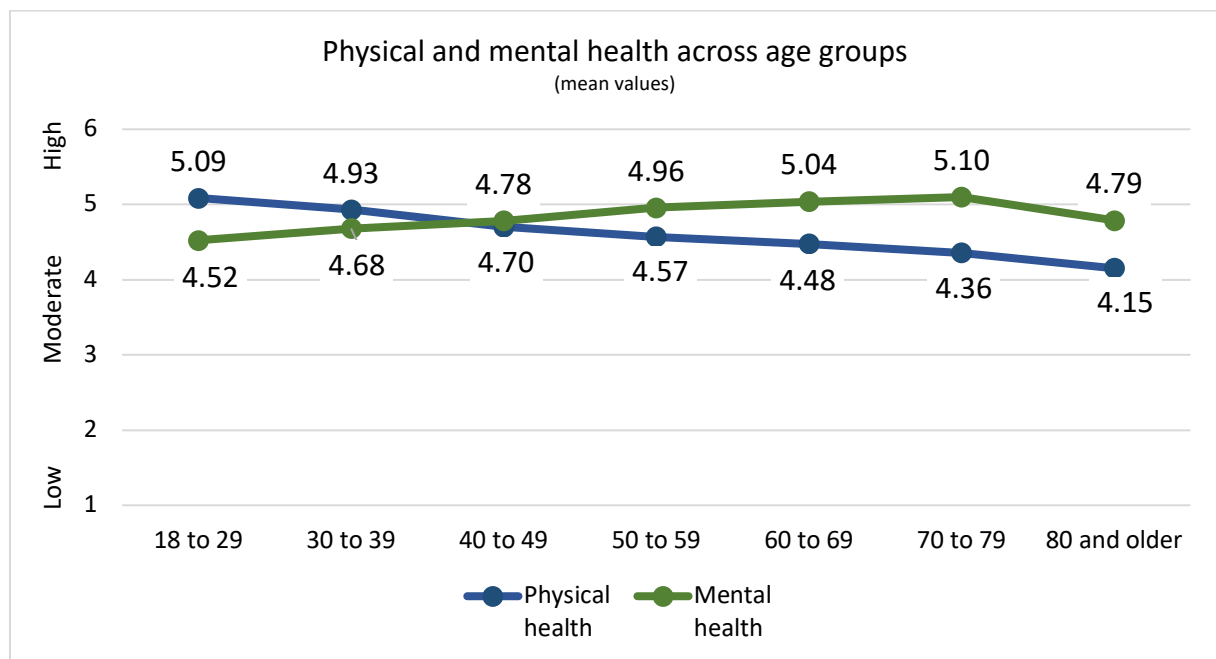


Figure 29: Physical and mental health across age groups

6.2 Emotional, psychological and social well-being

The perception of hope and meaning in life is closely linked to personal well-being. Current research has identified three types of well-being (Keyes, 2002, 2011):

1. Emotional well-being

Emotional well-being essentially refers to positive experiences and emotions and includes feelings of happiness, life satisfaction and interest in life.

2. Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being is about personal growth and optimal development as an individual. It includes experiencing meaning and purpose in life, maintaining good personal relationships with other people, feeling competent in one's tasks and having an overall good opinion of oneself (e.g. being a good, likable, responsible and committed person).

3. Social well-being

Social well-being refers to the individual's relationship with the wider community and society. A positive relationship between the individual and the social environment is typically characterized by shared social goals and values, a sense of belonging and a feeling of being part of society, mutual appreciation, respect and recognition towards other people, the opportunity to contribute to the community, and the experience of positive development of society and the world in general.

Fig. 30 shows two key phenomena. Firstly, the emotional and psychological well-being of most people is above average compared to their social well-being. The majority of people feel happy and satisfied with their lives and also feel that they have good self-esteem and the ability to develop. In contrast, social well-being, i.e. one's own connection to society, is below average. The second finding relates to the relatively lower well-being of younger people. In all three aspects, but especially in the social area, young people feel significantly less well than the older generations.

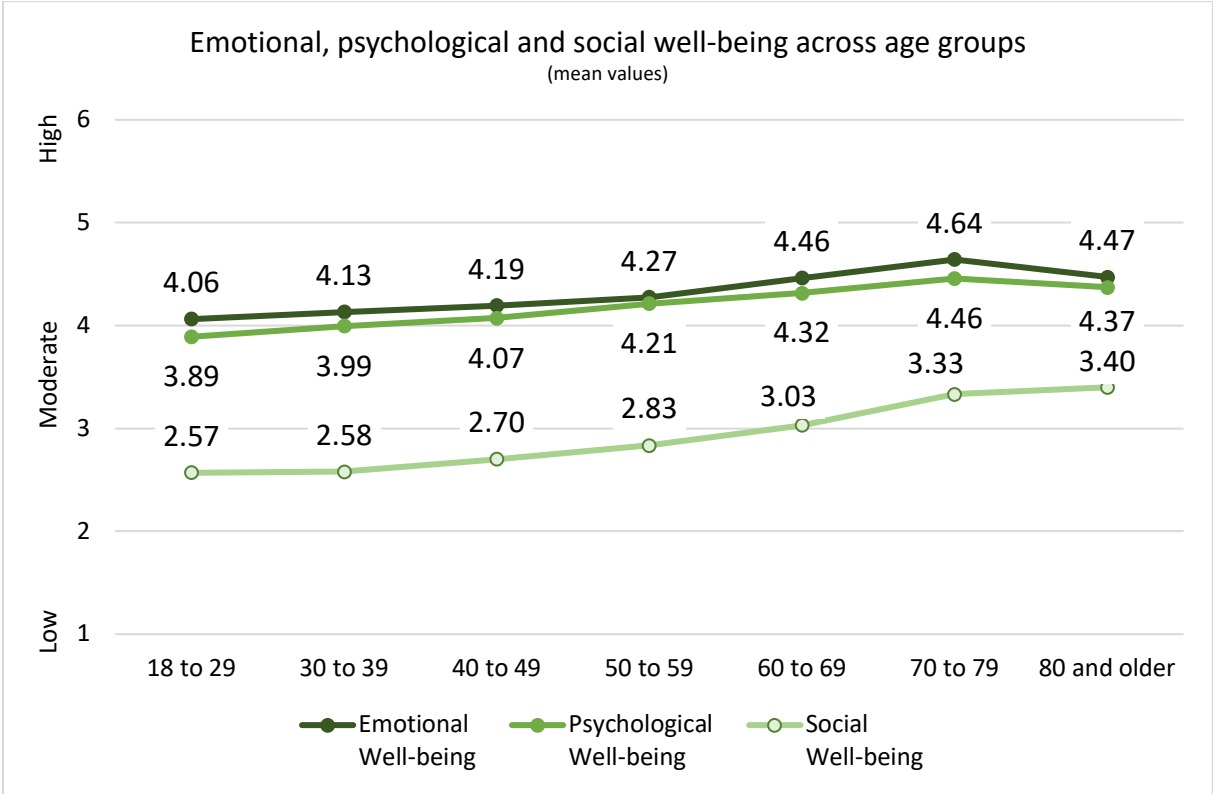


Figure 30: Emotional, psychological and social well-being across age groups

Mental health in the form of emotional, psychological and social well-being has a positive correlation with belief in the benevolence of people and the world ($r = 0.49$), with self-worth ($r = 0.46$), with a sense of meaning in life ($r = 0.71$) and, finally, with hope for the future ($r = 0.64$).

7 Summary and conclusions

For many years, studies around the world have shown a large discrepancy between people's negative assessments of society as a whole and their positive outlook on their personal future (Brunstad, 2002; Krafft, 2019; Nordensward, 2014; Rubin, 2002). There is a great dissonance between what people expect for their personal lives and how they assess the global future: Optimism about the personal future and pessimism about national and global developments.

The world that each individual experiences is only a small part of the world as a whole. People experience this small part as their home, so to speak; it is known and familiar to them. Most people in Switzerland are still doing well personally. They have everything they need in life and sometimes much more. Stability and prosperity usually prevail in their own lives.

Against the backdrop of incomprehensible and unpredictable events such as wars, political debacles, refugee flows, natural and environmental disasters, a sense of threat arises. The more negative information is available about what is happening in the world, the more uncertain and threatening it becomes for us. However, it is not just the events themselves, but the general helplessness and powerlessness that characterize the negative outlook for the future. The events develop into a feeling of omnipresent uncertainty, unpredictability and insecurity, because we do not know where the world is heading.

An incomprehensible world, in which existing problems seem difficult to solve, creates uncertainty and ultimately even anxiety, which is why people initially take a critical or even hopeless view of general events and developments. You can still get directly involved in your own life, you can act and bring about change. One's own world is understood in this sense, which means having one's own life under control. The world that is perceived through the media is largely beyond our direct influence. On the one hand there is the world of trust and the predictable, on the other that of the mysterious and threatening.

When the anxiety of negative future prospects is greater than the hope for a positive future, a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness arises. Societal hopelessness involves the belief that the majority of people will not change their behavior and show care and responsibility for other people and the earth. In many places, there is a lack of belief that positive action could make a difference, which in turn leads to a reluctance to take necessary measures. Hopelessness about the future of the world in this case means indifference, disengagement and political radicalization. Thus, hopelessness is both the cause and the consequence of indifference and inaction.

If we want to bring about positive change, hope is indispensable for the necessary action. It is precisely hope that can have an encouraging and mobilizing effect against collective unease, against disillusionment, against fatalistic convictions regarding a lack of alternatives to the current situation and against pessimistic prospects. However, in many places, the question of what is good is increasingly being asked and the desire for a better world is being kindled. Hope generally arises when circumstances are perceived as unsatisfactory. Uncertainty and insecurity are worrying, but they are also a prerequisite for hope. For hopes for a better future to be possible at all, there must be a certain degree of uncertainty. We must become aware of this uncertainty and show a willingness to shape a desirable future.

From a developmental psychology perspective, hope is an emergent phenomenon from positive development in the struggle between anxiety and trust, which leaves a lasting tendency to believe in the fulfillment of existential desires, despite the threats in life and the associated anger (Erikson, 1998). Hope is experienced above all when there is a sense of feasibility and meaningfulness. Despite all

uncertainty, hope can create a positive attitude towards oneself, one's fellow human beings and the world. As hope in the future is based on a general sense of belonging and attachment, it can also be maintained in the face of social threats and challenges.

The future is not something that happens to us and that we are at the mercy of for better or worse. We can and must actively and constructively shape our future. First and foremost, we need to believe in the possibility (not necessarily the likelihood) of a better future and have the willpower to realize it. To do this, however, we need to know what we really want with all our heart, what is particularly important to us in life and believe that we can do something in order to achieve this together.

This shows the importance of a meaningful life. The feeling of meaninglessness is one of the greatest sufferings in life. Every person who hopes for a good future, hopes for something that seems meaningful and valuable to them. Only by experiencing a sense of meaning in life can people remain hopeful even in difficult times. This meaning points beyond their own life and lies in their commitment to a good cause or their willingness to help other people. The more a person grasps their purpose, the more meaningful their life will appear to them and the more hopeful they will feel. People who have a meaningful task experience what they do as valuable and rewarding, are more determined and feel that their life has a deeper meaning, which is why they also have a more positive outlook on the future.

A hope filled with meaning is linked to the conviction that we can always make the best of our lives and the world in both good and painful times. This allows us to overcome disappointments and experience a deeper meaning even in adverse situations, which enables us to continue to affirm life and thus remain hopeful. This basically requires three things:

1. a constructive attitude towards all life situations, regardless of whether we like them or not.
2. the creative development of new possibilities in a given situation.
3. the freedom and the will to seize and realize these opportunities.

8 Key figures on the structure of the study

Method:	Online survey
Instrument:	Electronic questionnaire
Population:	Web and e-mail-active people of all age groups from Switzerland
Scope:	A total of 141 closed questions and 9 socio-demographic questions
Sample size:	5,763 questionnaires evaluated (complete, correct and adult participants)
Representativeness:	Broad-based survey through cooperation with “20 Minuten” as media partner and presence on various social media
Survey period:	13.11. - 30.11.2023
Head:	Dr. oec. HSG Andreas M. Krafft
Citation:	Use permitted provided the source is acknowledged

The following tables show the demographic distribution of the respondents.

Language region	Quantity	%
German	3699	64.2
French	1458	25.3
Italian	606	10.5

Gender	Quantity	%
Male	2873	49.9
Female	2828	49.1
Other	62	1.0

Age	Quantity	%
18-29	416	7.2
30-39	932	16.2
40-49	1135	19.7
50-59	1405	24.4
60-69	1279	22.2
70-79	497	8.6
80+	99	1.7

Education	Quantity	%
No completed school education	41	0.7
Compulsory school / elementary school completed	202	3.5
Technical (secondary) school without Matura	276	4.8
Grammar school with Matura / Abitur	1085	18.8
Vocational training	1611	28.0
Higher vocational training with diploma	1614	28.0
University / (applied) college	934	16.2

Marital status	Quantity	%
Still living with parents	131	2.3
Single	865	15.0
In a partnership but living separately	397	6.9
Living together in a partnership	1089	18.9
Married	2494	43.3
Divorced / separated	632	11.0
Widowed	155	2.7

Main occupation	Quantity	%
In training	99	1.7
Family, housework, raising children	228	4.0
Part-time employment	1205	20.9
Full-time employment	2634	45.7
Unemployed	208	3.6
Pension (old age or IV)	1389	24.1

9 References

- Brunstad, P. O. (2002). Longing for belonging: Youth culture in Norway. In J. Gidley, N. Ingwersen, & S. Inayatullah (Hrsg.), *Youth futures: Comparative research and transformative visions* (S. 143–154). Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Eckersley, R., Cahill, H., Wierenga, A., & Wyn, J. (2007). *Generations in dialogue about the future: the hopes and fears of young Australians*. Canberra: Australia 21 Ltd. Melbourne: Australian Youth Research Centre, 2007.
- Erikson, E. (1998). *Jugend und Krise: Die Psychodynamik im sozialen Wandel*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Ferring, D., Balducci, C., Burholt, V., Wenger, C., Thissen, F., Weber, G., & Hallberg, I. (2004). Life satisfaction of older people in six European countries: Findings from the European study on adult well-being. *European Journal of Ageing*, 1(1), 15–25.
- Frankl, V. E. (1979). *Der Mensch vor der Frage nach dem Sinn - Eine Auswahl aus dem Gesamtwerk*. München: Piper.
- Janoff-Bulman, R. (1989). Assumptive worlds and the stress of traumatic events: Applications of the schema construct. *Social cognition*, 7(2), 113–136.
- Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered assumptions*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Keyes, C. L. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of health and social research*, 43, 207–222.
- Keyes, C. L. (2011). Toward a science of mental health. In S. Lopez, R. C. Snyder (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 89–95). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Krafft, A.M. (2019). *Werte der Hoffnung: Erkenntnisse aus dem Hoffnungsbarometer*. Springer-Verlag.
- Krafft, A.M. (2022). *Unsere Hoffnungen, unsere Zukunft: Erkenntnisse aus dem Hoffnungsbarometer*. Springer-Verlag GmbH.
- Krafft, A. M., Guse, T., & Maree, D. (2021). Distinguishing perceived hope and dispositional optimism: Theoretical foundations and empirical findings beyond future expectancies and cognition. *Journal of Well-Being Assessment*, 1-27.
- Krafft, A.M., Martin-Krumm, C. & Fenouillet, F. (2017). Adaptation, further elaboration, and validation of a scale to measure hope as perceived by people: Discriminant value and predictive utility vis-à-vis dispositional hope. *Assessment*, 1073191117700724.
- Krafft, A. M., & Walker, A. M. (2018). *Positive Psychologie der Hoffnung: Grundlagen aus Psychologie, Philosophie, Theologie und Ergebnisse aktueller Forschung*. Springer-Verlag.
- Nordensvard, J. (2014). Dystopia and disutopia: Hope and hopelessness in German pupils' future narratives. *Journal of Educational Change*, 15(4), 443–465.
- Rubin, A. (2002). Reflections upon the late-modern transition as seen in the images of the future held by young Finns. In J. Gidley, N. Ingwersen, & S. Inayatullah (Hrsg.), *Youth futures: Comparative research and transformative visions* (S. 99–110). Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Shade, P. (2001). *Habits of hope – A pragmatic theory*. Vanderbilt University Press.
- Schnell, T. (2016). *Psychologie des Lebenssinns*. Springer Berlin Heidelberg.
- Schnell, T., & Danbolt, L. J. (2023). The Meaning and Purpose Scales (MAPS): development and multi-study validation of short measures of meaningfulness, crisis of meaning, and sources of purpose. *BMC psychology*, 11(1), 304-321.
- Stewart, C. (2002). Re-Imagining Your Neighborhood: A Model for Futures Education. In G. Gidley & I. Inayatullah, S. (Ed.). *Youth futures: comparative research and transformative visions*. London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 187-196.

Books

