

sWISH*: scientific study reveals the Swiss wish landscape – major differences by language region

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To enjoy good health, have a job and grow old comfortably: this summarise the wishes of the Swiss population. These were the findings of the scientific study conducted in conjunction with the sWISH* Expo.02 project which was published by the University of Zurich today. This unique scientific project is intended to make an important contribution towards the sustainability of the Expo.02, ensuring that it is remembered long after the exhibition has closed its doors.

IBM and Swiss Re commissioned a representative and quantitative scientific study entitled "Switzerland's wish landscape" to accompany and round off their artistic engagement – in the form of the sWISH* exhibition project – at the Expo.02. The University of Zurich's social research unit conducted a survey of the wishes of some 1500 people throughout Switzerland. Just like in the pavilion at the Arteplage in Biel, the focus was on the wishes of Switzerland's population. The study revealed a Switzerland which harbours some surprising wishes.

Pragmatism rules in German-speaking Switzerland

One major revelation was that most pragmatic wishers live in German-speaking Switzerland and are concerned only with health, peace and material things. Meanwhile, the wishes of most of the people in French-speaking Switzerland tend to be of a social nature. At around 30%, Ticino houses a lot more spiritual and tolerant wishers than either German-speaking or French-speaking Switzerland, with their respective 15% and 17%. Wishes related to love, emotional life, wisdom, intelligence and belief indicate spiritual interests, while wishes about openness and justice point towards an interest in tolerance.

The study also revealed that 87% of those taking part judged themselves to be somewhere between "quite satisfied" and "really satisfied". What stand out are the answers to the question about who was responsible for fulfilling people's wishes. With a median of 4.1 on a scale of 1 to 6, the wisher is clearly thought to be responsible for fulfilling his or her own wishes, along the lines of "life is what you make of it". The study also showed that people living in Switzerland generally have few wishes. Almost 50% said that they had few or very few wishes.

The authors of the study, Professor Heinz Gutscher and Jürg Artho found that the so-called "free wishes" were influenced a lot more by the region where the wisher lived than by the differences between the sexes or between town- and country-dwellers. From a sociological point of view, according to Dr Hans-Peter Meier-Dallache and Dr Therese Walter from the *cultur prospectiv*, an institute for future-oriented research and projects in social sciences, the wish results are also evidence that Switzerland remains a privileged country in the hierarchy of the global society.

Respect for the opposite sex and the Christian interpretation of death

When it comes to respecting the opposite sex, people's wishes vary greatly. Approximately twice as many people in German-speaking Switzerland as in French-speaking Switzerland find it important to respect the opposite sex. 26.7% of all those in German-speaking Switzerland wished that men would show women more respect, while 8.1% of those from this area wished that women would show men more respect. When asked about their special wishes on the subject of death, most people's beliefs were dominated by the Christian doctrine of salvation. Around one-third of those questioned hoped that there was a paradise or heaven after death, while two-thirds wished for everlasting life or reincarnation. Only one in ten wished that death was the ultimate end.

Similar studies planned for later generations

IBM and Swiss Re attribute great importance to the sustainability aspect of the sWISH* project. This was why, when deciding on the research method for the Swiss wish landscape study, they considered it important to create a basis upon which to conduct follow-up studies that would document changes in the Swiss population's moods over time. The same applies for comparative surveys conducted in other countries.

After the presentation, the study will be handed over officially to the Swiss Confederation. The qualitative raw data and quantitative data collected in the survey will be archived in Neuchâtel in the Swiss Data Archive for the Social Sciences, SIDOS. Peter Quadri, General Manager of IBM Schweiz, and Walter Anderau, Executive Board Member at Swiss Re, will present a summary of the most salient points of the

study to the Swiss members of parliament.

SWISH* is a joint project staged by IBM and Swiss Re. The entire cost of the project is expected to be CHF 10 million.

You can find more information, photographs and virtual wishes at www.swish.ch.

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