



Hope Barometer 2022

Perceived Stress, Coping Strategies, and Personal Growth
Individual Attitudes and Collective Hope

Results for Switzerland

Dr. Andreas M. Krafft

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Swiss Positive Psychology Association

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Since 2009, the Hope Barometer has been collected annually for the coming year in a large Internet survey supported by the daily newspaper 20 Minuten. Starting in Switzerland, the survey is conducted in collaboration with renowned universities in Australia, Colombia, the Czech Republic, France, India, Israel, Italy, Nigeria, Poland, Portugal, Spain and South Africa. The current report presents the latest results of the November 2021 Hope Barometer in Switzerland. The public was surveyed about their experiences in the 2021 pandemic year, focusing on perceived stress, personal coping strategies, inner growth, personal hopes and sources of hope, and attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccination.

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Author:

Dr. oec HSG Andreas M. Krafft

Research Associate for Future Studies at the Institute for Systemic Management and Public Governance at the University of St. Gallen

Co-President of swissfuture, the Swiss Association for Futures Research

Member of the Board of the Swiss Positive Psychology Association (SWIPPA)

E-mail: andreas.krafft@unisg.ch

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Summary

1. Compared with 2020, people in Switzerland are just as satisfied with their lives but significantly less satisfied with politics, social trends and the disappointment with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. The development of the economy is assessed much more positively in 2021 and stress levels are at a similar moderate level as in the previous year. Between 15 and 20 percent of the population has suffered more deeply from the current crisis, especially young and single people.
2. Despite higher stress levels, women have a comparably higher levels of life satisfaction as men. This is mainly due to the use of effective coping strategies such as a more positive evaluation of their personal situation, a better self-efficacy, and various sources of social support. As a result, women recognized their personal strengths, developed more appreciation for life, strengthened their interpersonal relationships, and took advantage of new opportunities in life.
3. Many people in Switzerland were able to successfully deal with the current challenges. They have been able to accept the difficulties and obstacles and integrate them positively. Compared to 2020, however, one can see a clear disillusionment and disappointment, which in some cases have resulted in despondency and dejection. Social cohesion and mutual support have suffered in particular, although most people see these as an important source of hope.
4. General hope in the future is still between moderately and strong, though somewhat lower than in 2020. Women and older people are slightly but significantly more hopeful than men and younger people. As in previous years, most people hope above all for good health, a happy family, marriage or partnership, a harmonious life, self-determination, good interpersonal relationships and a meaningful task in life. Both a secure job and the desire to help others have become less important compared with the previous year. The most important sources of hope are experiences in nature, the support of family and friends, one's own abilities and mutual helpfulness.
5. Due to the current crisis, many people in Switzerland have been able to experience slight to moderate personal growth. By successfully overcoming personal challenges, they were able to become more aware of their strengths and develop a deeper appreciation for their lives. Some, especially women, were also able to build stronger connections with others and embrace new opportunities.
6. Personal attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccination significantly determine people's vaccination behavior. Vaccinated people believe in the efficacy and benefits of vaccination, feel more protected as a result, worry less about future side effects and have greater trust in the government. Unvaccinated people are much more critical of these issues and are therefore significantly less satisfied with current developments in society, but have a high level of life satisfaction and strong self-confidence.

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I Introduction

I.1 Background

The current Hope Barometer survey took place at the end of 2021, in the second year of the global COVID-19 pandemic, while Switzerland experiencing its fourth wave of Corona with increasing numbers of infections and hospitalizations. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic in March 2020, approximately one million people in Switzerland had contracted Corona by the end of November 2021, with more than half of these cases occurring between January and November 2021 (with an increasing tendency in December). The peak in hospitalizations and deaths to date has been recorded in the second major wave between October 2020 and February 2021. In the course of 2021, the general situation in Switzerland has alternately sometimes worsened and sometimes eased again. The second, somewhat flattened wave took place between mid-March and mid-May and the third wave during the summer vacations from mid-July to the end of September.

In order to contain the number of infections, the Federal Council decided on various measures which, similar to those in 2020, had a major impact on the economy, public life and private households. From mid-January to the end of February 2021, stores selling non-daily consumer goods were closed. Restaurants even had to close their interiors between January and the end of May. Events with a public audience did become possible again in a limited form at the end of April. At the end of May, the home office obligation, which had applied from mid-January, was replaced by a home office recommendation and an internal test concept. At the end of June, the certificate obligation was introduced in Switzerland, which made access to certain places, events and activities possible only with a valid certificate (healed, vaccinated or tested).

At the beginning of 2021, the great hope for overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic was focused on the development and rapid administration of effective vaccines against the Corona pathogen. As early as December 2020 and January 2021, Swissmedic granted approval for vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna. In parallel, the Federal Council agreed with the pharmaceutical companies on the delivery of sufficient quantities of vaccine doses and drew up an allocation and delivery plan to the cantons. By the end of November 2021, two-thirds of the population in Switzerland had been fully vaccinated with the two planned doses.

Since February 2021, various virus mutations of concern have emerged in Switzerland (e.g., the alpha, beta, and delta variants). Due to their altered pathogen characteristics, these variants are attributed with an increased risk of infection (even after recovery), more severe courses of disease, and reduced vaccination protection (BAG 2021a). Since the end of October, the number of confirmed infections, hospitalizations, and deaths has again increased markedly. In December, a selective tightening of the certificate regulation as well as a general vaccination obligation were therefore under discussion.

I.2 Goals of this Year's Hope Barometer

Similar to November 2020, this year's survey examines the experiences and coping strategies during the past year 2021 as well as the future prospects of the Swiss population. The data from 2021 regarding people's satisfaction with their lives as well as with politics, the economy and other socially relevant areas will be compared with the results from the previous year. Particular emphasis is placed on perceived stress levels and how people have coped with the challenges and adversities in their lives.

Based on the data from 2020, we recognized during the first pandemic year that a considerable part of the population was able to cope with the difficulties and struggles of everyday life in an active, constructive and supportive manner, perceiving not only negative but also positive personal changes. During 2021, a general fatigue, disappointment and frustration with the prolonged pandemic as well as social tensions could be observed. The current study therefore examines how these phenomena have affected people's future prospects.

One particular social debate of recent months has its roots in people's different attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccination. While about three quarters of the adult population has been vaccinated against

Corona, about a quarter of the population expressed great doubts about the vaccination and an unwillingness to be vaccinated. Rising case numbers and tightened government measures have sparked an increasing clash between vaccinated and unvaccinated people in the second half of the year, leading to a looming divide in society. In this year's study, we want investigate and understand the different attitudes that lead to a positive acceptance or a concerned and negative attitude towards vaccination. In doing so, we certainly do not want to widen the divide, but rather to promote a better understanding of the different perceptions, expectations and concerns of both groups in society, to expose the negative consequences of mutual accusations, antagonisms and hostility, and to provide better foundations for an open and constructive dialogue between people.

The Hope Barometer survey was conducted with the support of the newspaper “20 Minuten” as a media partner in the period from November 12 to 30, 2021. A total of 5546 people in the three largest language regions (German, French and Italian) filled out the questionnaire completely and correctly (see chapter 8 about key figures on the structure of the study). We would like to thank the people responsible at “20 Minuten” and all those involved for the time they invested in actively participating in this study.

2 Satisfaction and Perceived Stress

Introduction

At the beginning of the survey, people were asked to briefly look back and assess their satisfaction in 2021 with various areas. Satisfaction is not to be equated with joy, happiness or well-being, but rather the subjective perception of the extent to which personal expectations with regard to one's own life as well as the political, economic and social environment have been fulfilled. Crises and stress can affect satisfaction, but they can also inspire it if one has been able to deal with them constructively and has satisfactorily mastered the challenges that have arisen. In addition, different people experience general events as stressful in different ways, depending on the life situation in which they find themselves.

2.1 Satisfaction 2021

Figure 1 compares the level of satisfaction in 2021 with that in 2020. It is striking that satisfaction with one's own life in 2021 is almost identically strong as in the previous year. The frequency distributions in figure 2 show that 55.6% of the Swiss population in 2021 was rather satisfied with their lives, 18.6% neither particularly satisfied nor dissatisfied and 25.7% rather dissatisfied. Although the events related to the Corona pandemic were stressful and anything but pleasant, a majority of the population was still able to cope satisfactorily. However, a quarter of the population is less satisfied with their lives.

The comparison between the sexes in figure 3 shows an identical intensity of life satisfaction between men and women. Further analysis of the data revealed that life satisfaction is most strongly related to marital status: Married people and people in a partnership generally have significantly higher life satisfaction than single people.

As in previous years, satisfaction with personal life is significantly higher than satisfaction with politics, the economy and other socially relevant areas (Fig. 1). Compared with 2020, satisfaction with politics, with the government's handling of the pandemic, and with the resolution of social and environmental issues has declined significantly. About half of the population is rather dissatisfied with these areas (fig. 2). In contrast, satisfaction with the economic situation has increased markedly, a consequence of the rapid economic recovery during 2021. These developments took place in a similar way in the three language regions surveyed.

A more in-depth analysis shows that satisfaction with the economy increases significantly with the level of education and with age. Older and better educated people assess the economic situation more positively than young people with a basic education (secondary schooling or vocational training).

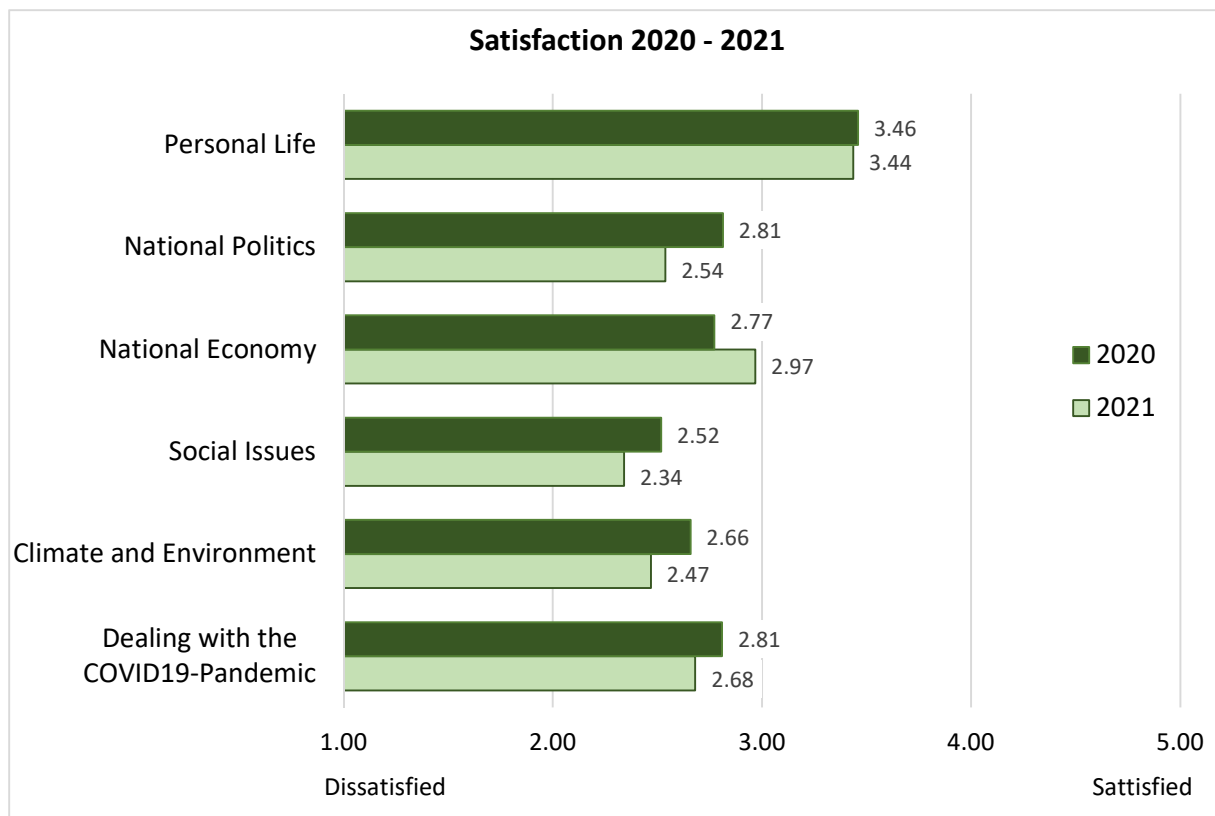


Figure 1: Satisfaction 2020-2021 - mean values

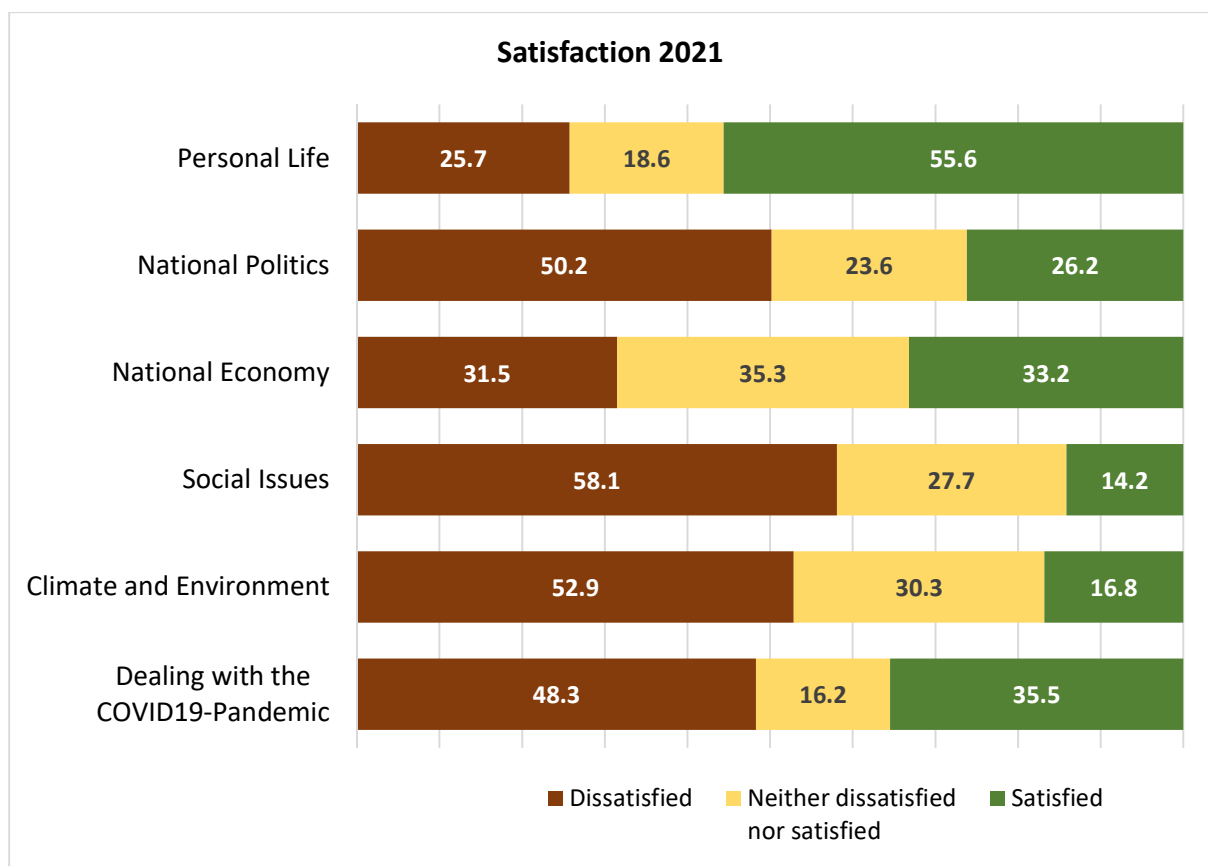


Figure 2: Satisfaction 2021 - frequencies in percent

Interestingly, men are significantly more satisfied with the economic situation than women, whereas women are somewhat more satisfied with politics (Fig. 3). Men probably benefit more than women from an economic upswing or assess it more positively. The biggest difference between men and women relates to the satisfaction with the climate and environmental issues. Here, women are most clearly dissatisfied than men, possibly reflecting women's greater sensitivity to the issue of sustainability.

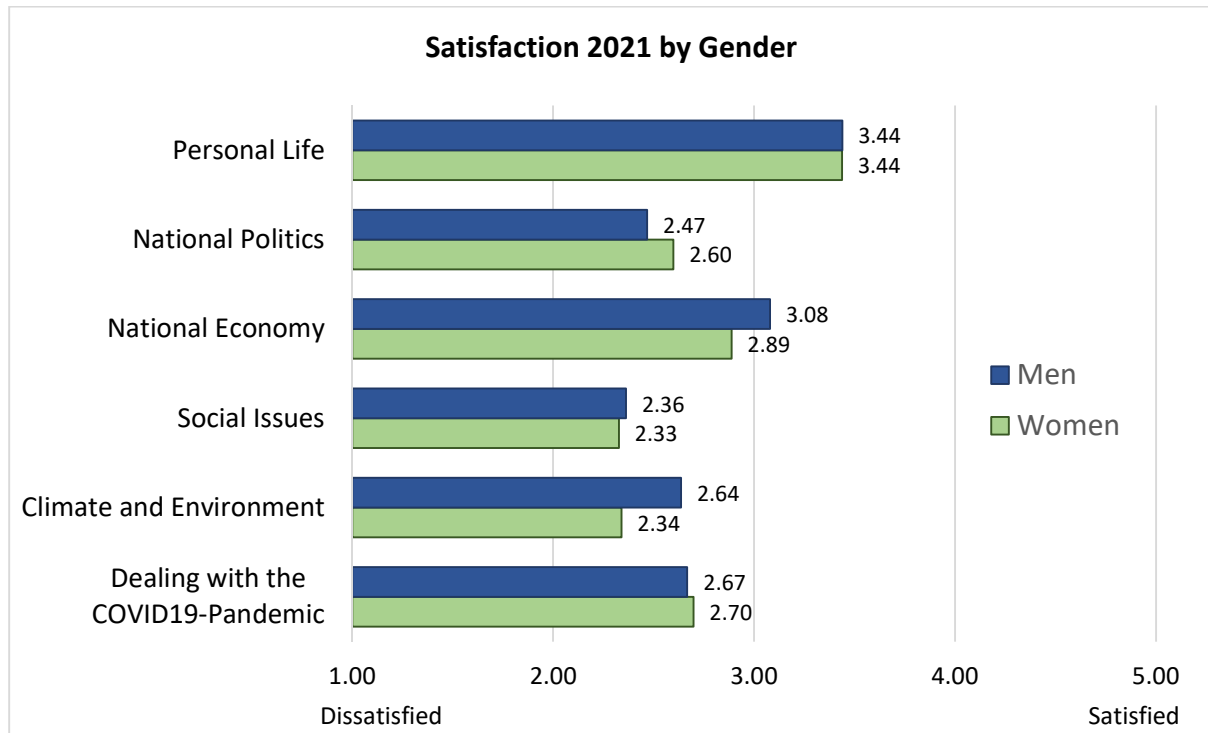


Figure 3: Satisfaction 2021 by gender - mean values

2.2 Perceived Stress 2021

Introduction

The events surrounding the Corona pandemic have continued to put society to the test in 2021. However, not all people perceive stressful situations as equally burdening. Stress is fundamentally a subjective phenomenon that depends on two aspects (Lazarus 1977):

1. The personal assessment of a situation as threatening or challenging.
2. The options and resources available for coping with the situation.

People can differ greatly from one another based on their life situation, social relationships, character traits and past experiences. Moreover, stress is not a simple phenomenon, but a complex and multifaceted one. Psychologically speaking, the individual perception of stress is linked to three essential experiences:

1. The less you can assess and predict future events, the more uncertain and subsequently stressed you feel.
2. When situations get out of control or people have the impression that they cannot sufficiently handle essential aspects in life, this in turn increases the feeling of stress because one feels dependent on external conditions.
3. Increasing demands as well as new and constantly changing situations can result in personal overload.

As in 2020, the population's stress level was measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen et al. 1983). The PSS is one of the most widely used psychological instruments for measuring stress perception. The PSS measures the extent to which critical life situations are rated as more or less stressful. The questions are formulated in such a way that they are of a general nature and therefore relatively free of specific life situations. The PSS is particularly well suited for determining chronic stress under long-lasting life circumstances as well as subjective expectations regarding future events or developments. The ten questions of the PSS, rated on a five-point-scale from 0 (never) to 4 (often), basically focus on the respondents' feelings and thoughts during the current year. This means that people were asked how often they felt in a certain way in 2021.

Based on past studies, stress levels can be divided into three categories or normal ranges: (1) low stress levels represent mean values between 0 and 1.3; (2) medium stress levels are characterized by mean values between 1.4 and 2.6; in this case, personal satisfaction and well-being may already be slightly impaired; (3) high stress levels or stress overload represent values between 2.7 and 4.0. Here, the perception of stress has a stronger impact on satisfaction and personal well-being. In the long run, a high stress level can seriously endanger physical and psychological health. The "normal" or common stress level in our Western society is often around mean values of 1.3 to 1.4 (Cohen et al. 1997). These values could be compared to the magnitude of an earthquake on the Richter scale, where mild earth shakes (less than 5) produce little damage, moderate shocks (between 5 and 6) already leave visible marks, and stronger earthquakes (greater than 6) produce serious destruction. Similarly, it can be compared to a mild to severe flood or tsunami. The difference, however, is that an earthquake or tsunami are usually one-time events and the Corona pandemic is a now long-lasting situation. The threshold values of the stress scale may thus only serve as orientation and cannot represent the subjective feeling completely objectively.

Results

A comparison of the mean values for 2020 and 2021 in Figure 4 shows that the average stress levels of the population are almost identical (just under 2.0). Hardly any differences were found between the three language regions (somewhat lower $M=1.88$ in French-speaking Switzerland).

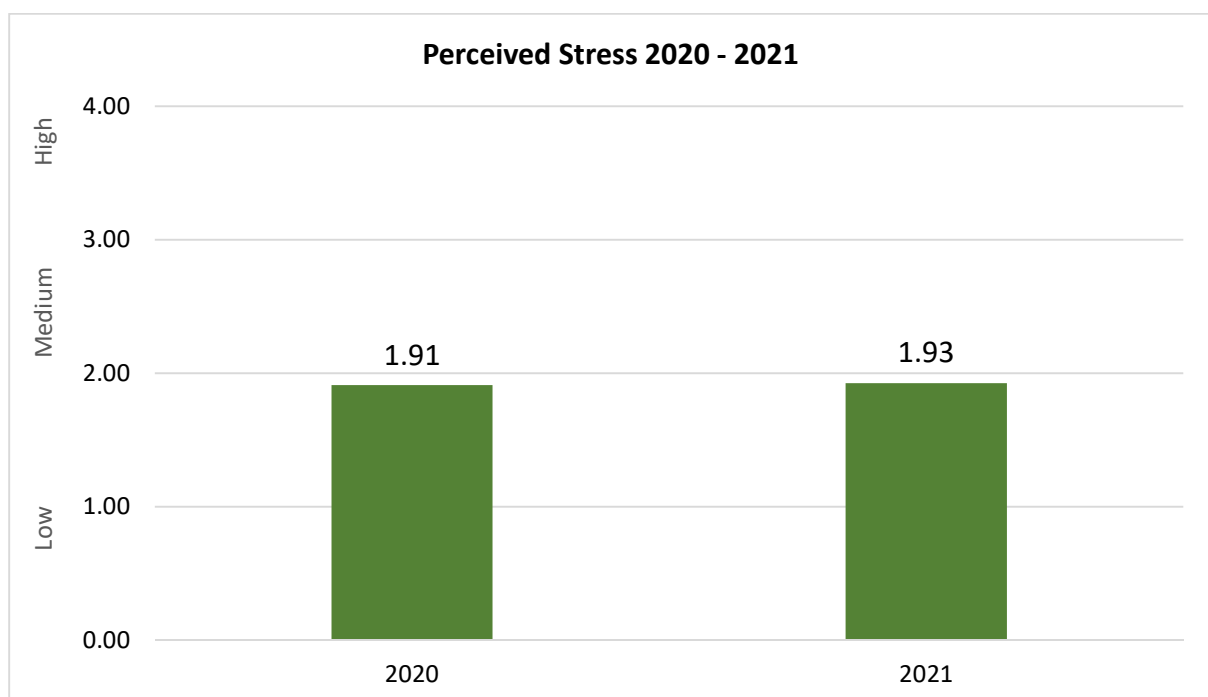


Figure 4: Perceived Stress 2020-2021 - mean values

In Figure 5, the distribution of the perceived intensity of stress is presented in a differentiated manner. 21.5% of the respondents were hardly or only slightly stressed, 62.8% felt stress moderately, and 15.7% of the respondents (perhaps even up to 20%, depending on the threshold values) suffered severely from stress. High levels of stress can trigger worry and anxiety and cause physical reactions such as tension, excitability, loss of appetite, and insomnia.

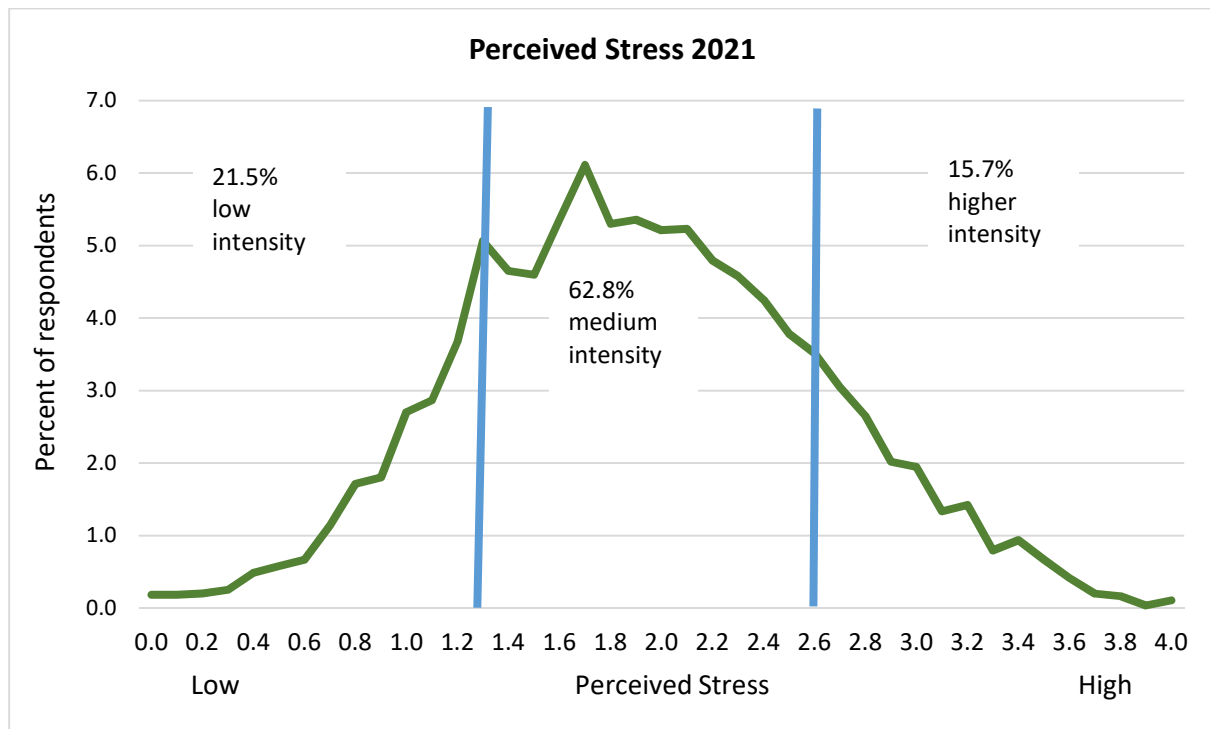


Figure 5: Perceived Stress in 2021 - frequencies in percent

To illustrate these values, figure 6 shows the results of three statements on the main causes of stress, i.e., unpredictability, loss of control and overload. Slightly more than one-third of the population rarely or never had the feeling that things in their lives did not develop according to their expectations. This was sometimes the case for around 40% and frequently to often for just under a quarter of the participants. Many more people (around 43%) felt they often had situations in their lives that they could not influence or control. However, a quarter of respondents rarely or never experienced this. Fortunately, for more than half of the respondents, these situations hardly ever led to a noticeable feeling of being overburdened. However, about 20% of the individuals have experienced a more severe strain.

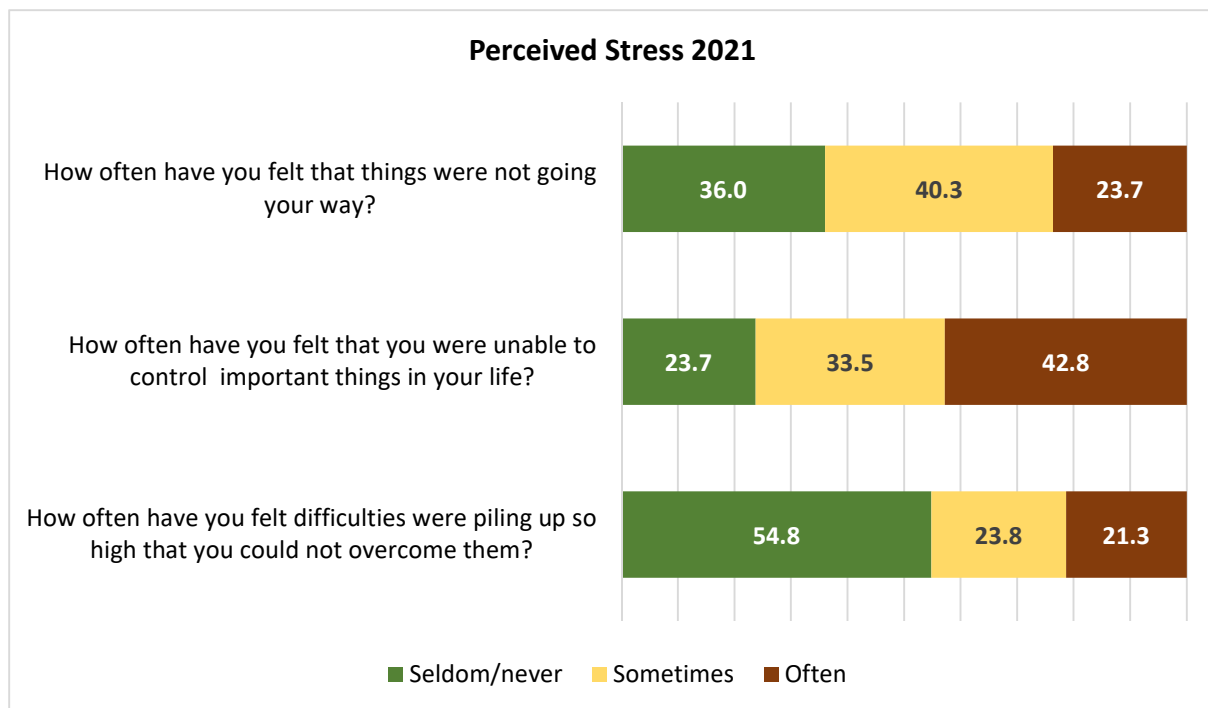


Figure 6: Perceived Stress - selected questions - frequencies in percent

Similar to 2020, the perception of stress decreases with age in 2021 (Fig. 7). Younger people suffered more from the occupational and social consequences of the Corona measures than older people. This may be related to the fact that young people experienced situations as more challenging or threatening due to their life circumstances and had fewer material, personal or social resources to cope with them.

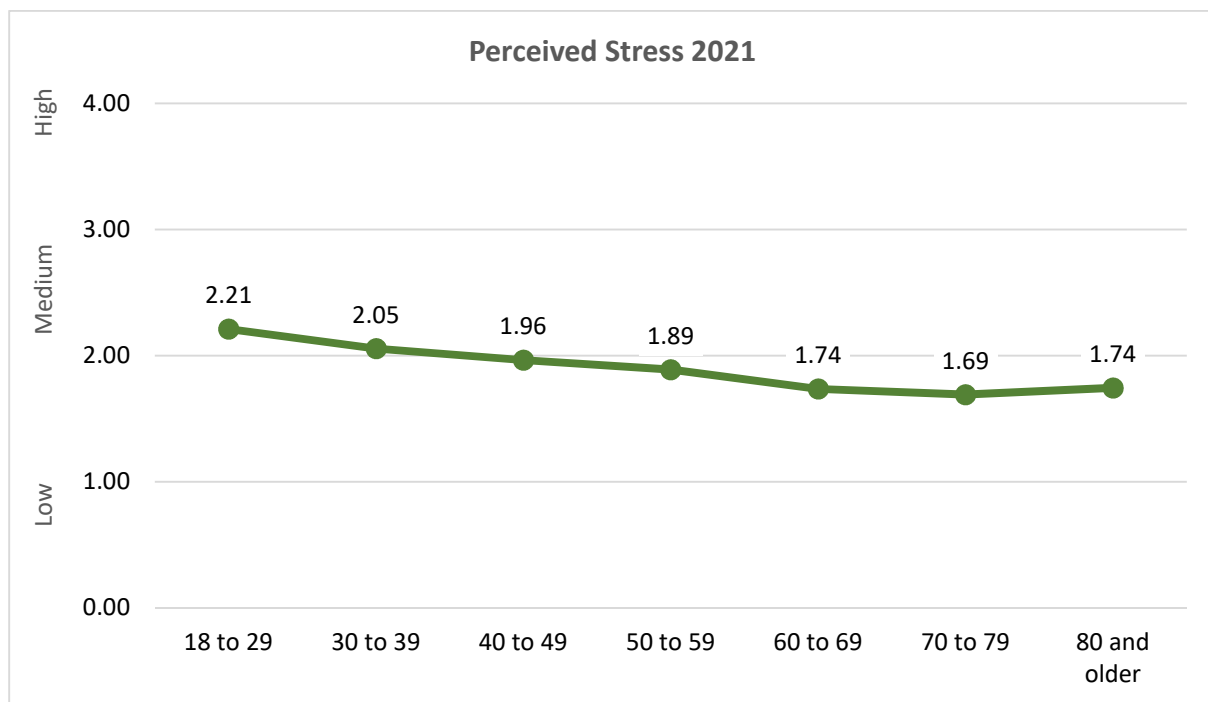


Figure 7: Perceived Stress by age - mean values

Slightly more pronounced than in the previous year was the small but statistically significant difference between men and women in 2021 (Fig. 8). Presumably, women are confronted more strongly with multiple sources of stress at work and in the family and therefore have higher stress scores. However, people with children (women and men, married, in a partnership or single) do not have significantly higher stress levels than those without children, with the exception of single fathers.

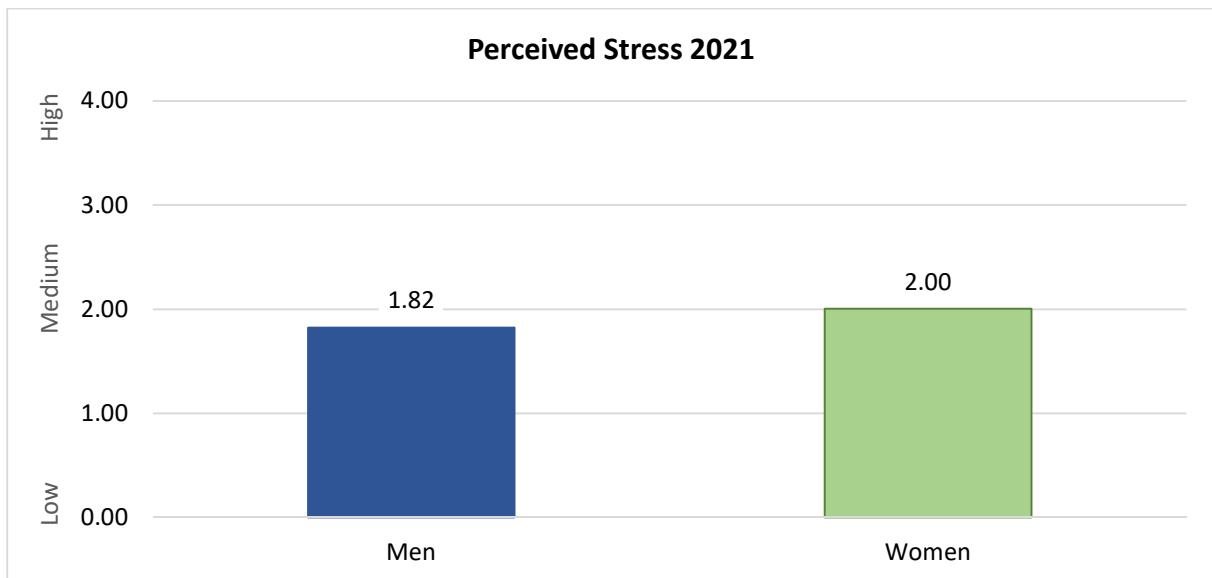


Figure 8: Perceived Stress by gender - mean values

Summary

1. Similar to 2020, more than half of the people in Switzerland were basically satisfied with their lives in 2021. However, a quarter of the population were rather to strongly dissatisfied.
2. People were significantly less satisfied with politics, the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, social issues and measures relating to the climate and the environment in 2021 than in the previous year. In contrast, satisfaction with economic development increased.
3. Women were just as satisfied with their personal lives as men, despite higher stress scores. Whereas women were slightly more satisfied with politics than men, satisfaction with the economy was higher among men.
4. Perceived stress of moderate severity in 2021 was almost identical to the previous year. Around 20% of the population experienced low stress, just over 60% experienced moderate stress and 15 to 20% experienced high levels of stress.
5. Young people generally experienced stress more intensively than older people. Women, as in 2020, had slightly but significantly higher stress scores than men.

3 Coping Strategies 2021

Introduction

As in the previous year, at the end of 2021 we wanted to examine the strategies and activities used by people in Switzerland to cope with different events and life situations. In psychology, the way people deal with stress is called *coping strategies*. The perceived stress level can be influenced by two types of perceptions: (1) how threatening a particular situation is subjectively perceived to be and (2) what resources and coping possibilities one has available to deal with the situation. The more positively and strongly coping options are assessed, the less threatening the situation appears and the lower the perception of stress.

However, there are both positive and negative forms of coping. For example, while seeking social support is a positive response, excessive drinking to distract oneself from worries and problems usually has negative effects.

To measure coping strategies, we again used Carver's (1997) multidimensional *coping inventory*, which contains 14 different activities that are assigned to three categories. The first category is called problem-focused coping. This includes behaviors aimed at solving a specific problem or doing something to influence the sources of stress. The second category includes emotion-focused coping. This is aimed at reducing emotional or psychological stress. In most cases, people can resort to both coping strategies. Problem-focused coping is used when the person feels that he or she can do something constructive to influence the situation. Emotion-oriented coping predominates when people feel they cannot do anything concrete about the situation, but at the same time do not want to be crushed or discouraged by the given situation. The third category contains so-called dysfunctional strategies, which usually neither solve the problem nor make people feel better about themselves.

The 14 coping strategies are described as follows (Carver et al. 1989):

Category I: Problem-focused coping strategies

1. *Active coping*: Active measures are taken to change the situation or mitigate the negative effects of a situation.
2. *Planning*: As long as no concrete measures can be taken yet, possible strategies for action and future steps can be considered and planned.
3. *Self-direction*: One focuses on things that one can influence or do (e.g. one's own tasks in the family or at work). This does not solve the problem immediately, but the focus is directed to what is currently feasible.
4. *Instrumental support*: This involves seeking concrete support from other people. This can be of a material nature (e.g., money) or relate to active help in accomplishing concrete tasks (e.g., caring for children).

Category II: Emotion-focused coping strategies

5. *Emotional support*: The other form of social support is aimed at personal encouragement or emotional support. People need a sympathetic ear, understanding and human closeness in difficult situations.
6. *Acceptance*: Reality is accepted as it is, which is usually the prerequisite for dealing with it actively and constructively. The opposite of acceptance is denial.
7. *Positive reframing*: A positive reassessment of the situation takes place without denying the negative aspects. For example, not only the problems but also the opportunities are seen in the situation.
8. *Humor*: One takes the situation with a pinch of cheerful serenity. However, the humor must be healthy and not black or fatalistic.

9. *Religion*: For some people, belief in God or a higher power and involvement in a religious community are valuable resources for coping with crisis situations.

Category III: Dysfunctional coping strategies

10. *Disengagement*: Disengagement is exactly the opposite of commitment and an expression of lack of courage and help. One refrains from any attempt to change something or to achieve certain goals.
11. *Venting*: Negative feelings are allowed and expressed openly. Such a reaction can be temporarily useful if it makes the person feel relieved. Over a longer period, however, the negative consequences are usually greater.
12. *Denial*: Sometimes looking away can have a positive effect, for example, by making you worry less about the future. Usually, however, denying a reality only creates additional problems, especially if nothing is done to improve the situation.
13. *Self-blame*: In certain situations, some people tend to look for the causes of their problems only in themselves and therefore feel guilty. Especially when self-esteem is low, people tend to blame themselves ("If only I hadn't ..." etc., etc.).
14. *Alcohol consumption and substance abuse*: In the event of anxiety, worry, loss of control and excessive demands, people sometimes resort to excessive consumption of alcohol and other substances. This only worsens the situation (their own health, social relationships, etc.).

Results

Figure 9 presents the coping strategies used in 2020 and 2021. In both years, the emotion-focused strategies "acceptance" and "positive reframing" were the most frequently used strategies. In order to find constructive solutions to a difficult situation, it must firstly be acknowledged and then viewed from a new and more positive perspective. This allows to engage in active coping or planning of new approaches and solutions. Comparing the values of 2021 with those of 2020, various developments stand out: As in the previous year, positive coping strategies still outweigh negative ones in 2021. However, after one and a half years of the pandemic, the signs of fatigue as well as their social consequences become visible. Compared to the previous year, people in 2021 seem to have had less room to maneuver (self-direction) or have used or needed it less. Also noticeable is the decrease in positive reframing (it is harder to see the positive side) and social (instrumental and emotional) support (people are either less willing to seek help or less likely to get it). Moreover, the increase in disengagement (lack of courage and help) and in (fatalistic?) humor is a sign of weariness and dejection.

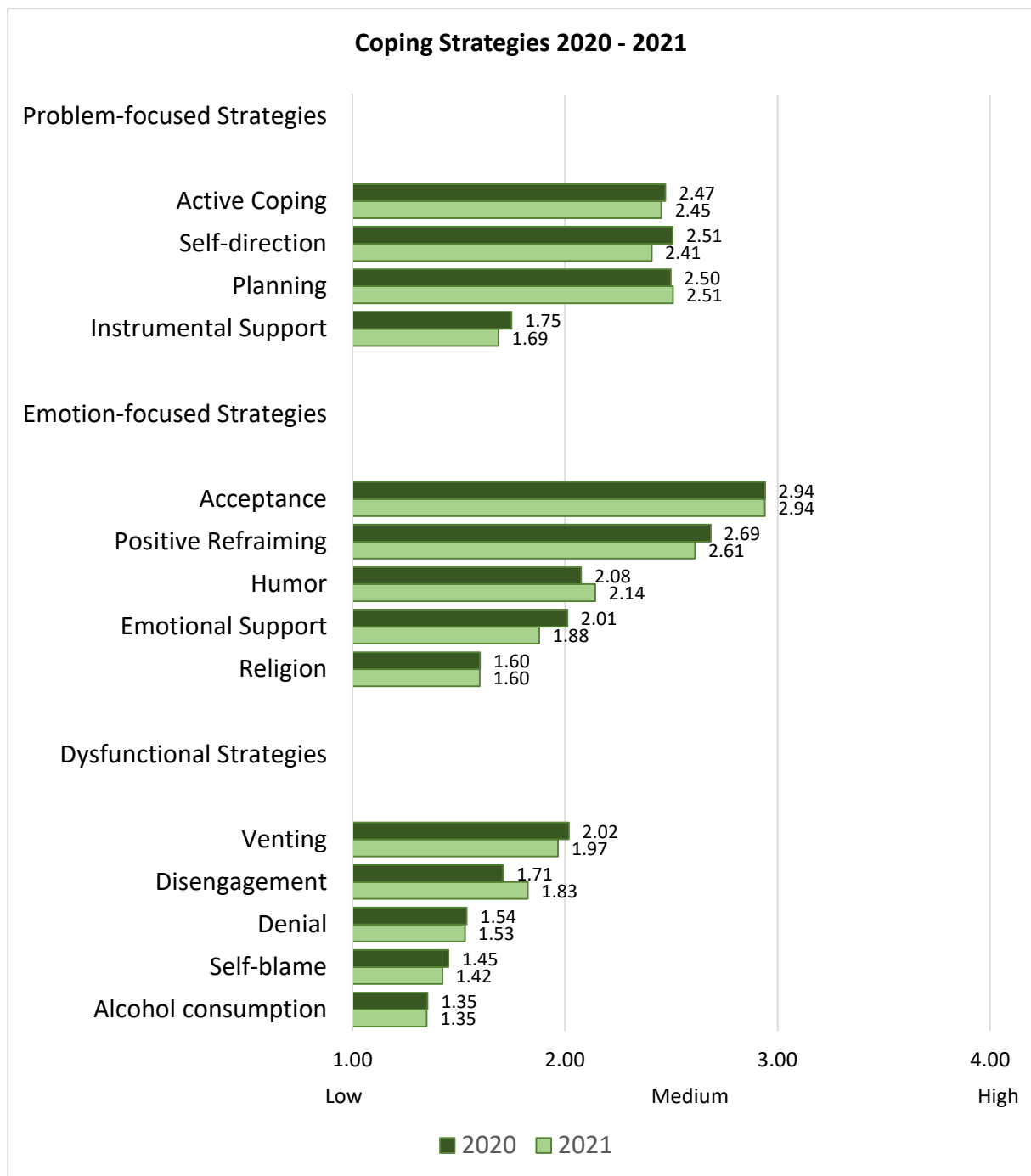


Figure 9: Coping Strategies 2020-2021 - mean values

The results of selected statements regarding different coping strategies are presented in Figure 10: More than half of the respondents were able to look at things from a more positive side this year (positive reassessment). To get their minds off things, 44.5% of people were able to focus (quite and very much) on work or other activities (self-direction). For the other 55.5%, this was not possible or perhaps not even necessary. 42% of respondents received a little bit emotional support from other people and just under a quarter quite or even very often. Just under a third have given up dealing with the pandemic situation fairly to completely. This can have a positive and a negative background. On the positive side, it is when the sources of stress and bad news do not take over in people's lives. Sometimes, in fact, it is very advisable to stop dwelling so intensively on negative news. On the other hand, this attitude could be counterproductive if people close their eyes to the current situation, ignore harmful consequences and do not take necessary measures.

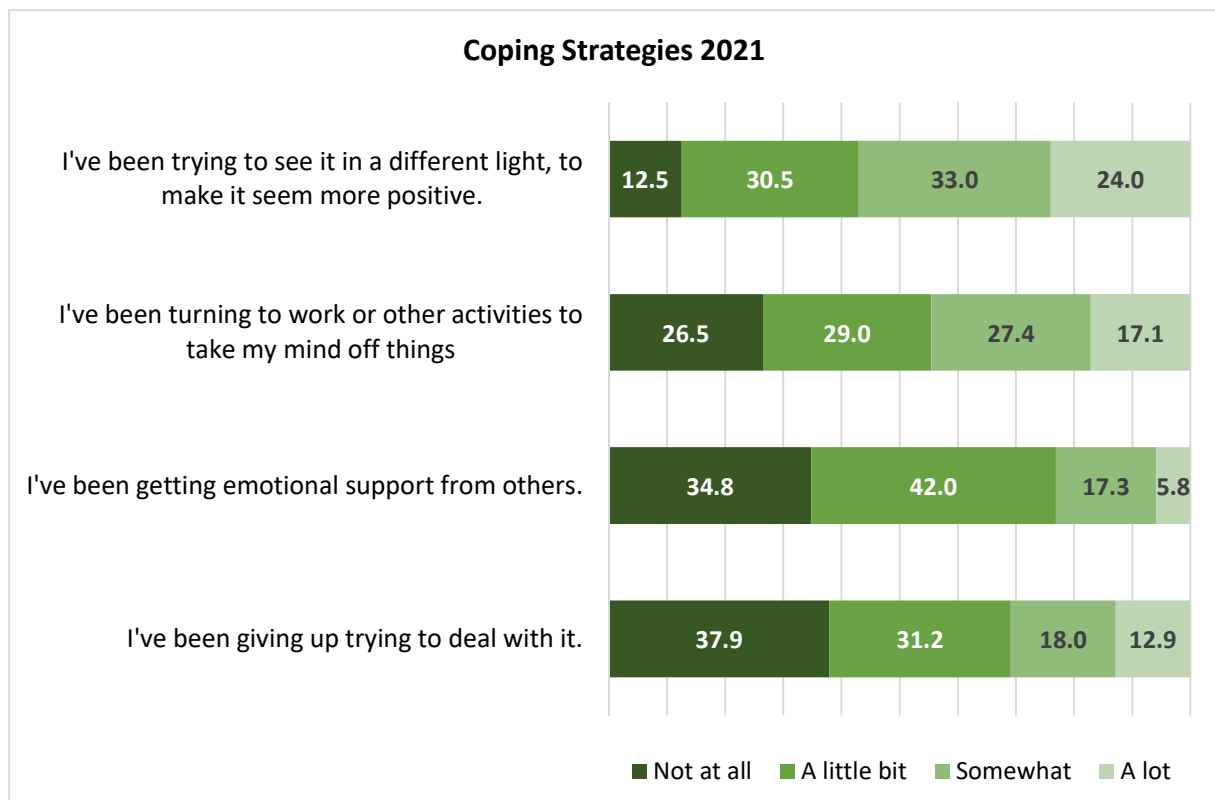


Figure 10: Coping Strategies 2021 - selected questions - frequencies in percent

Comparing the results for both genders, clear differences become apparent (Fig. 11): women received significantly more emotional and instrumental support, were able to see the positive and not just the negative sides of a situation, used their own creative leeway, sometimes let off steam (which is also positive) and found emotional support in religious or spiritual faith. This may explain why women, despite their higher stress load, experience a comparably high level of life satisfaction as men. In contrast, men resorted to (healthy or fatalistic?) humor and, to a lesser extent, to the use of alcohol or the consumption of other substances.

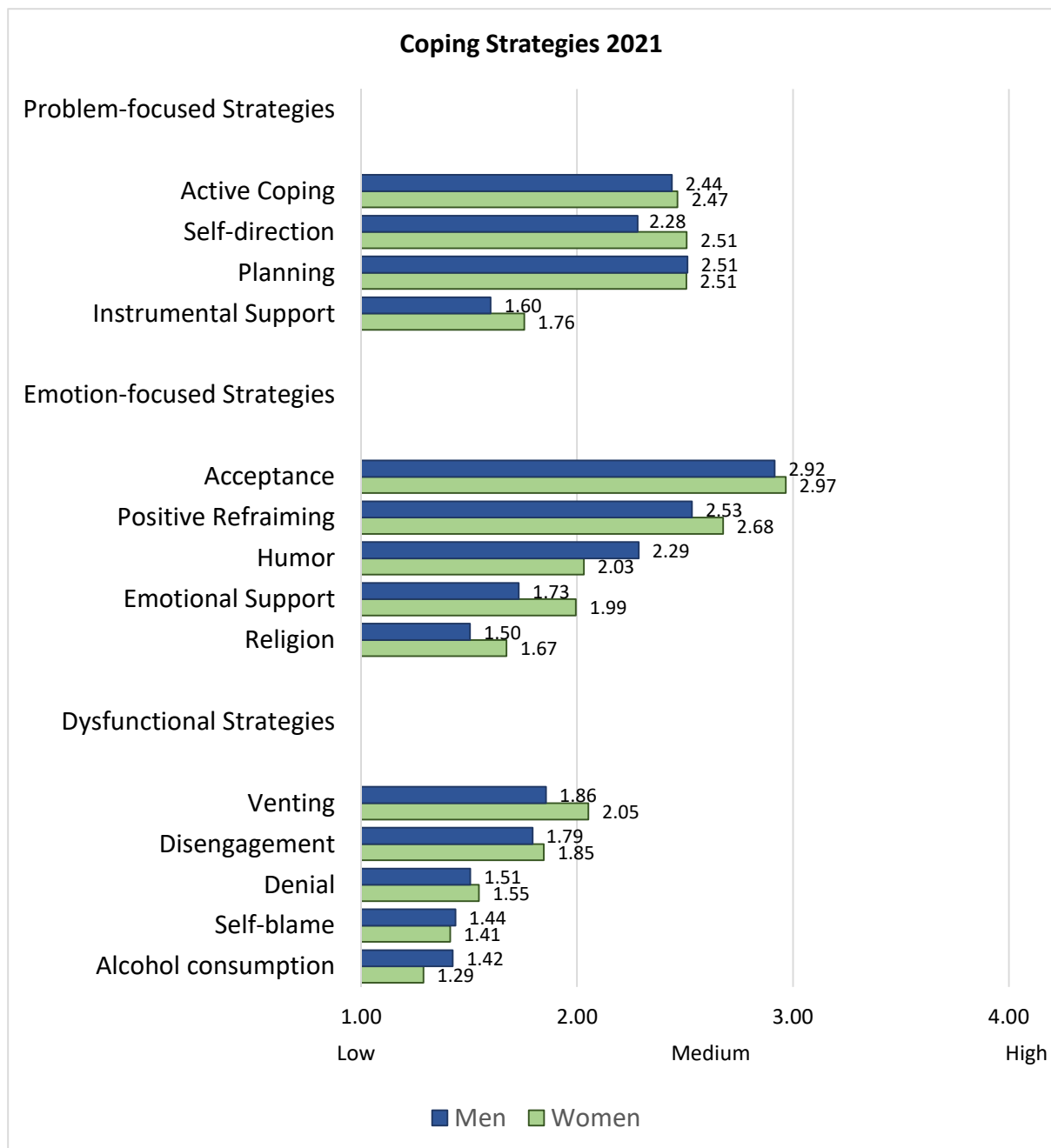


Figure 11: Coping Strategies 2021 by gender - mean values

Summary

1. Similar to the previous year, people in 2021 primarily used constructive strategies to cope with the crisis, specifically acceptance of reality and positive reframing.
2. Compared with the previous year, however, people in 2021 were somewhat less likely to see the positive side of the situation and receive fewer social support. At the same time, disengagement has increased.
3. Women were more able than men to look at the positive, to enjoy social support, blow off negative emotions, and engage in religious or spiritual practices.
4. Men used humor and consumed alcohol slightly more than women.

4 Hope in Times of Crisis

Introduction

Hope is omnipresent in life and that is why we hardly pay attention to it consciously. We probably do not recognize the value of hope in daily life because it is as natural and taken for granted as air is for us humans or water is for fish. Often we only become aware of the value of hope in crisis situations. Hope basically arises when circumstances are perceived as unsatisfactory or threatening. While uncertainty and insecurity are worrisome, they are also a condition for hope. In order to be hopeful for a better future, there must be a certain amount of uncertainty. We must become aware of this insecurity and be prepared to shape the desirable future.

If one wants to bring about positive change, hope is essential for necessary action. It is precisely hope that provides encouragement against general unease, disillusionment, fatalistic convictions regarding a lack of alternatives to the current situation, and against pessimistic forecasts.

All our actions, everything we do, is consciously or unconsciously based hope. Thus, hope is closely linked to our ability to act and is the motivating power for our commitment. When we believe that the fulfillment of a hoped-for wish is possible, we feel empowered to do something about it. Hope provides the practical reason for our actions. Because we desire and hope for something, we act. Or, to put it the other way around. Should we no longer have hope (whether because we do not wish for anything or because we consider the fulfillment of our wishes to be impossible) we would take no action at all.

However, hope is also relevant when we experience and are confronted with the limits of our own ability to act, whether because we lack certain means and possibilities or because our strengths and abilities are limited. Sometimes we can realize our hopes through our own actions. In other cases, our hopes are completely out of our control and depend entirely on external factors and circumstances.

Hope starts from a wish and from the conviction that this wish is possible, even if this seems difficult and is not completely within one's own power. Hope is therefore not pure optimism. Recognizing the current difficulties, with hope we develop an attitude towards the future, seeing both the challenges and the opportunities, the possibilities and the strengths. Hope is thus one of the essential conditions for positively coping with and overcoming uncertain situations and life crises.

4.1 Perceived Hope

As in previous years, we employed the validated *Perceived Hope Scale* (Krafft et al. 2017) to assess the general level of hope, which includes six items to be scored on a six-point scale from 0 to 5. Looking at the data in Figure 12, the following results stand out: Perceived hope in the population remains well above the mean score of 2.5 and is therefore moderately high. However, the 2021 values show a slight decline in all three language regions compared with those of 2020, possibly reflecting a certain disappointment or disillusionment with regard to a rapid overcoming of the pandemic. In French-speaking Switzerland, as in the previous year, the hope values are slightly but significantly lower than in the Italian and German parts of the country.

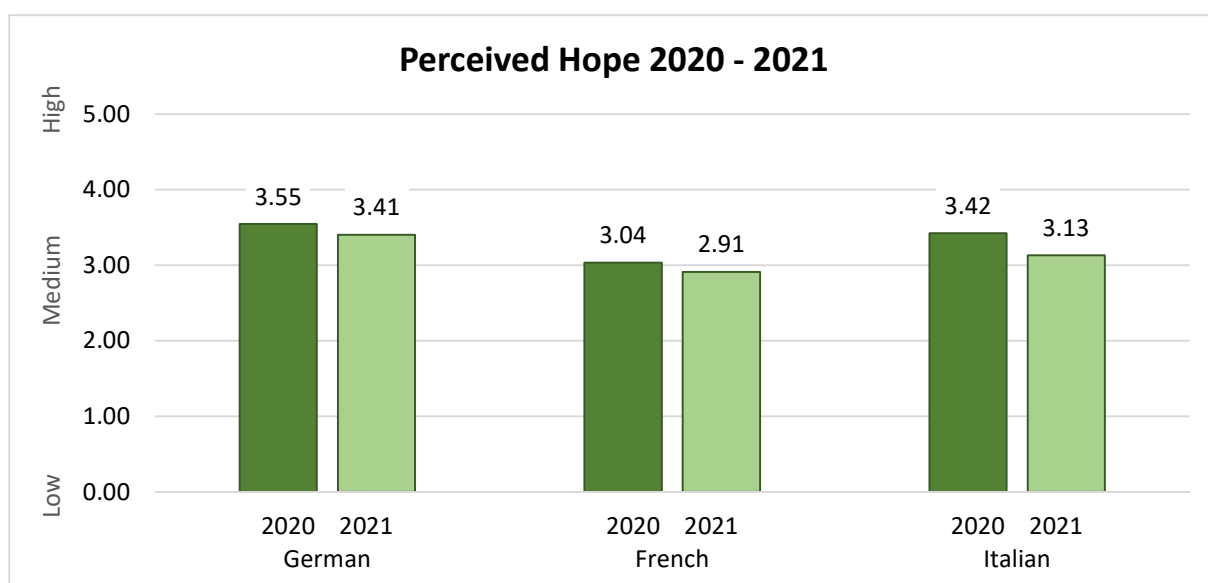


Figure 12: Perceived Hope 2020-2021 by language region - mean values

Figure 13 presents the responses to selected questions on general hope. 47% of respondents feel fairly hopeful at the end of 2021. Somewhat or not at all hopeful is felt by 13.7% of people. At the end of 2020, 49.3% felt fairly hopeful and 11.7% felt somewhat or not at all hopeful. More than half of people (52.1%) were able to remain hopeful in difficult times at the end of 2021 (up from 54.3% in 2020). This was barely the case for just 23%, a slight increase from 21.4% in 2020. However, 57.4% of respondents in 2021 claim that hopes rather than fears predominate in their lives (up from 60.7% in 2020). In contrast, 22.4% in 2021 seem to have more fears than hopes, which is also a slight increase compared to the 20.1% in 2020.

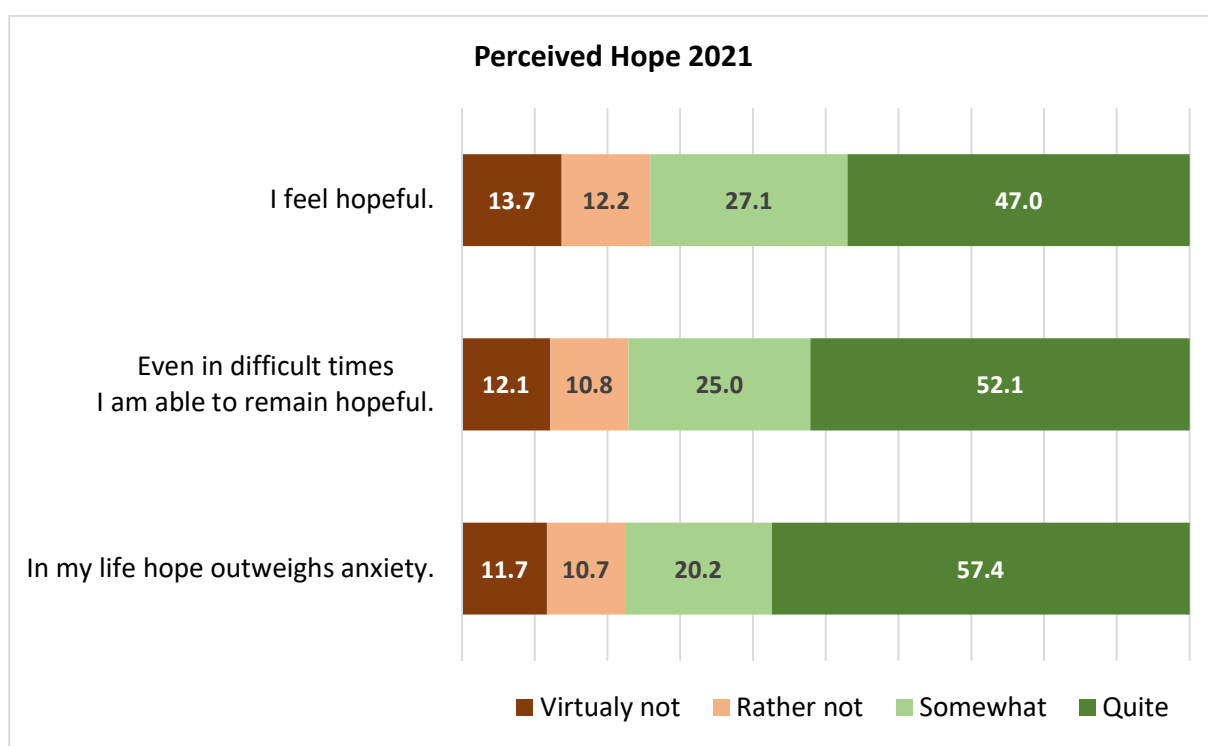


Figure 13: Perceived Hope 2021 - selected questions - frequencies in percent

If we take a look at the demographic characteristics, the following peculiarities stand out: Unlike in 2020, where men and women were equally hopeful, women have slightly but significantly higher hope scores than men in 2021 (Fig. 14). This again emphasizes the noticeable effect of positive coping strategies of women, in particular the ability to focus on the good and the opportunities as well as to resort to emotional support (also in the spiritual sense), two aspects that yielded the greatest statistical correlation with hope.

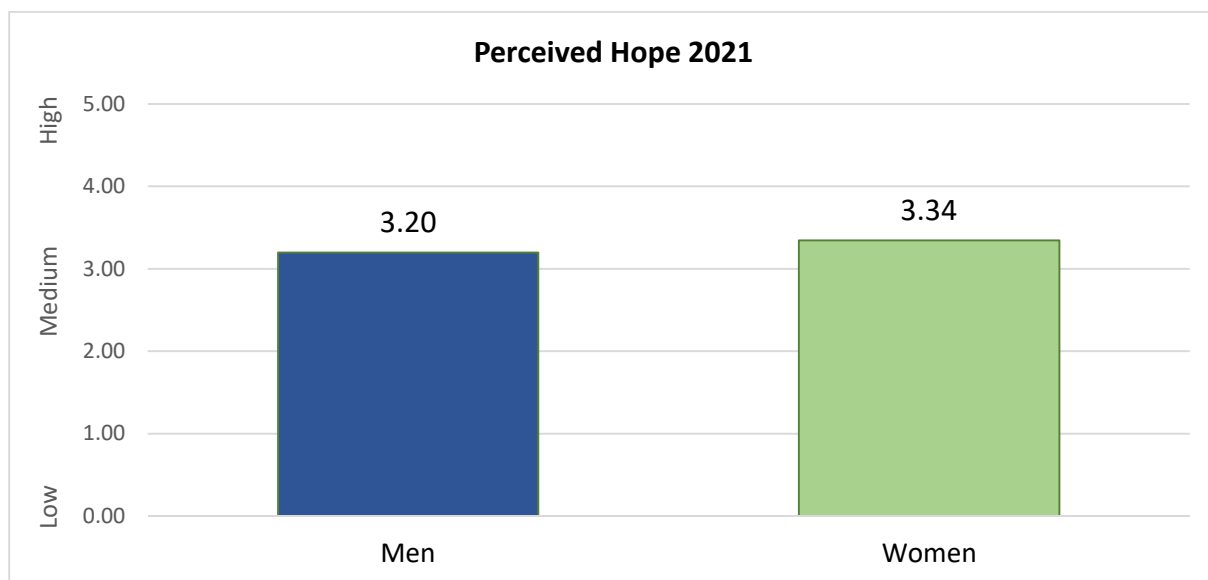


Figure 14: Perceived Hope 2021 by gender - mean values

In terms of age, a similar pattern is repeated in 2021 as in previous years: Hope tends to increase with age (Fig. 15). Just as stress is more evident in young people, they also tend to have fewer coping options. Older people, on the other hand, have the advantage of greater life experience, the availability of material resources and a more extensive social network.

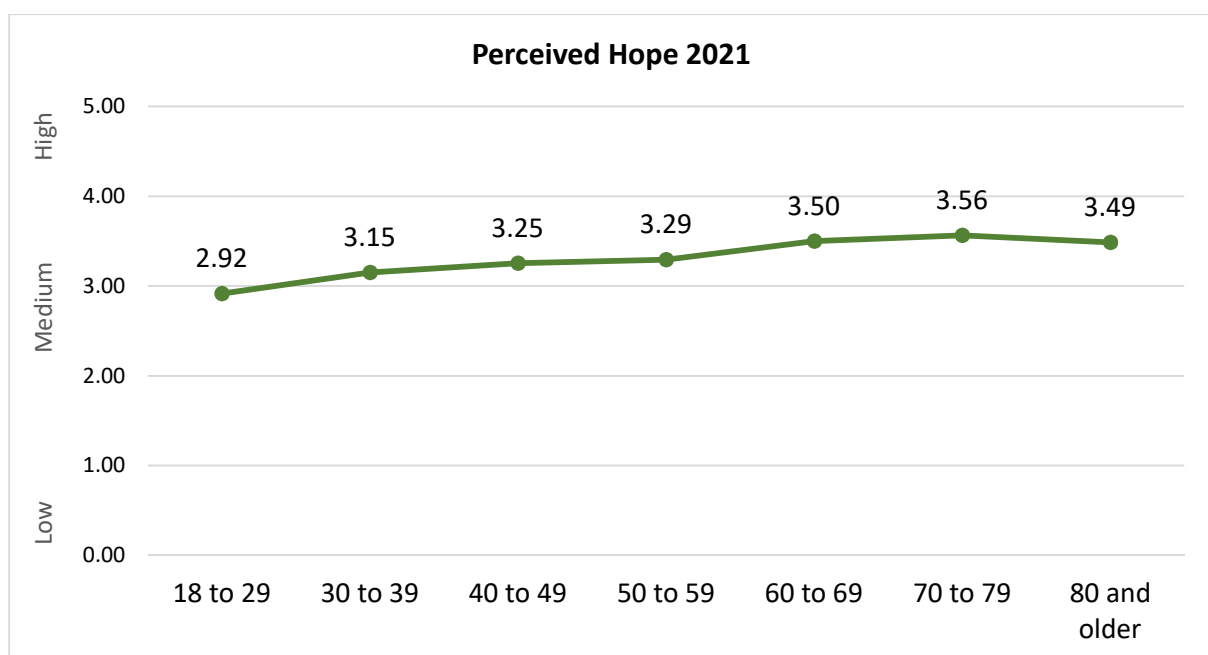


Figure 15: Perceived Hope by age - mean values

Further analysis revealed that the relationship between coping strategies and a hopeful attitude is most pronounced among people who are open to a positive appraisal of the situation and are actively engaged in overcoming current difficulties and problems.

4.2 Personal Hopes for 2022

Just as we have done for the past ten years, in November 2021, i.e. during one of the peaks of the COVID-19 pandemic, we asked people about their personal wishes and hopes for the coming year. Personal hopes refer to domains of life that are particularly important to people. Thus, personal hopes consciously or unconsciously reflect the concretization of personal values (Krafft 2019).

The 17 domains of life that respondents were asked to rate in the Hope Barometer relate to the following six categories, which could be rated on a scale from 0="unimportant" to 3="very important."

1. Personal well-being (e.g. personal health, harmony)
2. Social relationships (e.g. happy marriage, family, partnership, good relationships with other people)
3. Success and material goods (e.g. More money, success, achievement and career);
4. Lust and pleasure (e.g., more sex, romantic experiences, leisure);
5. Safety (e.g., in the personal environment or at work);
6. Altruism (e.g. being able to help other people)

The order and mean values of the 17 targets of hope have shown remarkable consistency over the last years. The really important things in life are still health, family/partnership, a harmonious life, the opportunity for autonomy and self-determination, good relationships with other people and a meaningful task in life (Fig. 16). By contrast, the professional career, more money and romantic experiences, while not unimportant, are of lesser importance in relation to everything else in life. The current crisis has hardly changed these priorities. This means that people's great hopes have a deeper and more universal character.

Compared to 2020, however, two areas stand out where a notable decrease has taken place: Due to economic uncertainty in 2020, hope for job security had risen from rank 9 to rank 7 ($M=2.23$). The rapid economic recovery, accompanied by job growth and a decline in unemployment, has visibly reduced the fear of job loss. As a result, hope or desire for job security has returned to 2019 levels ($M=2.06$).

The second, less pleasing change relates to the desire to be able or willing to help other people. In the wake of general solidarity and mutual helpfulness, the willingness to be there for others and support them had increased noticeably in 2020. Due to the prolonged burden of the pandemic and the social tensions that arose as a result, the willingness to help other people has decreased again during 2021.

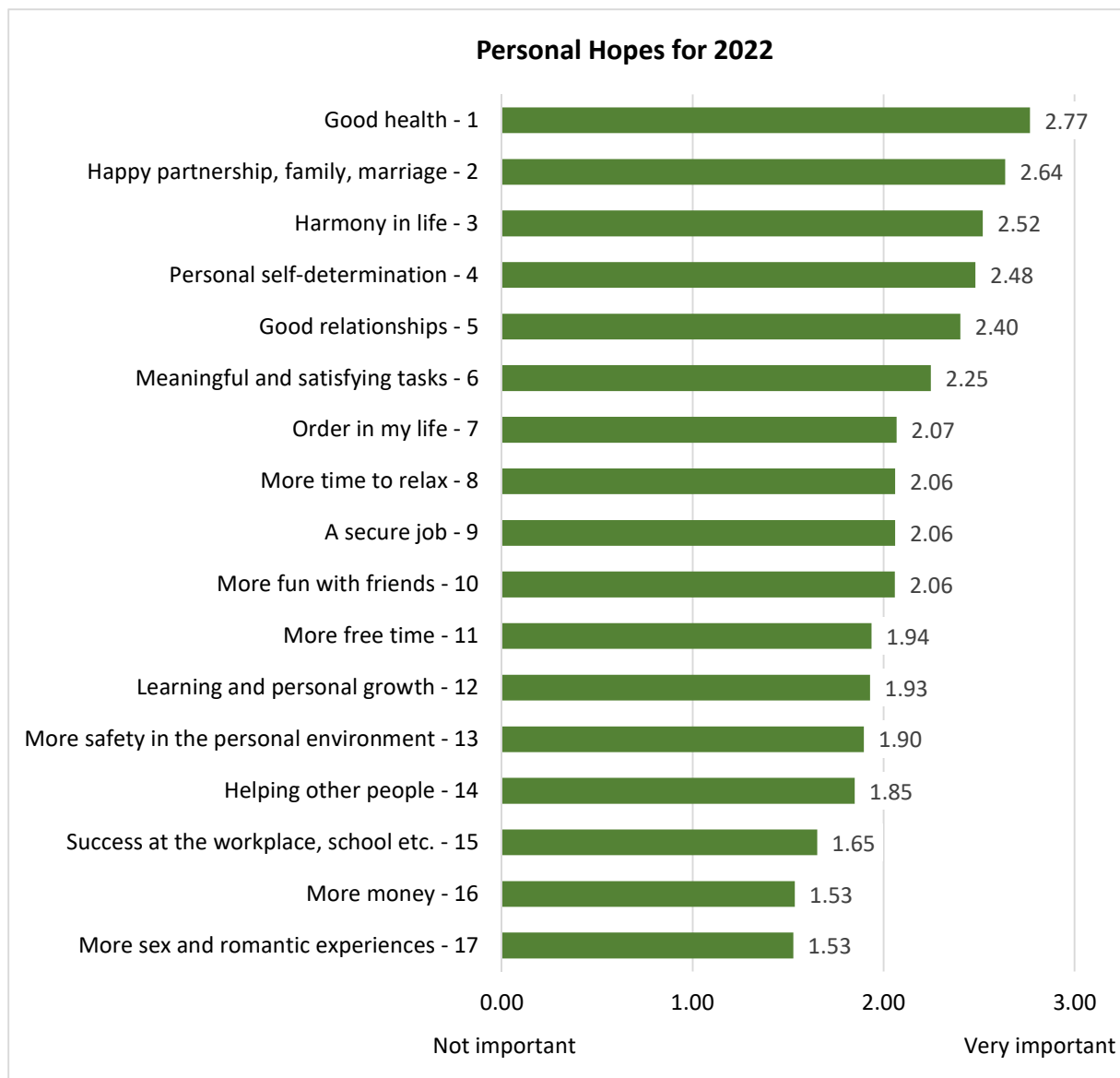


Figure 16: Personal Hopes for 2022 - mean values

4.3 Sources of Hope

In November 2021, we also wanted to learn more about the experiences that especially reinforced people's hope during the pandemic. Sources of hope generally include personal skills and competencies, social relationships, positive experiences, and religious or spiritual faith (Krafft 2019; Krafft & Walker 2018).

Just like people's hopes themselves, the sources of hope have remained almost constant in magnitude and importance over the past years. The results in Figure 17 are almost identical to those from previous years. In Switzerland, many people have a strong connection to nature. Be it the mountains, the forests, the meadows, the lakes or the rivers, nature is a place of retreat for most people and a particularly strong source of strength and energy. More and more studies prove the health-preserving value of nature.

The support of family and friends is also a particularly important source of hope in difficult times. As we have already seen, this involves emotional support and practical assistance in concrete situations, i.e. being there for each other when someone needs it.

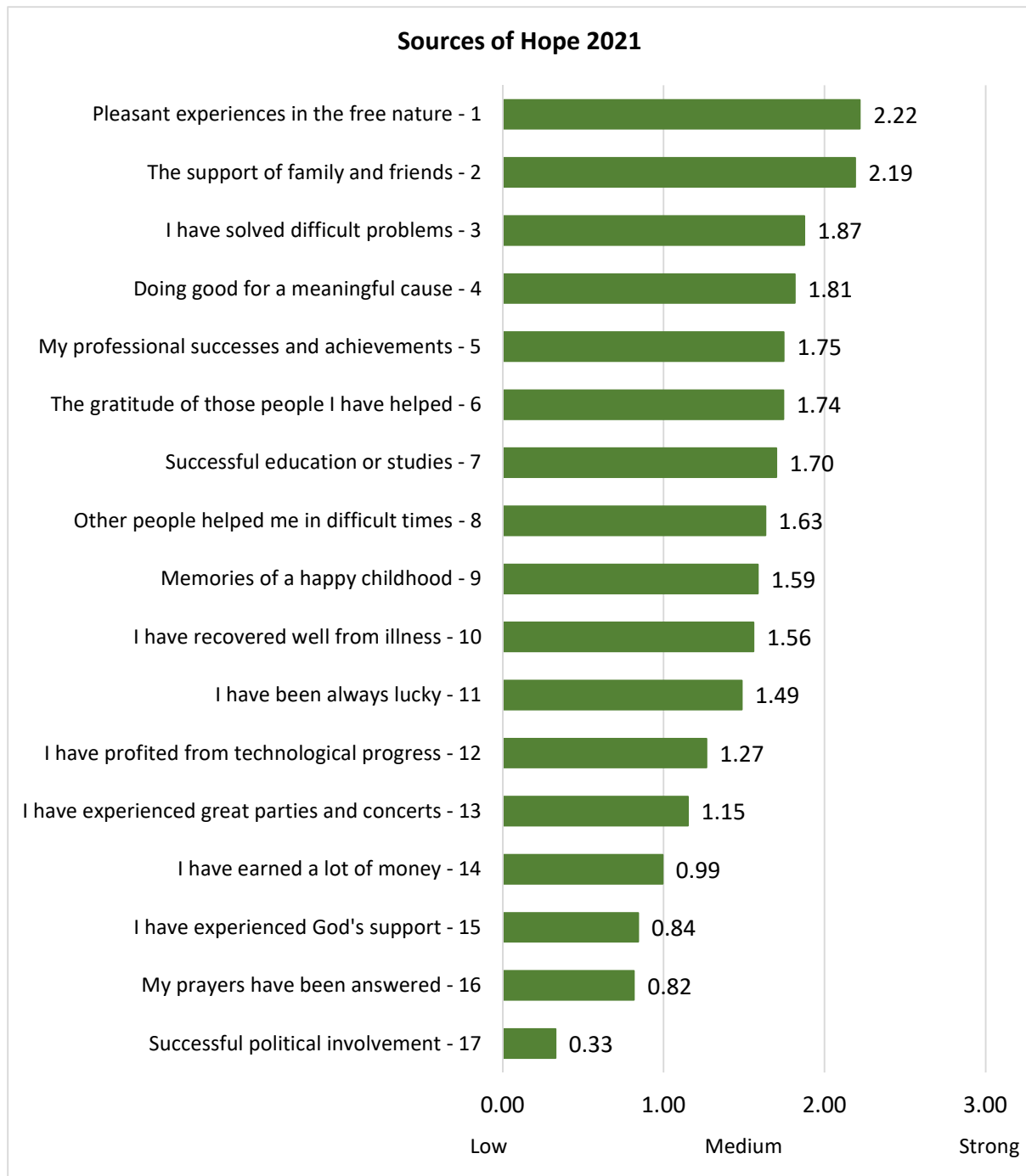


Figure 17: Sources of Hope 2021 - mean values

The positive effects of deeds that serve a meaningful purpose (e.g. volunteering) and one's own willingness to help others must also be highlighted. When people commit themselves to a worthwhile cause and are able to help others, they also draw hope, courage and joy for their own lives. This means that self-confidence and awareness of one's own strengths and abilities, the basic trust in others and the strengthening feeling of having always been lucky in life, are significant sources of hope.

A comparison between men and women in figure 18 shows significant differences: women were able to draw strength above all from nature, count on the support of family and friends, do good for a meaningful purpose and experience religious support. In contrast, men benefited more from technological progress and experienced money as a source of hope.

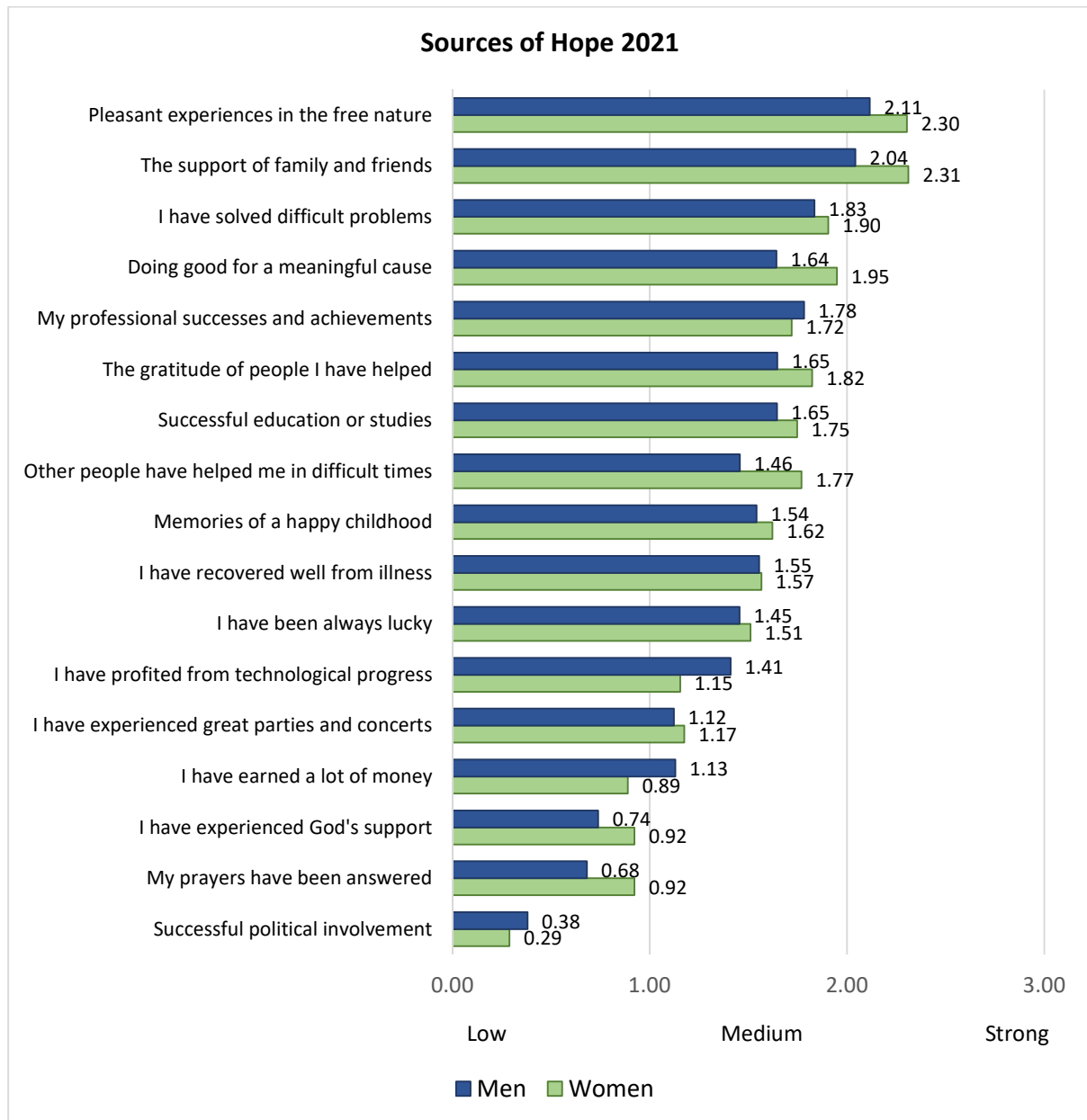


Figure 18: Sources of Hope by gender - mean values

Summary

1. Hope in Switzerland remains moderately high in 2021. However, people in all three language regions are somewhat less hopeful than in the previous year, which can be interpreted as a sign of increasing disappointment and fatigue with the general situation.
2. Women are slightly but significantly more hopeful than men despite being more stressed and thanks to positive coping strategies.

3. Hope increases with age. Because of their life experience, older people's hopes outweigh their fears and they can remain more hopeful, especially in difficult times.
4. The most important hopes of people are good health, a happy marriage, family or partnership, harmony in life, self-determination, good human relationships and a meaningful task in life.
5. The most significant sources of hope are contact with nature, support from family and friends, and one's own strengths and concrete willingness to help.
6. Women have drawn more hope than men from nature, social relationships, and religious experiences. In contrast, men have benefited more than women from technological progress and have had money as a source of hope.

5 Personal Growth

Introduction

Every crisis is undoubtedly a stressful experience and can leave negative traces such as increased anxiety, mistrust and dejection. At the same time, individuals (as well as an entire society) who have successfully mastered a crisis can experience positive effects in terms of inner maturity or personal growth. Positive changes after a crisis has been overcome include a better awareness of one's own strengths, a more intensive appreciation of personal relationships, the definition of other priorities in life, and the development of a new philosophy of life. People who have successfully mastered a crisis and grown from it often report that they have been able to develop an inner serenity to "take life easier" or enjoy it differently. One no longer focuses so much on negative things, but appreciates more the many good things in everyday life. Whether and how this inner development takes place is mostly related to the individual handling as well as the subjective and also collective coping with the crisis situation. At the same time, this inner development further strengthens the positive coping strategies examined in Chapter 3.

Have people in Switzerland been able to use the current crisis to strengthen themselves internally and grow from it? Or are we still too much immersed in it that only the coming years will show whether we have learned anything from it and developed for the better?

For this year's study, we used the short version of Tedeschi and Calhoun's (1996) scale (Cann et al. 2010) to measure personal growth. Based on their theory and research, Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) were able to identify five areas of growth after a stressful situation and formulate them as follows:

1. *Personal strength and self-awareness*: people feel stronger and with more confidence because they know they can handle difficult situations; they feel more experienced; they also sometimes feel that they have grown personally and matured into better people.
2. *Relationships with other people*: The person recognizes how important and valuable social relationships are; the relationship with family members becomes deeper and more intimate; the person is able to form closer and more empathetic relationships with others; he or she feels more sensitivity and compassionate for others; the willingness to give and accept help increases.
3. *New possibilities*: New priorities are set in life; we realize what is really important and valuable to us in life; new interests develop; new paths and perspectives in life open up; life takes on a new direction; we want to do more good in life and change things in a positive way.
4. *Appreciation of life and new life philosophy*: people look at life with different eyes; they develop a new mindfulness and perceive each day more consciously; they realize how precious life is; feel gratitude for many small and big things in life; life is taken with greater ease; they enjoy every moment and appreciate what they have.
5. *Spiritual growth*: one's own religious faith is strengthened; one develops more interest in and understanding of spiritual matters; there is greater engagement with existential questions.

Self-assessment of these five areas is collected with ten questions (two per area), ranging on a scale from 0="not experienced at all" to 5="experienced to a very high degree."

Results

The results in Figure 19 show low to moderate growth, with women showing higher scores than men in all areas. This is a further confirmation of the positive effects of women's effective coping strategies presented in Chapter 3. The greatest effects of the current crisis have been recognition of personal strengths and appreciation of life.

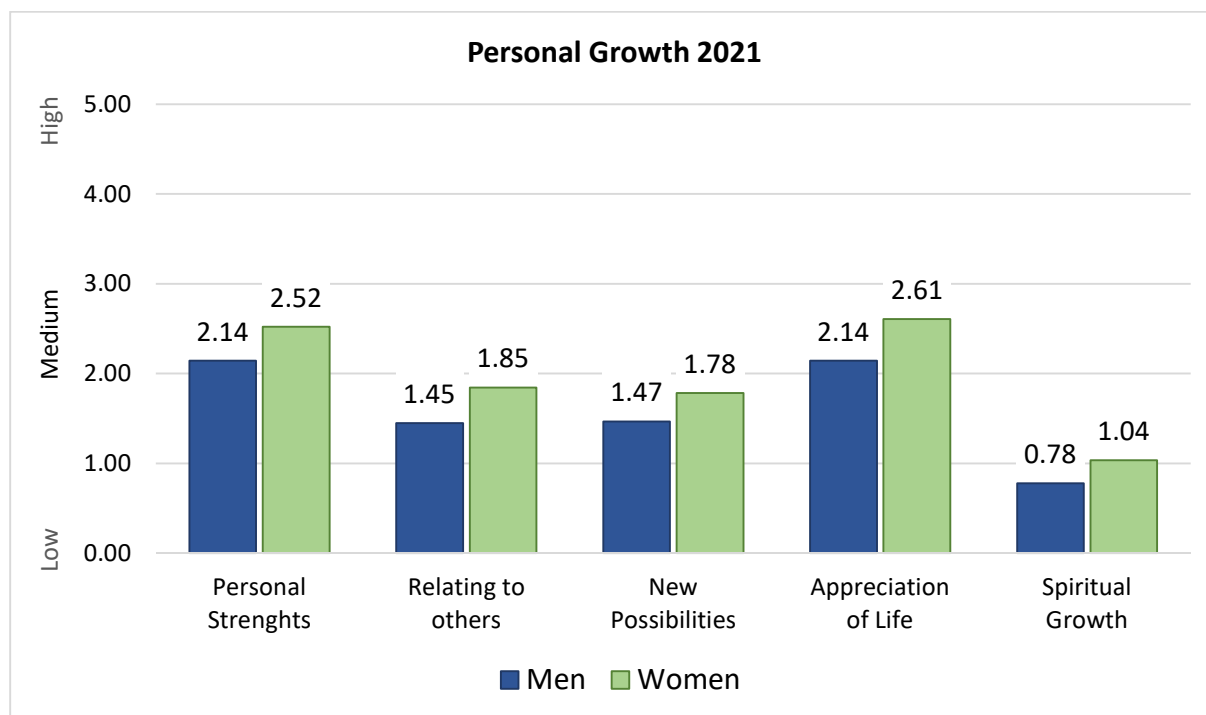


Figure 19: Personal Growth 2021 by gender - mean values

Looking at the results in the individual language regions, the differences are small but significant in some areas. In French-speaking Switzerland, people were most able to identify and take advantage of new opportunities; in German-speaking Switzerland, interpersonal relationships were somewhat more pronounced than in the other two regions; and in Italian-speaking Switzerland, people developed their personal strengths and recognized the value of the religious-spiritual dimension.

For a better understanding of these results, selected statements are presented in a differentiated manner in Figure 20. Between approx. 25% and 30% of respondents have discovered personal strengths in themselves as a result of the events and experiences of recent years, set new priorities in life and generally learned to value their own lives more profoundly. A more intimate connection with other people was experienced particularly strongly by just 15.7% of people. A quarter to a third of the population have experienced these developments only to a minor degree. Social attachment, which is extremely important for coping with crises and for personal and social well-being, has developed only slightly or not at all for two-thirds of the people.

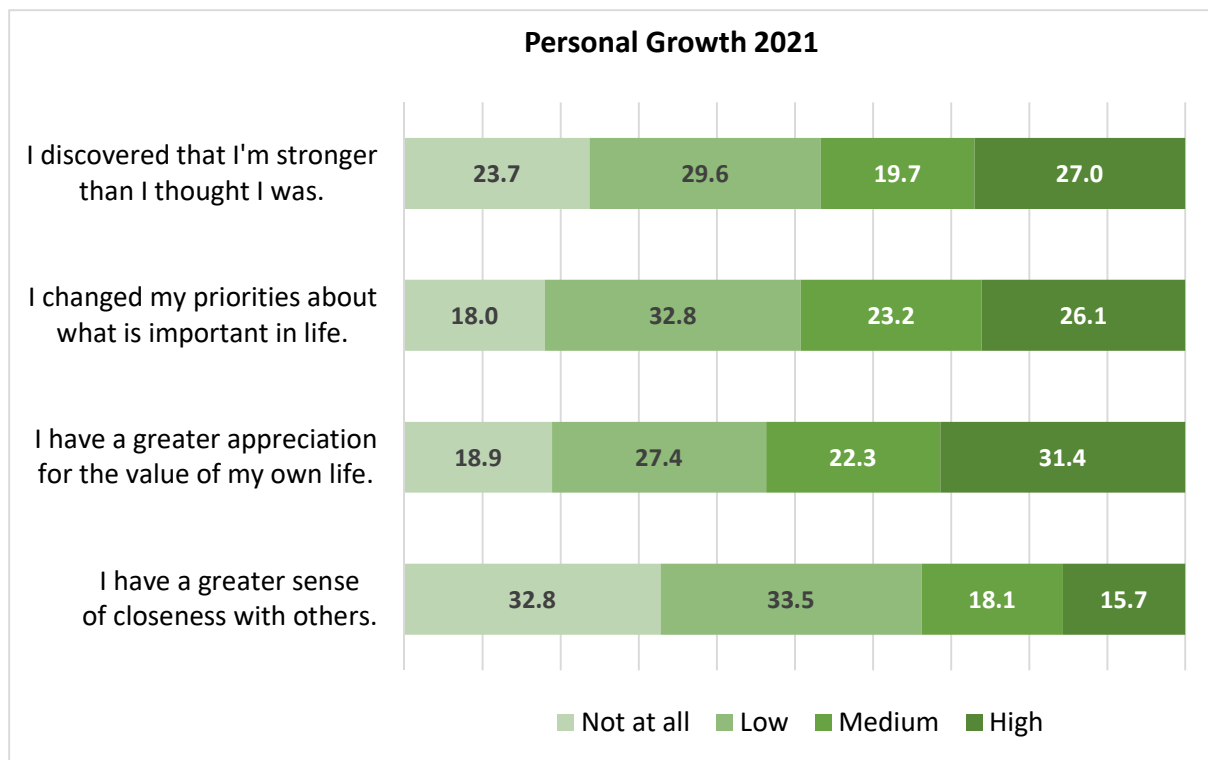


Figure 20: Personal Growth 2021 - selected questions - frequencies in percent

Summary

1. In 2021, people in Switzerland experienced low to moderate internal growth as a result of their personal coping with the pandemic crisis, particularly in the recognition of personal strengths and an increased appreciation of life.
2. In all areas, women experienced more positive personal developments than men, thanks to the coping strategies they employed.
3. Connectedness with other people has increased only slightly, and for one-third of the population not at all.
4. Half of the respondents were able to set new priorities in their lives and seize opportunities, while the other half were able to do little or nothing.

6 Attitudes towards COVID-19 Vaccination

Introduction

Looking back to 2020, the management of the global pandemic was linked to the hope of rapid development and administration of effective vaccines. This assumed that a large majority of the population would also be willing to be protected against the corona pathogen with these relatively quickly developed vaccines. By the end of 2021, however, only about two-thirds of the population in Switzerland had been vaccinated, a figure that appears insufficient to control the numbers of infections that began to rise again at the start of the winter season. According to epidemiologists and immunologists, the long-term success of measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic depends on whether a large proportion of the population has become immune to the virus (herd immunity).

From the very beginning of the national vaccination program, questions have been raised and debated about the extent and duration of protection provided by the new COVID-19 vaccines. This debate has taken place against a background of latent mistrust in the safety and efficacy of these new vaccines, which has subsequently led to public demonstrations against the COVID-19 measures and against mass vaccination. Although a majority of the population is positive about the vaccines, there are a significant number of people who doubt the efficacy, safety, and fundamental appropriateness of Corona vaccination programs.

The current infection figures show that the health authorities have failed to get a grip on the further spread of the pandemic. The thoroughly contradictory messages about the causes and reasons for this development have created a distrust in the government and in science among many people and strengthened the rejection of vaccination campaigns. To counteract further polarization of society and hardening of the confrontation lines, it is of great importance to understand public attitudes about the safety, importance, and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. There is an urgent need for a more nuanced examination of the attitudes of different segments of the population that are relevant as reasons for accepting or rejecting vaccination.

With this study, we aim to investigate the different attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccination and to identify the determinants of people's vaccination behavior. Positive or negative attitudes were measured using the validated Vaccination Attitudes Examination (VAX) scale (Martin & Petrie 2017) and adapting it to the COVID-19 vaccines. The VAX scale contains 12 questions about four different factors that influence people's vaccination behavior. The following four factors can be used to identify the main objections and concerns of people who do not want to be vaccinated:

1. Distrust of the efficacy and benefits of vaccines.
2. Concerns about unforeseen future side effects.
3. Doubts regarding commercial profiteering.
4. Preference for natural immunity.

Of the 5546 respondents, 4041 (72.9%) fully vaccinated and 1323 (23.9%) unvaccinated (adults) participated in our study. The remaining 182 individuals (3.3%) were either vaccinated with only a single dose of vaccine (131 individuals) or were unvaccinated but had the intention to be vaccinated (51 individuals). The following results refer exclusively to the first two groups of fully vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. In our sample, the two groups include as many women (72.9% vaccinated and 23.8% unvaccinated) as men (73% vaccinated and 23.7% unvaccinated). In terms of age groups, our sample largely corresponds to the nationwide statistics from the BAG (2021b).

Results

The general results in Figure 21 show marked differences between the vaccinated and unvaccinated in all four categories: The most striking contrast is in beliefs about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination. Concerns about unknown future side effects are most prevalent among the unvaccinated, although the vaccinated also express concerns about this issue. Unvaccinated also express a strong distrust of the commercial profiteering of pharmaceutical companies and government agencies. Finally, unvaccinated people manifest a clear preference for naturally acquired immunity from the disease.

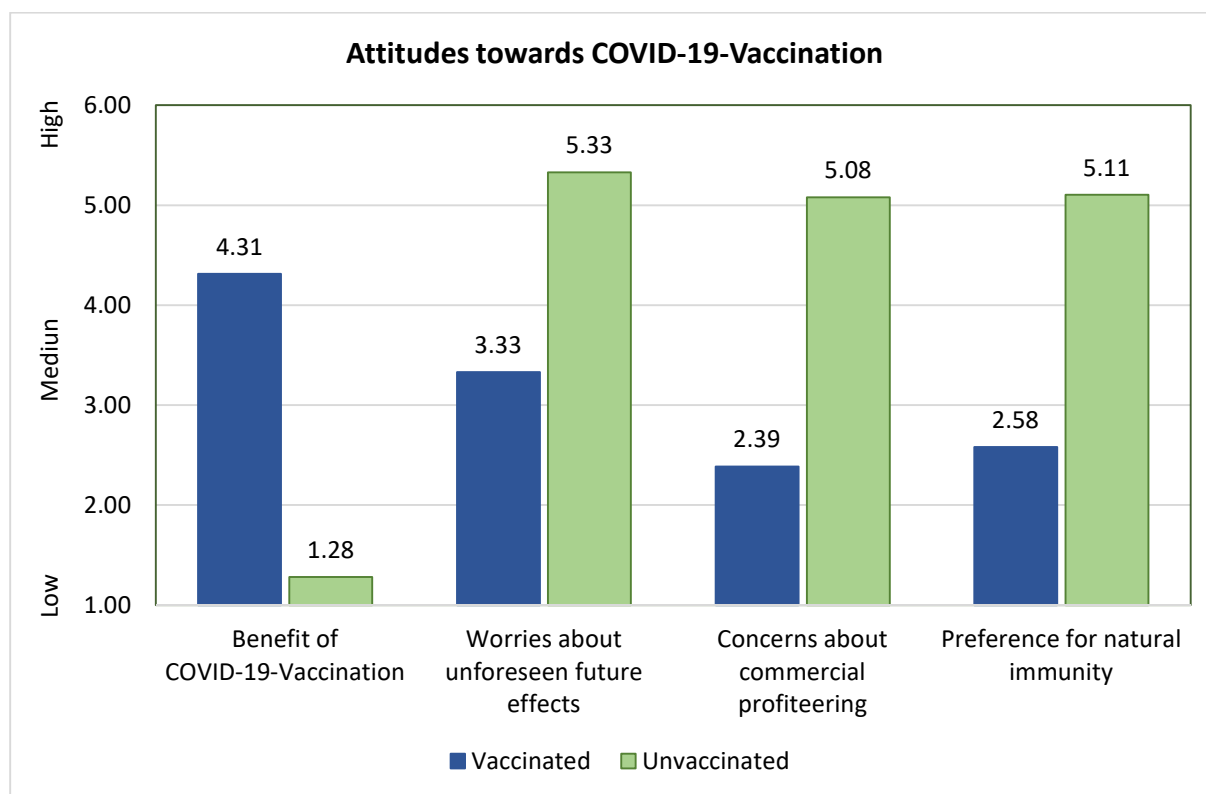


Figure 21: Attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccination by vaccination behavior - mean values.

To provide a better and more nuanced interpretation of these results, we present the detailed analyses for selected statements. We begin in Figure 22 with a statement about the benefit of COVID-19 vaccination: More than 80% of the unvaccinated would not feel protected against the disease at all by vaccination. In contrast, nearly 54% of the vaccinated (despite known vaccine breakthroughs) feel fairly to fully protected and 26.1% feel at least somewhat protected against the disease. Similar results appear with respect to the statements "I feel safe when vaccinated against COVID-19" and "I can rely on vaccination to stop COVID-19."

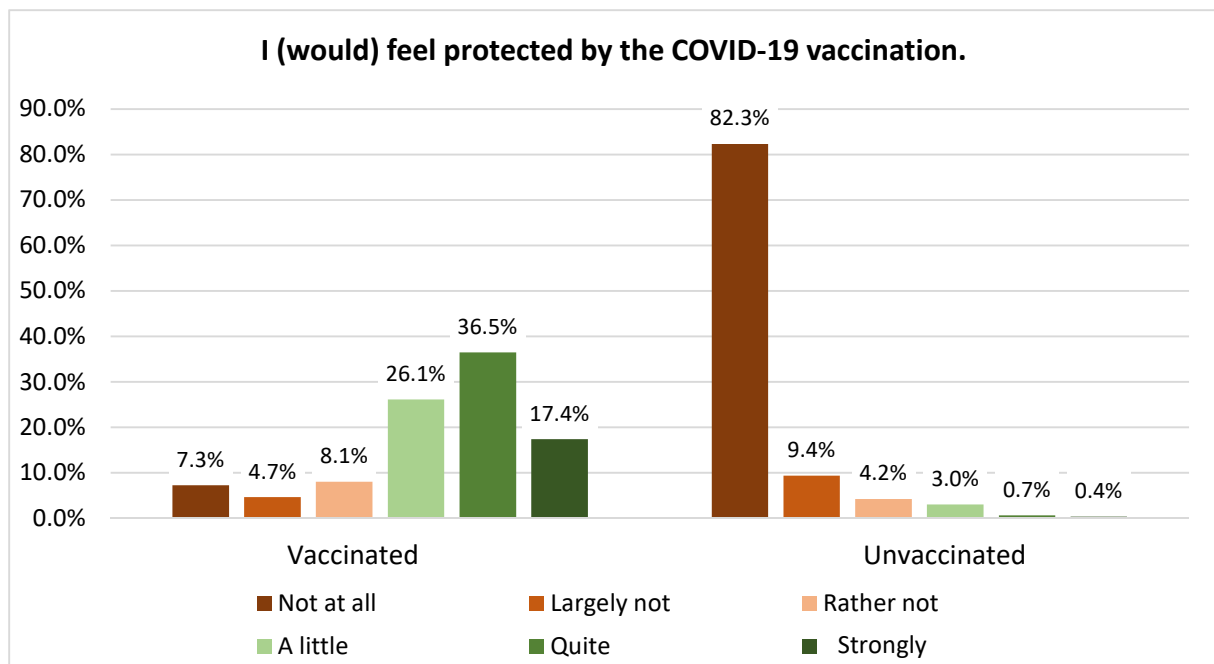


Figure 22: Protection against COVID-19 according to vaccination behavior - frequencies in percent.

Regarding concerns about unforeseen future side effects, two statements are considered in more detail. Both vaccinated and unvaccinated people are more or less aware that COVID-19 vaccines can cause previously unknown health problems (Fig. 23). However, nearly two-thirds of the unvaccinated strongly agree with this statement.

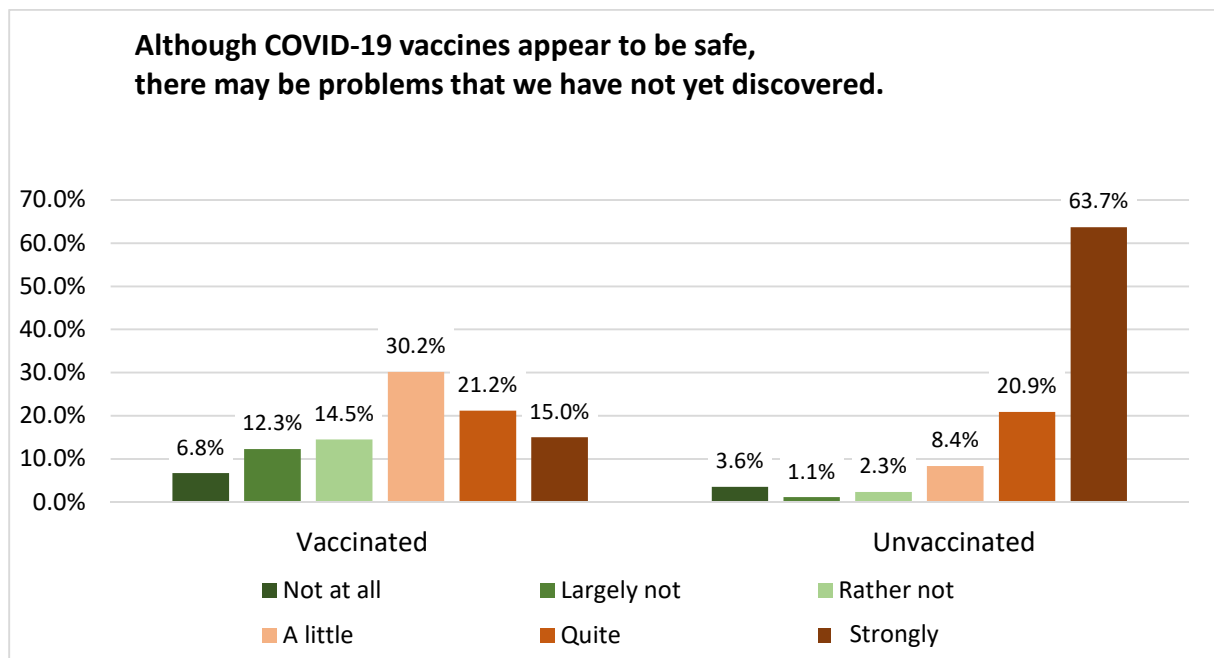


Figure 23: Undetected problems of COVID-19 vaccines by vaccination behavior - frequencies in percent.

Despite these uncertainties, two-thirds of the vaccinated are rather or not at all worried about unknown future side effects (Fig. 24). In contrast, two-thirds of the unvaccinated are very concerned about this.

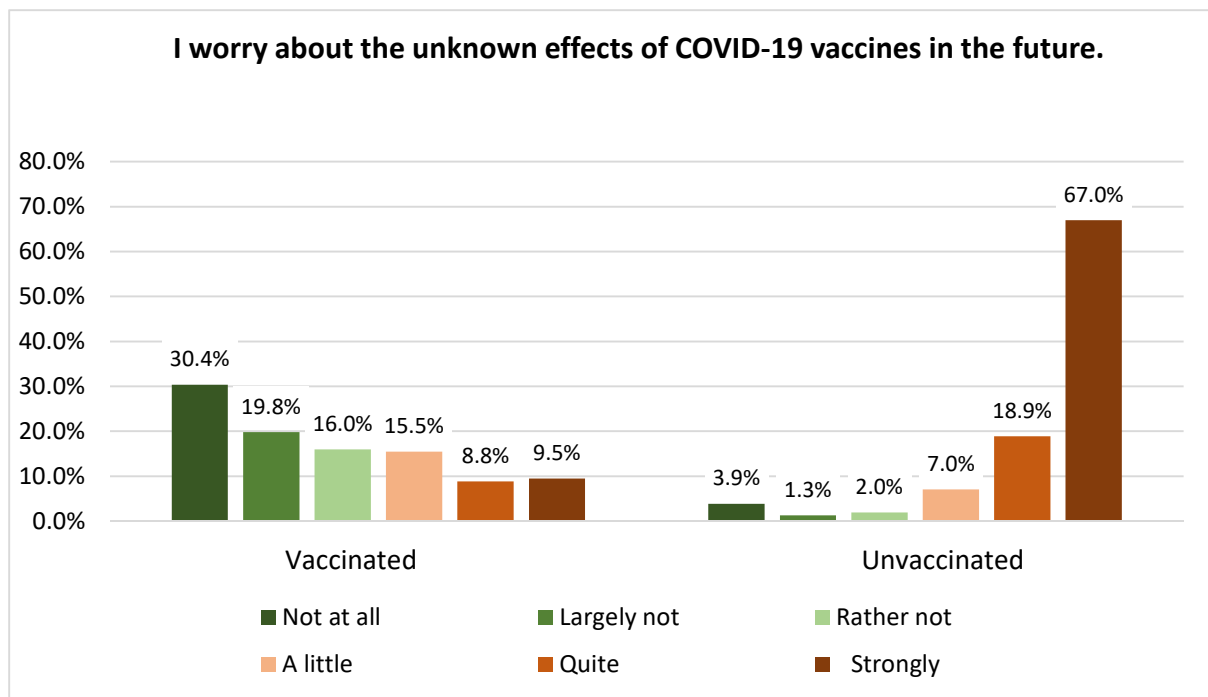


Figure 24: Concerns about future side effects by vaccination behavior - frequencies in percent.

Among the most critical and probably most controversial statements are the suspicions of commercial (unethical) profiteering on the part of pharmaceutical companies and government agencies. Exemplary are the ratings for the statement in Figure 25. Two-thirds of the vaccinated do not believe that COVID-19 vaccines make a lot of money for pharmaceutical companies but do not benefit ordinary people much. In contrast, about two-thirds of the unvaccinated are convinced that this is so and fully agree with the statement.

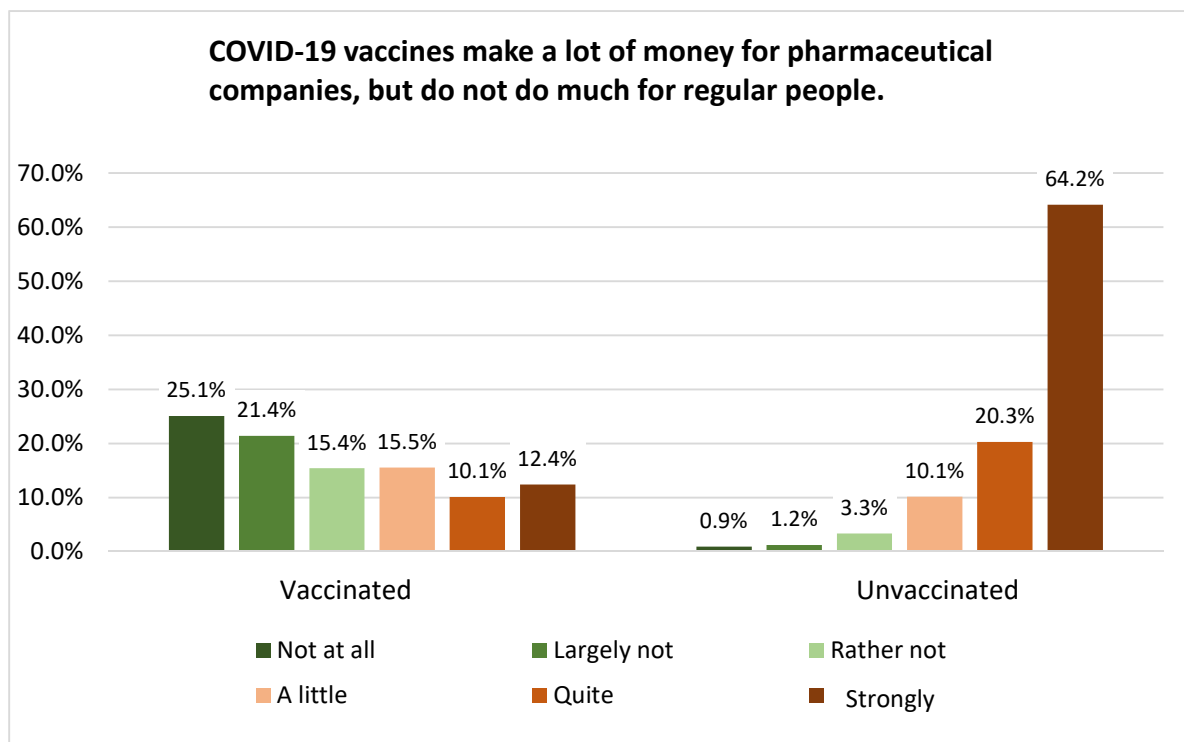


Figure 25: Profit-making by pharmaceutical companies according to vaccination behavior - frequencies in percent

The polarization is even more extreme regarding the statement in Figure 26, where about 70% of the unvaccinated imply (fairly or strongly) that the authorities promote COVID-19 vaccination for financial reasons rather than to protect people's health. This would mean, according to another statement with similar ratings, that the vaccination programs are considered unfair practices. In contrast, more than two-thirds of those vaccinated do not believe in this statement. However, 20% of the vaccinated have a critical attitude toward the authorities and about 15% of the unvaccinated have a positive attitude.

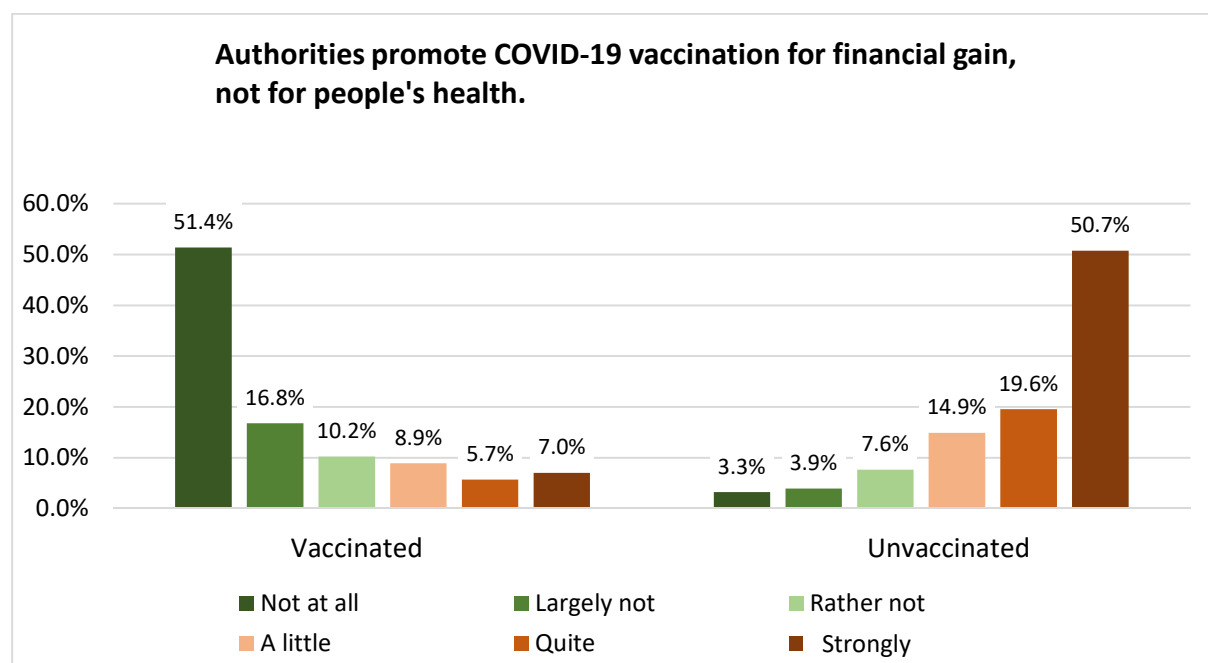


Figure 26: Profit orientation of authorities according to vaccination behavior - frequencies in percent

Finally, there are questions related to the preference for natural immunity. With respect to the statement in Figure 27, more than three quarters of the vaccinated do not believe that natural contact with COVID-19 (i.e., infection) is safer for the immune system than vaccination. This contrasts with the contrary belief of about 80% of the unvaccinated.

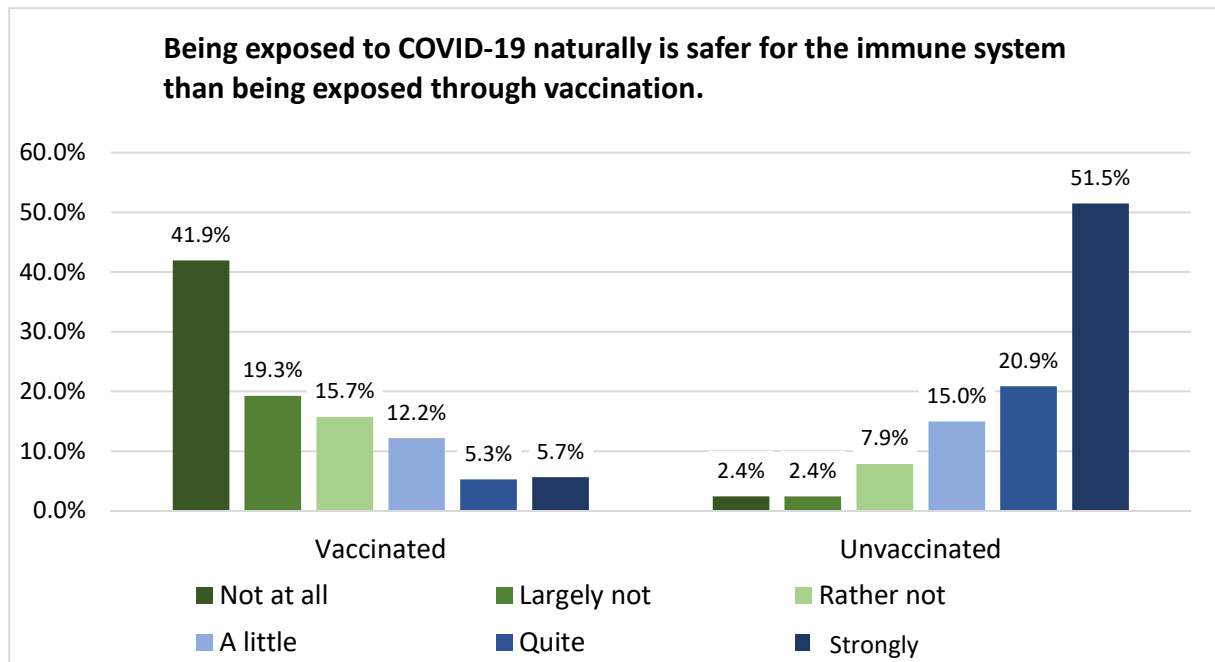


Figure 27: Safety of natural immunity by vaccination behavior - frequencies in percent.

These different basic attitudes and beliefs not only have a direct impact on vaccination behavior, but also on people's well-being and personal mood. Looking at respondents' satisfaction with politics, the economy and social issues in society, significant differences emerge in the assessments of the vaccinated and unvaccinated. As can be seen in Figure 28, unvaccinated respondents are particularly dissatisfied with national politics, with the way the COVID-19 pandemic has been handled, and also with the treatment of social issues and the development of the national economy. However, unvaccinated persons ($M=3.46$) are as satisfied or even slightly more satisfied with their lives than vaccinated persons ($M=3.37$).

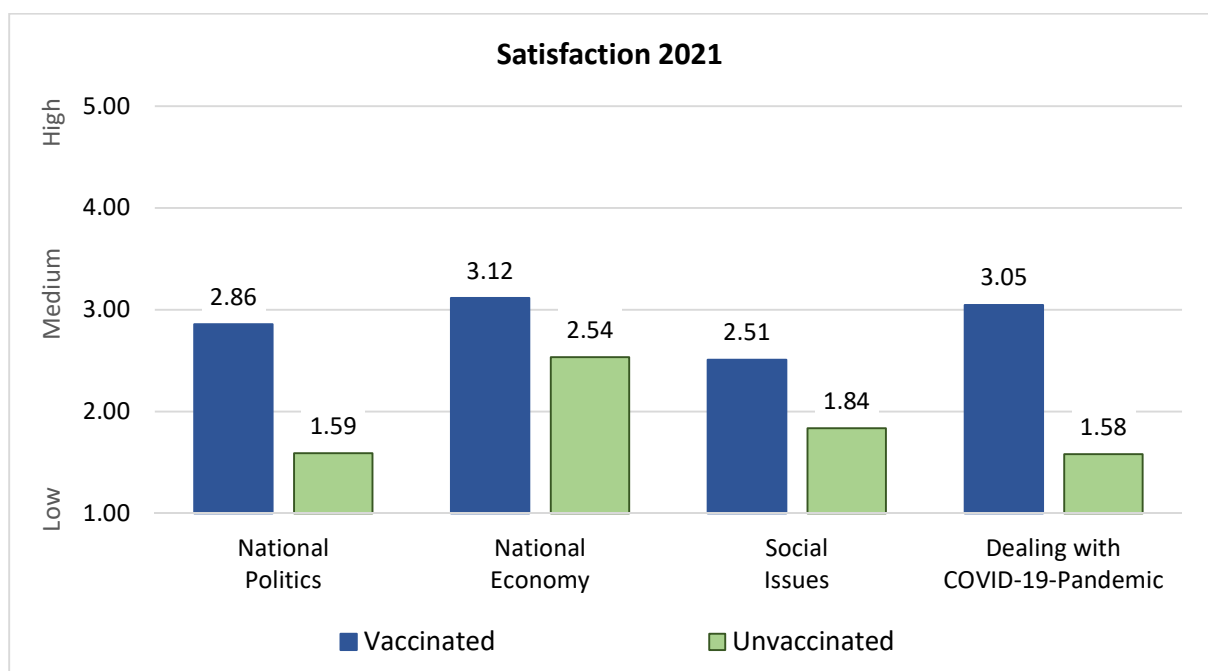


Figure 28: Satisfaction 2021 according to vaccination behavior - mean values

The assessments of the vaccinated and unvaccinated have further effects on areas attributed to psychological and social well-being (Keyes 2007) (Fig. 29). Unvaccinated individuals feel more confident in expressing their own ideas and opinions and recognize that they have something important to contribute to society, which are signs of slightly higher levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. Conversely, unvaccinated individuals are even less likely than vaccinated individuals to agree with how society is currently developing, which expresses greater alienation.

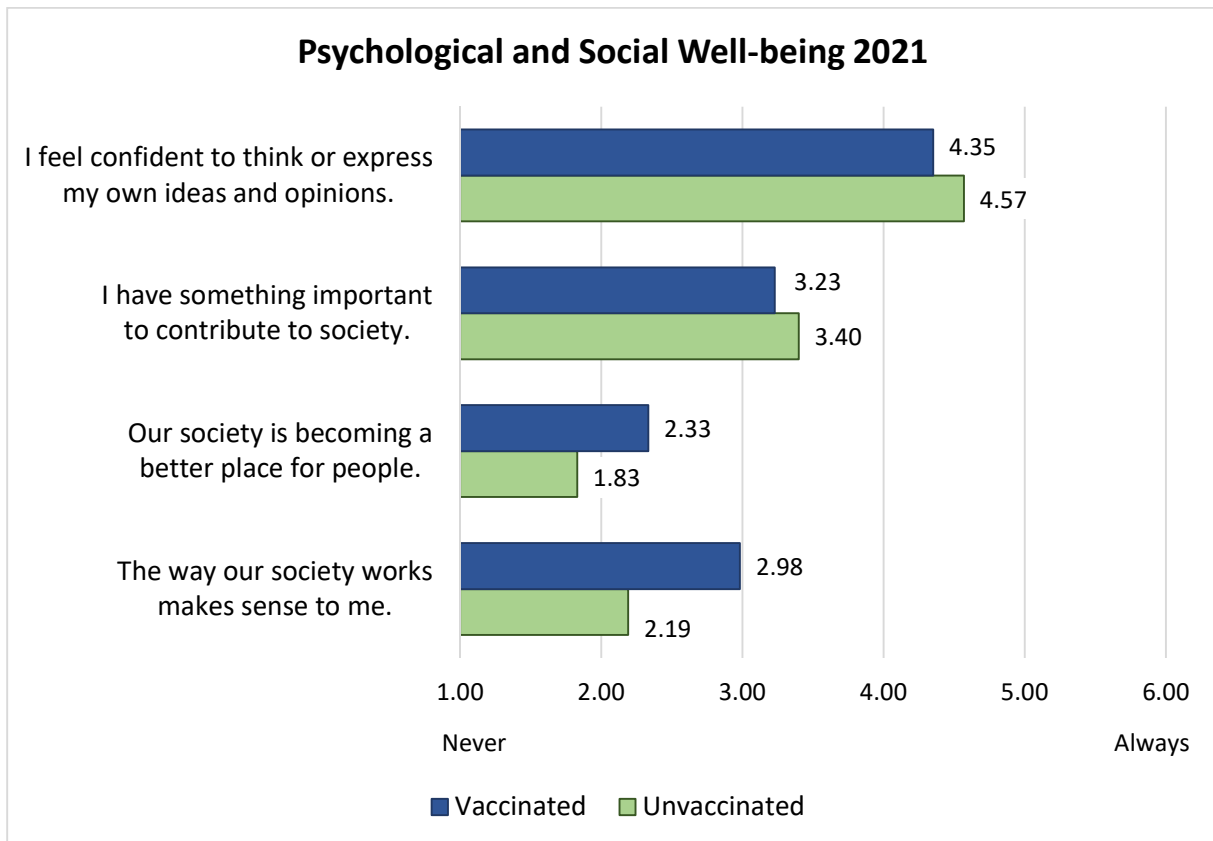


Figure 29: Psychological and Social Well-being by vaccination behavior - means.

Summary

1. The individual attitudes of the vaccinated and unvaccinated regarding the efficacy, safety, and usefulness of Corona vaccination differ significantly.
2. The vast majority of unvaccinated people would not feel protected from COVID-19 at all by vaccination. A majority of the vaccinated feel at least somewhat or fairly protected.
3. A large majority of the unvaccinated are concerned about the unknown and unwanted side effects. Most of the vaccinated are aware of possible side effects, but worry less about them.
4. While the unvaccinated blame pharmaceutical companies and authorities of unethical profiteering, a majority of the vaccinated do not believe in dishonest interests.
5. Most unvaccinated persons are in favor of natural contact with Corona virus, which a majority of vaccinated persons clearly oppose.
6. These different attitudes and beliefs, as well as the social consequences of them, have a significant impact on people's satisfaction. Unvaccinated people are markedly less satisfied with politics, the economy and social issues than vaccinated people.
7. On the one hand, unvaccinated people feel confident in their thoughts and actions; on the other hand, they feel more uneasy about social developments.

All these findings are not intended to widen the gap between the vaccinated and the unvaccinated, but to enable a better understanding of the more or less unspoken ideas and assessments of both camps. However, this differences requires respecting other people's beliefs, even if one does not agree with them and may not understand them at all. In order to deal constructively with mistrust and rejection of vaccination, their reasons should be taken seriously.

Although negative attitudes toward vaccines pose a major public health challenge, further polarizing society through mutual accusations and harsh measures would not be an advisable course of action. This could deepen mistrust between the parties, further harden the fronts, and cement the intentions of the unvaccinated not to get vaccinated against COVID-19 under any circumstances. Ultimately, the root causes of these tensions and conflicts are negative sentiments such as mistrust, fear, and worry.

If one wants to promote a positive attitude and generate new hope among the population, confidence-building measures should be taken and faith in good social understanding and development should be restored. Public communication campaigns can address people's concerns and (as far as possible) prepare and convey information according to their needs. As the Internet has become an important yet sometimes misleading source of information, online education and dialogue-based interventions can correct misinformation and make people feel that they are being taken seriously. For example, scientific institutes could share findings regarding the safety, efficacy, and side effects of vaccines more effectively with people, pharmaceutical companies could disclose their finances, and government agencies could engage in open dialogue with citizens. Last but not least, understanding, openness and helpfulness will strengthen faith in the good as well as mutual trust and lay the foundations for the emergence of hope and confidence in society.

7 Conclusions

The term crisis comes from the Greek and means something like intensification, decisive turn and uncertainty. This can refer to the course of a disease as well as to social developments and processes. The crisis represents the still uncertain climax and turning point of the course of a disease or of social processes. Crises are inherently associated with uncertainty and with a loss of confidence in previous assumptions, taken-for-granted practices, and social institutions (Siegenthaler 1993). Part of the uncertainty of a crisis is the fact that one can hardly predict its course and effects. The outcome of any crisis can be either positive or negative. Depending on what is done, the crisis can lead to recovery or, in extreme cases, to a catastrophe, both in relation to one's own health or to society.

Most crises are associated with an individual and collective lack of orientation. In such situations, fear and anxiety arise, but they can be used positively. They show us that the situation requires new ways of thinking and behaving. We are forced to adapt and take new paths. Most of the time, crises are the condition for personal growth because they draw us out of our shells and we become inventive. If something has fundamentally changed in the world, this requires a corresponding adjustment of our actions, but we are only prepared to do so when there no longer seems to be any alternative. Most of the time, we then have to try something completely new without knowing whether it will really work. This applies both to the individual and to society as a whole.

It is true that we cannot foresee the future. But we can hold on to the fact that no matter what conditions currently exist, we can always do something to improve the situation. In difficult times, we can positively influence our own lives and the lives of others, and overcome discouragement or dejection. As well as fear and worry, hope is a social force with the belief that our collective future can be better than the present if we work for it (Krafft 2022). Even if we don't know exactly what the world will look like next year, we can believe that as long as we work together to make it happen, we can overcome the current situation. And that is regardless of how bad the situation may look at the moment. However, we must trust that we are not the only ones who want to do something about it.

What holds societies together are shared hopes of a better common future (Rorty 2002). This kind of hope connects us to other people with whom we can build a community of hope. Instead of focusing only on our individual goals, we engage with and pursue together a larger community with overarching social, environmental, and even economic goals. At the core is an interest in shaping the world in a positive way so that we can all live better. The focus is on how we individually learn and change and thus shape the world around us.

A community of hope requires shared values and ideals but also shared engagement. Thus, the members of a community are committed to the realization of common goals (McGeer 2004). Communities are especially important for overcoming obstacles and difficulties, thus forming a unifying identity. In social hope, we acknowledge the difficulties of present circumstances while believing that things can be shaped for the better through ourselves and others. In community, the conditions for common action are generated and, when difficulties arise, faith and trust are strengthened to realize hopes. When the Spanish flu was overcome 100 years ago, this led to a surge of modernization in architecture, art and music. A rethinking as well as social changes took place. We would also like to see such a positive transformation after the current pandemic is overcome soon.

8 Key figures on the structure of the study

Method:	Online survey
Instrument:	Electronic questionnaire
Population:	Web- and e-mail-active persons of all age groups from Switzerland
Scope:	A total of 162 closed-ended and 9 socio-demographic questions.
Sample size:	5,546 questionnaires evaluated (complete, accurate, and adult participants).
Representativeness:	Broad-based survey due to cooperation with “20 Minuten” as media partner as well as broad presence on various social media platforms
Survey period:	Nov. 12 to Nov. 30, 2021
Management:	Dr. oec. HSG Andreas M. Krafft
Citation:	Use permitted with citation of source

In the following tables, we present the demographic distribution of the respondent groups.

Language Region	Number	%
German	3825	69.0
French	1146	20.7
Italian	575	10.3

Gender	Number	%
Male	2391	43.1
Female	3118	56.2
Something else	37	0.7

Age	Number	%
18-29	627	11.3
30-39	970	17.5
40-49	1104	19.9
50-59	1429	25.8
60-69	1023	18.4
70-79	358	6.5
80 and older	35	0.6

Training	Number	%
No completed school education	32	0.6
Primary school / elementary school completed	183	3.3
Technical (secondary) school without Baccalaureate	247	4.5
High School with Baccalaureate	972	17.5
Vocational training	1633	29.4
Higher vocational education with diploma	1591	28.7
University / Polytechnics	888	16.0

Marital status	Number	%
Still living with parents	195	3.5
Single	873	15.7
In a partnership but living separately	371	6.7
Living together in a partnership	1103	19.9
Married	2313	41.7
Divorced / separated	543	9.8
Widowed	148	2.7

Children	Number	%
Childless	2445	44.1
With kids	3101	55.9

Main occupation	Number	%
In training	158	2.8
Family, housework, raising children	260	4.7
Part-time employment	1222	22.0
Full-time employment	2654	47.9
Unemployed	219	3.9
Retired	1033	18.6

Professional status	Number	%
No position in a professional organization	918	16.6
In training	177	3.2
Employee	2185	39.4
Middle Management	1225	22.1
Senior Management	387	7.0
Owner / Entrepreneur / Self-employed	654	11.8

9 Literature

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