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21

Sustainable
development,
regional and
international
disparities

Neuchâtel 2022

City Statistics – Quality of life in the cities

A brief overview



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What is quality of life?

The concept of quality of life is used to measure the well-being of the population in its various dimensions. Originally developed by the OECD, it has been adapted to Switzerland's specific situation and includes eleven mutually dependent dimensions relating to material living conditions but also to the subjective perception of quality of life, itself a factor in a city's attractiveness.

Each dimension of quality of life is illustrated by one to four indicators taken from the City Statistics data. A brief overview is given here with just one indicator for each dimension. You can find all 28 City Statistics indicators and additional information on our website www.citystatistics.ch → Quality of life indicators or by scanning the QR code below.



City Statistics

Based on some 200 indicators, the City Statistics provide information and points of comparison on several aspects of living conditions in European cities and their larger urban zones. Basel, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Lugano, St. Gallen, Winterthur and Zurich are the Swiss cities taking part in this project that is also supported by the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE), the Federal Housing Office (FHO) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

City Statistics is a European project with Switzerland's participation and which provides data on living conditions in over 900 European cities. The data collected are available on the database of Eurostat, the European Union's statistical office. Find out more about the City Statistics project at European level on the Eurostat website: www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat → General and regional statistics → Regions and cities or by scanning the QR code below.

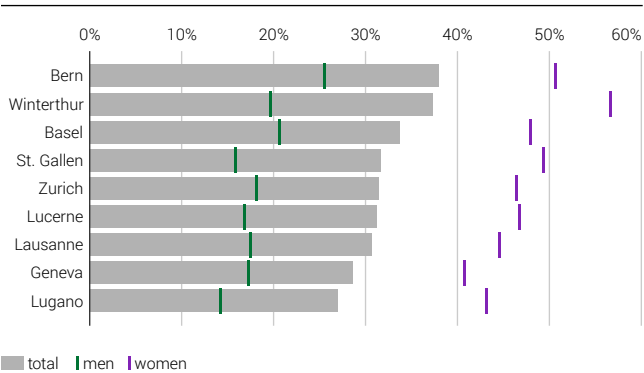


Income & Jobs

Income and jobs allow people to cover their basic needs and provide opportunities to fulfil personal wishes. They allow people to accumulate wealth, helping them to be more resistant in times of economic crisis.

Part-time employment, 2020

Share of employed persons with a work-time percentage of < 90%, in the core cities



Source: FSO – RS

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Part-time employment can have both positive and negative consequences. Additional time can be used for a better work-life balance and personal fulfilment and leisure. These are positive consequences. Negative consequences are a reduced income, fewer opportunities for promotion, limited possibilities for continuing education and training, as well as lower contributions to occupational pension funds. Part-time employment is also important for gender equality.

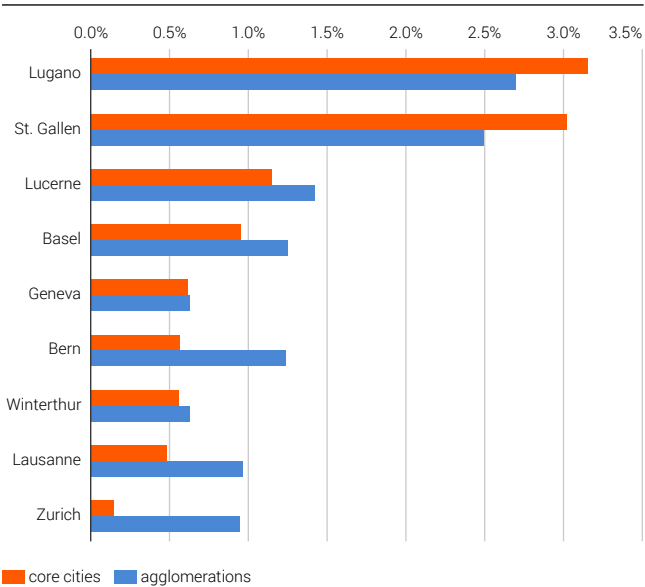
Other indicators of this dimension: economic activity rate; social assistance rate; unemployment rate.

Housing Conditions

Good housing conditions meet the basic needs of people for safety, feeling of protection, privacy and personal space. However housing costs can take up a large part of a household's budget, limiting expenditure on other areas.

Dwelling vacancy rate, 2020

Share of empty dwellings in total number of dwellings



Sources: FSO – BDS, Empty dwellings census

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A high dwelling rate makes the search for and the choice of accommodation easier and influences the price of housing on offer. Looking for suitable accommodation can take up a lot of time which would otherwise, for example, be spent with family or on leisure activities. An insufficient supply may impede a need to move, make it necessary to change neighbourhoods or to choose more expensive or less well-situated dwellings. This can sometimes lead to a longer daily commute or place a burden on the household budget.

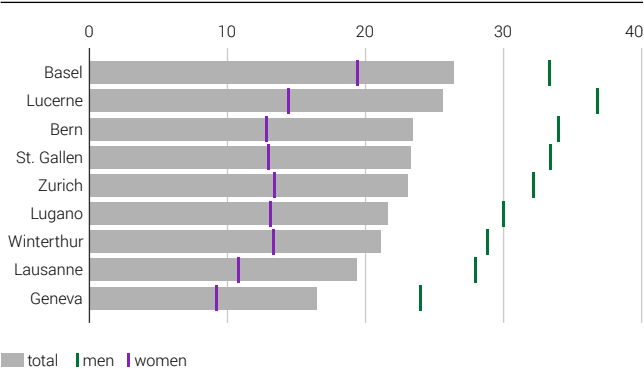
Other indicators of this dimension: traffic noise; area of living; overcrowded dwellings.

Health

Health is one of the most valuable aspects of a person's life. It enables active participation in social life and in the labour market. Health is also influenced by a good work-life balance as well as high environmental quality.

Mortality rate of under 65 year-olds

Crude mortality rate due to diseases of the circulatory or respiratory systems per 100 000 inhabitants, average from 2015 to 2018, in the core cities



Source: FSO – eCOD

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Deaths under the age of 65 can have many causes, such as genetic factors, accidents, individual health behaviour or the quality of the local environment. The discrepancy between men and women can be linked by men's greater consumption of tobacco and alcohol as well as a higher occurrence of obesity in men.

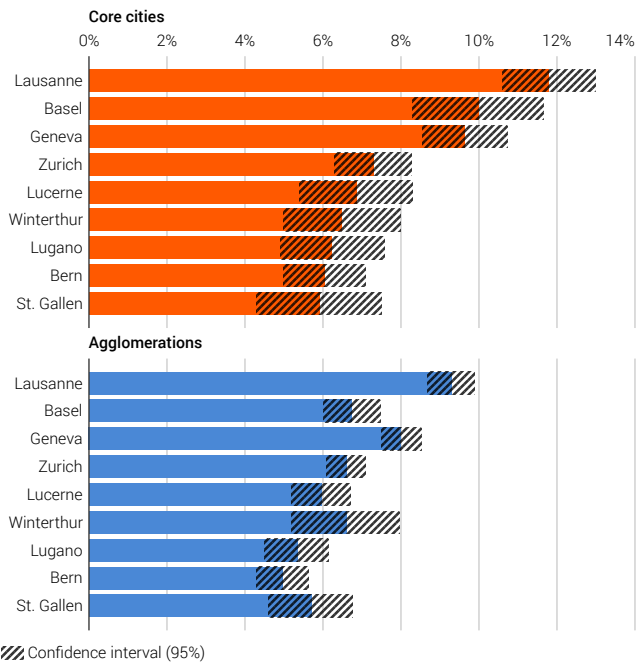
Other indicators of this dimension: practising doctors; suicide rate.

Education

Education opens opportunities for development and helps people to better cope with social and economic changes. Prospects on the labour market and the possibilities for professional fulfilment and advancement are to a large extent determined by education.

Young people outside the education system, 2016–2020

18–24-year-olds without post-compulsory education who are not in formal education and training, as a % of the permanent resident population of the same age, cumulative data¹



¹ Cumulated data over 5 years are used to achieve sufficient quality.

Source: FSO – RS

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Young people leaving the education system without an upper secondary level diploma are a potential risk group, as their prospects on the labour market are very limited and their integration in society is more difficult.

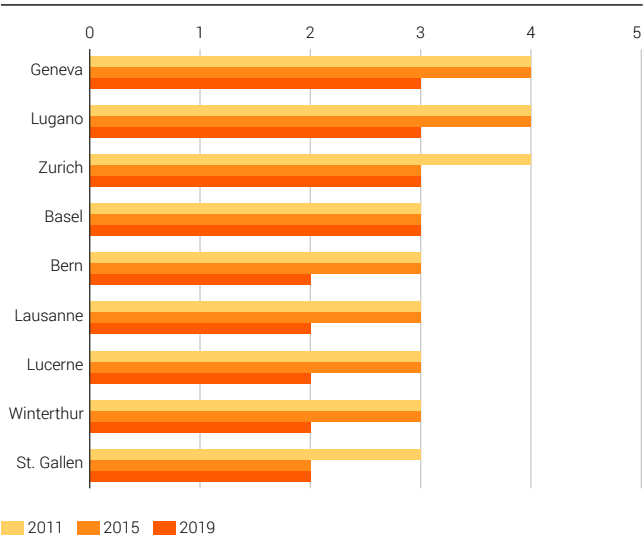
Other indicator of this dimension: educational attainment.

Environmental Quality

Many people appreciate pleasant and natural surroundings in their place of residence and for their leisure time. Both are influenced by the quality of the local environment. An environment that is contaminated with pollutants and noise affects the mental and physical health of the population.

Long-term pollution index

Population weighted mixed index¹ of air quality, in the core cities



¹ Based on concentrations of particulate matter (PM10), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and ozone (O₃). The index shows the average air pollution of towns and cities from level 1 "low" to 6 "very high".

Sources: FSO; FOEN

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The long-term pollution index shows the average air pollution of towns and cities. Chronic pollution by air pollutants such as particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide and ozone has a direct impact on human health and the environment. This may result in respiratory diseases such as bronchitis as well as an increased risk of cancer.

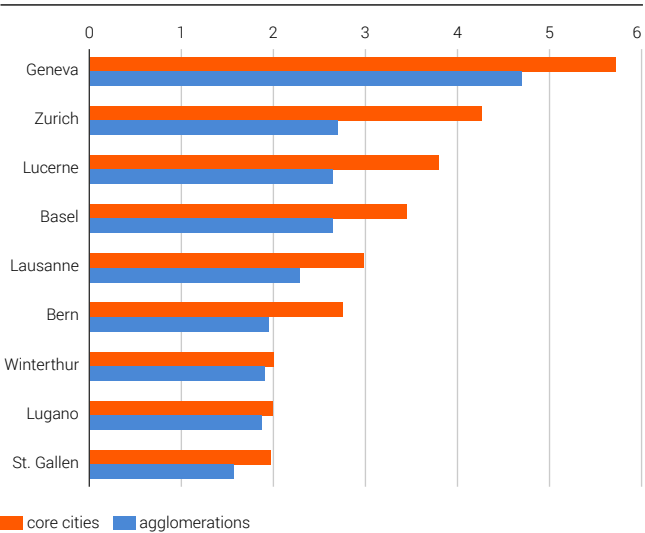
Other indicator of this dimension: wooded und recreational area.

Personal Security

Personal security is primarily influenced by crime, the risk of traffic accidents and natural hazards. Crime may lead to a loss of possessions, physical suffering, stress and anxiety. It may also influence residents' feeling of security.

Burglaries in dwellings, 2020

Number of burglaries¹ with intrusions in dwellings per 1 000 inhabitants



¹ including burglaries in cellars, outside storehouses and other annexes (incl. attempts)

Burglaries do not only result in damage of property for victims but also often mean that people no longer feel secure in their own homes. This may limit their daily activities.

Cities are often a node of human activity which has to be considered when interpreting the indicators of this dimension.

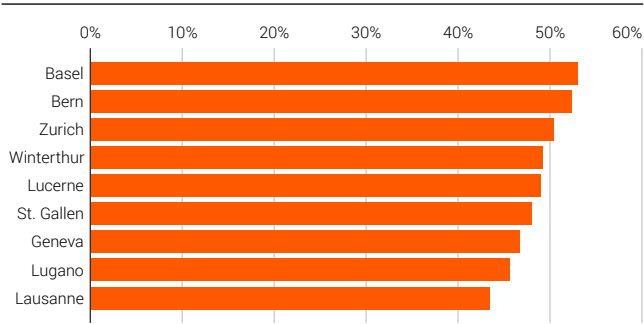
Other indicators of this dimension: violent crimes; road accidents.

Civic Engagement

By taking part in political and social life, citizens express their needs, making a democratic contribution to political decisions. This ensures that citizens are better informed and more easily accept political decisions. Civic engagement strengthens people's trust in institutions and increases the effectiveness of political action.

Participation in federal votes and elections to Parliament

Average rate from 2017 to 2020, in the core cities



Source: FSO – Statistics of votes and elections

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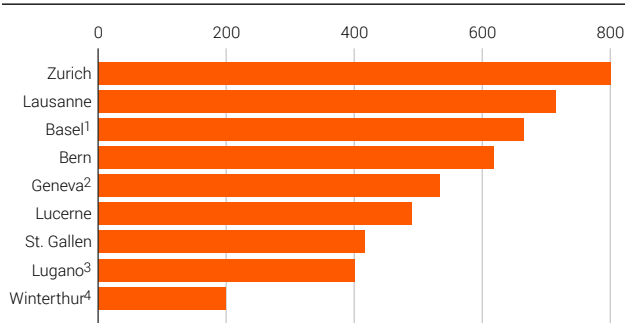
Citizens aged 18 or over have the opportunity several times a year to decide on constitutional texts and bills at federal level.

Work-Life-Balance

A good work-life-balance influences well-being, contributes to productivity in the workplace and helps people to remain healthy and happy.

Care of infants, 2020

Care of children of pre-school age, per 1 000 children in this age group, in the core cities



¹ cantonal data

² without day-childcare families

³ estimated data

⁴ company day-childcare centers and non-subsidised institutions not included

Source: FSO – City Statistics

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External childcare enables families to reconcile family responsibilities with their work commitments.

However, the data do not show, how many of the children in day care come from the respective core city. A high number of children in day care per resident children could also be explained by childcare provided for children whose parents work in a certain core city but who do not live there. This applies particularly to children in company day-childcare centers.

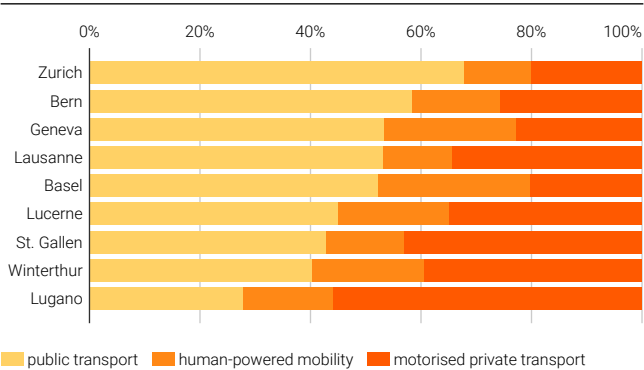
Other indicators of this dimension: duration of commute; availability of childcare for infants.

Mobility

Mobility is often necessary for work and leisure activities. For many people a good transportation network is important to satisfy needs such as shopping, education and recreation.

Choice of transportation mode, 2020

For commute, in the core cities



Source: FSO – RS

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A reduction of private motorised transportation helps to improve the quality of the environment and influences personal security in road traffic.

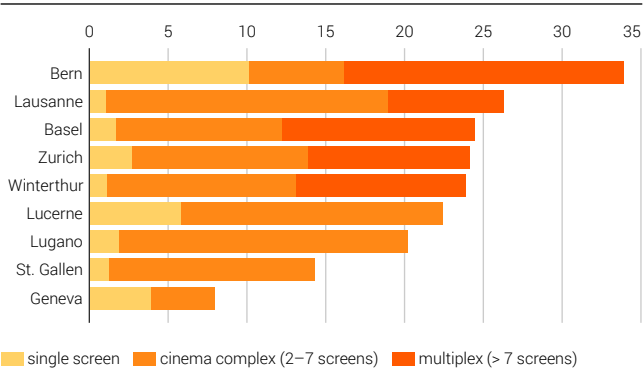
Other indicators of this dimension: price of monthly public transport ticket; public transportation stops.

Culture & Leisure

Cultural offers enable the maintenance of social contacts, the development of networks and offers possibilities for recreational activities. Culture and leisure also includes clubs and sport facilities.

Cinema seats by type of cinema, 2020

Number of cinema seats per 1 000 inhabitants by type of cinema, in the core cities



Source: FSO – SSCin

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Different types of cinemas allow to make inferences to be made on the selection of films available in a location. Since the 1990s, single screen cinemas have decreased at the expense of multiplex cinemas. Cinema complexes and especially multiplexes are often built together with restaurants and shops, allowing the easy combination of various leisure activities in one place.

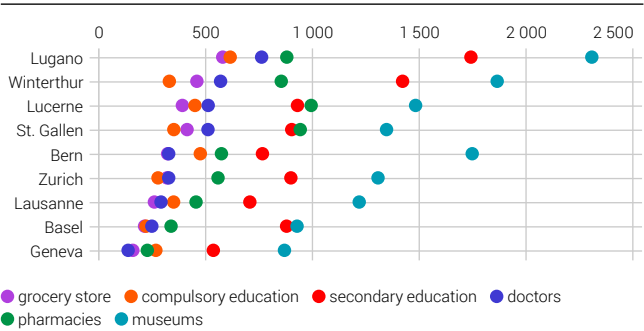
Other indicators of this dimension: cultural offering; demand of museums and theatres.

Infrastructure & Services

Infrastructure & Services is a measure of life quality and codetermines a location's attractiveness. Infrastructure and services can vary quite considerably from city to city, having an impact on the material aspects of quality of life. This includes, for example, residential and workplace infrastructure with an attractive environment, good accessibility, and also tax incentives.

Accessibility of services for the population, 2018

Mean distance¹ to the closest service, in the core cities



¹ distances calculated based on road network, in meters

Source: FSO – Services for the population

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Additional information

Data: in City Statistics, data from the Population and Households Statistics (STATPOP), the structural business statistics (STATENT), the Buildings and Dwellings statistic (BDS), and the structural survey (RS) from reference year t are surveyed as december or at 31 December of year t-1 in order to comply with Eurostat directives. The data for 2020 therefore represent the situation before the COVID-19 pandemic. For data taken from the Structural Survey (RS), it should be noted that this is a sample survey with varying confidence intervals that can be found on the FSO website, along with the data.

Perimeter: the perimeter for the agglomerations corresponds to the FSO's 2012 definition.

Switzerland conducts the City Statistics under the auspices of the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), in collaboration with:

Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE)

Federal Housing Office (FHO)

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

Statistisches Amt des Kantons Basel-Stadt

Statistik Stadt Bern

Office cantonal de la statistique du canton de Genève (OCSTAT)

Service d'urbanisme de la ville de Genève

Office d'appui économique et statistique (OAES),
Service de l'économie, Lausanne

Ufficio di Statistica della Città di Lugano

LUSTAT Statistik Luzern

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