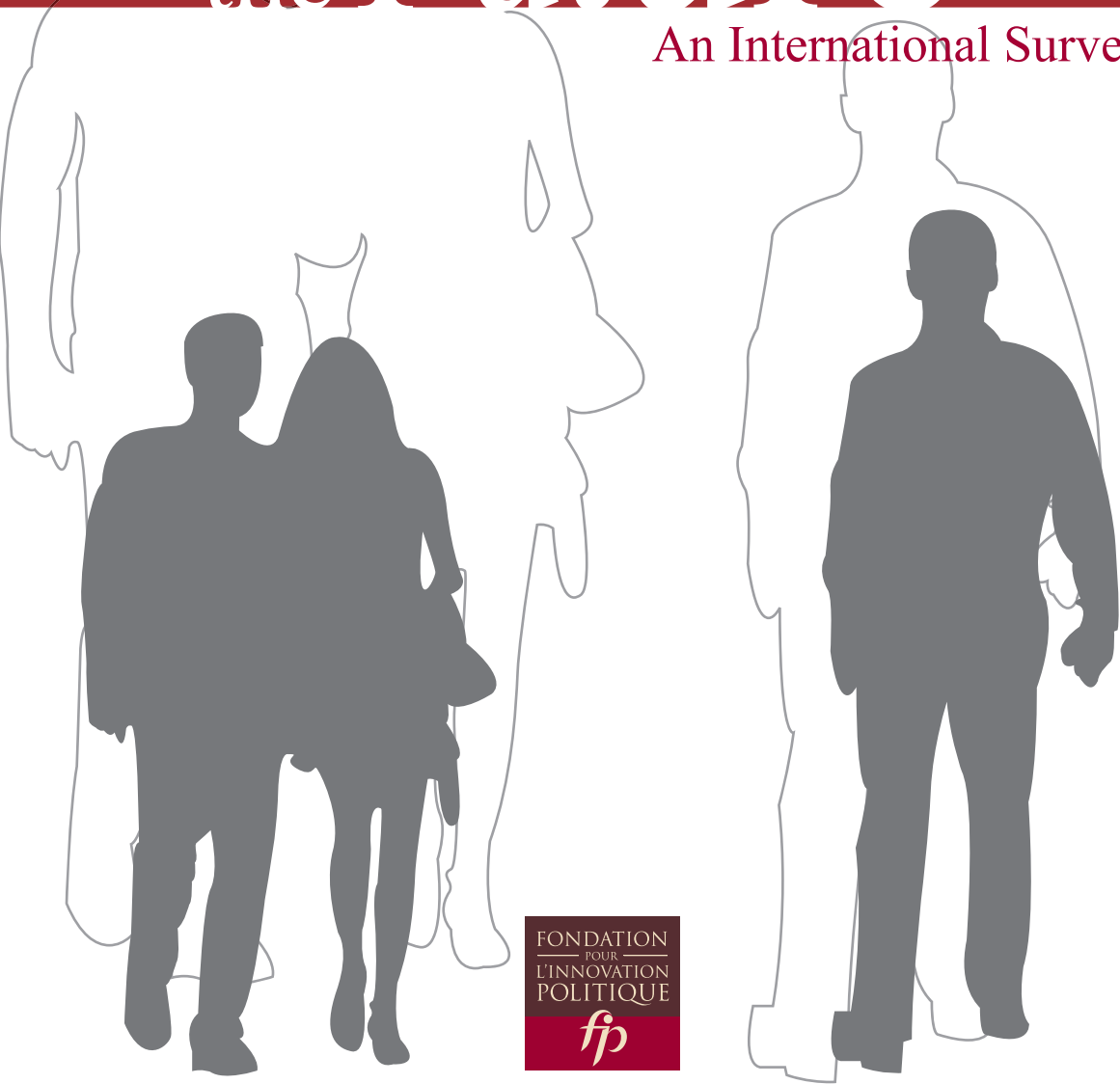


Under the direction of **Anna Steller**, with the collaboration of **Raphaël Wintrebert**

Foreword by **François de Singly**

Young People Facing the Future

An International Survey



YOUNG PEOPLE FACING THE FUTURE

An International Survey

Fondation pour l'innovation politique

Survey conducted by Kairos Future

Under the direction of Anna Stellingner,
with the collaboration of Raphaël Wintrebert

Foreword by François de Singly

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FOREWORD: YOUTH IN THE MODERN WORLD

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The international comparison proposed by the Fondation pour l'innovation politique has made it possible to compare the similarities and dissimilarities between young people in seventeen nations. In order not to limit ourselves to discussing what distinguishes or unites these youths, a reference model is needed to determine whether or not the observed variances are meaningful. In a widely read article, Pierre Bourdieu contends that “youth is just a word,” inasmuch as social differences are too broad to sustain the idea that such an age group really exists (Bourdieu, 1984). According to this sociologist, the reference model is that of social domination and of social and cultural inequalities. Here, we will adopt another interpretive framework, striving to learn how young people cope with the social injunction to realize themselves. Indeed, modern societies’ central process, according to Ulrich Beck, is individualization (Beck, 2002). Ideally, the individual must manage on his own to define himself, to no longer depend primarily on inherited legacies. This programme is derived from the Enlightenment philosophy that esteemed independence and autonomy in mankind (Kant, 1784). This presupposes that each individual set his own rules, refusing to give in to orders from superior authorities.

Such a programme was gradually applied in Western societies. One indicator of its dissemination is the transformation of education and the intergenerational relationship. Fathers—a symbol of legitimate authority—have lost their power. An American survey points to the decline of the “obedience” value and the rise of values of independence and autonomy throughout the 20th century (Alwin, 1988). Today, parents are insisting less and less that their children conform to external principles and are focusing more and more on respecting the innate nature of each of their children. They follow the so-called “new” educational precepts. Rules are not being eradicated, they are just changing patterns: they are evolving from external to internal (according to the very definition of autonomy).

Contrary to popular misconceptions, the year 1968 did not mark an historic rupture. Rather, it constitutes an acceleration of a movement that had begun earlier. Young people were clearly proclaiming their rejection of authority at home and in school. After a period of excess, a level was reached in which obedience was being maintained, despite apparent conflict with other demands: those of children who must, from their earliest years, claim

the right to express themselves and say what they feel and what they think is good for them.

This movement is all the more necessary in that our now-globalized world can only continue to evolve as long as working individuals are able to achieve greater mobility and innovation. This constant demand for innovation in the 19th century was compounded by capitalism, which is now requiring wage earners to be increasingly autonomous, mobile and creative (Boltanski, Chiapello, 1999).

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MORE OR LESS AUTONOMOUS

Young people cannot escape from this general shift toward independence and autonomy. That is demonstrated by this commendable survey by the Fondation pour l'innovation politique, conducted in partnership with the Kairos Future Institute. Indeed, national variations became clear, when young people aged 16 to 29 were asked about the essential qualities that should be developed in children. Only the qualities of obedience and independence were included in the table below (respondents were not asked about "autonomy") and an indicator was computed that represents the ratio between the "independence" value and the "obedience" value. A negative ratio means that obedience is more highly valued, while a positive ratio means that independence is the prevalent choice (see Table 1 below). The way obedience is valued varies widely—in the subset of countries surveyed, it rose from 19% to 65%—as independence does, from 46% to 84%.

Table 1: Qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home

	Independence	Obedience	Independence/Obedience Ratio
France	46%	55%	0.84
Spain	52%	50%	1.04
United States	72%	65%	1.11
Great Britain	66%	54%	1.22
Germany	64%	38%	1.68
Sweden	65%	36%	1.81
Denmark	70%	38%	1.89
Japan	57%	19%	3.00
China	84%	23%	3.65

Reading: The independence/obedience ratio is less than 1 if obedience is rated higher, and is above 1 if independence is rated higher. The percentages correspond to the responses of young people aged 16 to 29 who consider independence and obedience very important (scores 6-7 on a scale of 1 to 7) in a list of qualities that children must be encouraged to learn.

This index (independence/obedience ratio) can be considered as an indicator of each country's support of the individualization process. Extensive heterogeneity can be observed within Europe, on one hand, and between certain European countries and nations such as Japan and China, on the other. The cleavage within Europe divides the northern countries—notably Denmark, Sweden and Germany—from the southern countries, such as France and Spain. France is even the only country in which the independence/obedience ratio is negative. The young French tend to believe more that obedience is very important, compared to independence. In the 30 to 50 age group, the same variances appear and, in that context, France once again obtains the only negative ratio.

On closer examination, it appears that France shows the weakest score for independence as a quality that should be developed in children, and that in the United States, independence is considered to be compatible with obedience—with children having to contend with two sets of rules.

This finding observed in France may be surprising, since this country experienced a clearly anti-authoritarian student rebellion in 1968. Despite the importance of this event, it did not produce any lasting value inversion. Contrary to what politicians, intellectuals and the media say, excesses associated with anti-authoritarian individualism are not characteristic of France. It is true that French youth achieved a certain degree of liberation by obtaining the right to a sexual life outside of marriage and conjugal life, thus gaining access to parallel worlds, thanks first to the launching of private radio stations and later to those targeting “young” audiences. But this was not enough to change the family-based and school-based education of young people or to create conditions under which young people could take charge of their own lives. Children, young people, are not rulers—even of their own lives. Their power extends only to the clothes they wear and music they hear, but their academic future is not theirs to decide.

It is absolutely indispensable to enter the job market under good conditions in order for autonomy to be equated with true independence. The challenges that young French people have to grapple with in this area also attest to a strategy—conscious or not—on the part of adult generations to maintain them in an endless state of youth: they can have fun and party as long as they are not too aggressive about claiming their place in the job market. They are entitled to a sexual life outside of marriage: they disapprove even more strongly than young Swedes, Americans and Chinese the fact that sexual relations should be confined to marriage. They have a right to freely express themselves only within restricted areas and then only during their so-called “free time.”

The role of family

For young people, the individualization process consists of being able to make decisions on their own that affect their lives. This independence and autonomy do not imply the dismissal of family. Individualism is compatible with social relations provided that the

latter are not too unequal between generations (see Table 2 below). Therefore, in countries in which children and young people are encouraged to have more autonomy and independence, family is not any less appreciated, quite to the contrary. The highest scores of satisfaction with family can be observed in Sweden and Denmark.

Table 2: Young people and family

	Family as a factor of individual identity	Family as the foundation of society	Satisfaction with family
Denmark	66%	34%	72%
Sweden	62%	33%	70%
Spain	69%	44%	69%
China	73%	76%	68%
United States	75%	62%	66%
France	60%	35%	61%
Germany	70%	54%	60%
Japan	50%	34%	36%

Reading: Scores 6-7 on a scale of 1 to 7

Family may be valued in different ways. It can be loved because it constitutes a framework in which young people can live their lives without it being too much of a burden socially (family being the foundation of society). This is the case in Northern Europe. Family can also be valued because it is perceived as a fundamental reference point. By comparing Denmark to China—two countries in which young people rank independence higher than obedience—we note that for the Danes, family is a private affair, whereas for the Chinese (and the Americans), family is also a social value. As far as these family-related criteria are concerned, young French people's opinions resemble those of the Northern Europeans. They do not consider *the* family as the "basic unit of society," yet they do value *their* family.

Young people and their sources of support

Contrary to a general misconception about individualism, modern individuals need material and psychological support to realize their potential. In Northern European countries, they receive assistance from the Welfare State, whereas in the United States and China, family is the primary support provider. In the United States, religion also constitutes a source of support. The fact that social policies exist does not suffice to define them; one must also know on what conception of the individual they are based. In Northern Europe, for example, the State has implemented "individualized" policies, while in France, policies historically target individuals through their familial group: women through their husbands and young people through their parents.

However, if modernity does not prohibit solidarities, it tends to change their forms by stressing the fact that young people must, despite their youth, demonstrate a certain amount of independence and a certain autonomy. That attitude is expressed in the urgings they receive to take “menial jobs” to earn their “pocket money”—one way of being less dependent on family—or to take out a loan to pay for their university courses, a way of asserting that their studies belong to them and not to their parents.

Japan displays a different profile: independence is valued and family is not ranked very high. That seems to mean that the country in which familial traditions have always been recognized as dominant is actually going through profound changes (that are also perceptible among the women). It appears to be generating identities torn between tradition and individualization. Seeing their families split to some extent between these two principles, young people prefer to keep their distance from it. Young Japanese do not perceive family as something that provides “meaning” in their lives, unlike young Americans, Chinese and Swedes. This proves that different types of social organization can make family appealing, even to young people.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MORE OR LESS OPTIMISTIC

According to our comparison of eight countries, French youth belong to the group who are significantly more demoralized (Japan, France, Spain and Germany). They do not see their future as bright and are not very confident that they will have a “good job” (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: Young people’s perception of the future

	My future looks bright	I am confident I will have a good job in the future
Denmark	60%	60%
United States	54%	60%
Sweden	49%	43%
China	43%	56%
Germany	36%	34%
Spain	32%	36%
France	26%	27%
Japan	5%	9%

Reading: Scores 6-7 on a scale of 1 to 7

The most pessimistic youth in these countries are those who least often chose the response that they “have complete freedom and control over their own future.”

Therefore, 22% of the young French, versus 51% of the young Americans and 45% of the young Chinese and Danish respondents believe that they can control their future existence. Lacking power over their own lives, they feel as though they were dispossessed. This weak sense of control has significant negative effects, since these youth live in societies whose watchword is personal responsibility. How, indeed, can young people take responsibility for their actions if they believe that their lives are decided by others?

The future of pensions

Solidarity with older generations seems to be linked, regarding young people, to their perception of the future. Beyond their sense of family, the least optimistic youth do not look forward to funding their elders' retirement. Indeed, the countries within which morale is low can be distinguished by another indicator (see Table 4 below): very few of their young population expect to pay taxes to fund the pensions that will be paid to the oldest generations. On a scale ranging from 1 ("disagree completely") to 7 ("agree completely"), the young French surveyed give this prospect an average score of 3.28, the Japanese 4, the Americans 4.50, the Danes 4.61 and the Chinese 5.67. To be confident in one's future and to finance the pensions of retirees seem to be, at least to some extent, interlinked in the minds of the French surveyed.

Table 4: Payment of pensions

	I am prepared to pay the taxes needed to pay the pensions of older generations
China	63%
Denmark	35%
United States	32%
Sweden	27%
Germany	25%
Spain	21%
Japan	15%
France	11%

Reading: Scores 6-7 on a scale of 1 to 7

Here again, it is in France and Japan that young people are the least enthusiastic about standing behind their elders. Is it their way of taking revenge on the generations who preceded them? Believing that they have been deprived of their future, it would appear that these youth are blaming older generations for their situation and concluding that they owe them nothing. Such an indicator, in addition to the fact that it is troubling in terms of how the pensions will be funded, points to an intergenerational crisis of confidence.

By analogy, we may wonder whether the situation currently facing French and Japanese youth is not similar to that of certain peasants in the mid-19th century. In *La Vie d'un simple* (1904), Émile Guillaumin uses the example of a son who is furious with his parents who have considered him “under age” for far too long, preventing him from assuming his father’s position as head of the family. After receiving his inheritance, this son avenges himself by putting his parents in the stable. Today, by banking everything on educational attainment, and by delaying young people’s entry into the job market, including by allowing them to abuse internships and by using the unjustifiable excuse of “lack of experience,” generations of men and women with a professional occupation run a double risk. First, young people are to some extent forming the habit of being in an awkward limbo in which their personal world’s autonomy is not backed by real independence (de Singly, 2004). The present may be pleasant but gives them no inkling of what the future will be. Secondly, for those who are older, and have already been employed in the job market for some time, this protection being made available by young generations has a price—to be paid later, when pensions are due, with the potential risk that young people will refuse to show solidarity.

The fact that they have been confined for a long time (too long) to a youthful stage constructed as if it were an age of irresponsibility has induced young people to pessimistically perceive their own future—and that of their country. This can cause them to have two contrasting attitudes. They may withdraw into themselves (which can induce them to even commit suicide). An example of this is Japan, with its *hikikomori*—young people who stay home from school and subject themselves to a sort of “house arrest,” living off their parents even beyond adolescence. These youth can also forget the future by partying with free-flowing alcohol: they can escape everything, as if their only world were a virtual one. Or they can choose to be aggressive and rebel against society and adults, who represent a social order to which they do not subscribe.

THREE FORMS OF POSITIVE (AND TWO FORMS OF NEGATIVE) INDIVIDUALISM

Additional surveys should be carried out in order to better understand the reasons for the low morale young people have in certain countries, notably in Japan and France. What can be said is that these two countries assign tremendous importance to education. More specifically, parents’ obsession with education in Japan and in France stems from the fact that everything seems to depend on the diploma level attained. Experience and skills acquired throughout a person’s working life count less than degrees. The weight given to the latter has the effect of reducing the young person’s feeling of being in control of his/her life, inasmuch as it is the educational institution that determines his/her career path as soon as he/she becomes an adult.

This feeling of being able to control one’s life can be interpreted as an indicator of how intense the individualization process is in the various countries: the individual is defined not so much by the originality of his/her intimate nature, or personality, as by the power that

he/she exerts over his/her own life (de Singly, 2005). What is remarkable is that the four countries that once again fall into the same group on the basis of this indicator do not have the same social organization. In our opinion, this constitutes proof that individualization can take root in different contexts, in which social policies may or may not exist to the same extent.

Table 5: Having the feeling of being in charge of one's life

	People in my country have the opportunity to choose their own lives
China	43%
Denmark	60%
United States	61%
Sweden	44%
Germany	23%
Spain	30%
Japan	5%
France	26%

Reading: Scores of 6-7 on a scale of 1 to 7

The fact that such policies exist does not necessarily lead to a feeling of losing one's sense of self. However, it does not promote entrepreneurship: the French, Danes and Swedes do not think that the development of such a quality should be a priority in education (see Table 6 below). While young Swedes and Danes rank independence higher than obedience, they do not channel this independence into entrepreneurship. They favour a more collective individualism than the young Chinese.

Table 6: The importance of entrepreneurship as a quality children should be encouraged to learn

	Entrepreneurship
China	89%
Denmark	24%
United States	35%
Sweden	16%
Germany	38%
Spain	57%
Japan	39%
France	21%

Reading: Scores of 6-7 on a scale of 1 to 7

Positive vs. negative individualism

We believe that since the “second modernity”—as of the second half of the 20th century—two forms of individualism have co-existed: positive individualism, associated with an optimistic view of the future, and negative individualism, associated with a pessimistic view. In the preceding era, known as the “first modernity,” the dominant ideology of progress was, by design, that all discoveries were beneficial and promoted the conviction that “the future will be rosy.” A break from that line of thought occurred, though not worldwide: some countries such as the United States, China and those of Northern Europe, still—each in its own way—“see the future through rose-coloured glasses,” while others, notably France and Japan, fear the future.

Positive individualism assumes three different forms among youth. In the United States, it is a form of “*moral individualism*”—with the importance attributed to the family as the “foundation of society” and also to God and religion. For example, 39% of young Americans, versus 9% of young Swedes, French and Chinese, believe that “religious faith” should be encouraged in children. And 7% of young Chinese respondents and 18% of young French and Danish respondents, versus 69% of young American respondents, fully agree with the statement: “I believe in God.” Individualism in the United States is not strictly “liberal” in the philosophical sense of the word, because individuals are also thought of as sons or daughters of God. This is evident in the fact that children are encouraged to both obey and be independent. American individualism considers it possible for young people to be free and still remain their parents’ sons and daughters. American history, founded on the great migrations from the European continent, is still the benchmark. The myth of the “self-made man” is combined with the obligation to respect the authority of an earthly father and of God the Father.

Northern Europe’s form of “*social-democratic individualism*” involves social policies focused on supporting individuals rather than the family, which is viewed as a group. Individuals have fewer inherited ties—they can choose where they belong. At the same time, individuals are sustained in this process of individualization by the State, which both redistributes wealth in such a way that everyone may have a minimum, and resources so that all individuals can pursue their personal development.

In China, “*liberal-statist individualism*” prevails, according to which individuals are required by the Communist Party to comply with the absolute law of the market, in which the individuals’ personal value is pegged to their ability to acquire wealth in the marketplace. It is undoubtedly in this nation that men and women are most subjected to the paradoxical motto: “Be free to succeed!” This paradox stems from a historic reversal of individualism. Western individualism values every person’s autonomy inasmuch as the latter is what gives people the right to choose their political representatives. This can eventually be transformed into entrepreneurship. In China, the trend is reversed: the initial imperative is entrepreneurship, and it is because the latter requires an independent

and autonomous individual—excluding the political sphere—that the individualization process is valued.

French and Japanese youth, their differences aside, share the vision of a future without future. Negative individualism (that other countries share to a lesser extent) translates into weaker individualization. Very few young French and Japanese people stated that they have freedom and control over their own future (see Table 7 below).

Table 7: Having freedom and control over one's own future

	I have complete freedom and control over my own future
China	45%
Denmark	45%
United States	51%
Sweden	35%
Germany	39%
Spain	29%
Japan	16%
France	22%

Reading: Scores 6-7 on a scale of 1 to 7

The individualization process in these societies appears to be coming up against a multitude of obstacles. One thing seems clear: neither France nor Japan are in a crisis arising from excessive individualism—quite to the contrary. To regain their morale, young people in these countries need to be better recognized before they reach adulthood. They must have other areas in which to exercise their sovereignty than the artificial world of a “youth culture.” Could we not encourage them to be more responsible for themselves throughout their lives by putting less pressure on them to attain diplomas as a decisive factor in shaping their identity? Can we not acknowledge them, within a youth policy framework, as actors in their own right and not just as children of a family?

In order to define modern society as a “risk society,” Ulrich Beck highlights the limited command scholars and politicians have of discoveries, techniques and knowledge (Beck, 2001). In his view, individuals are becoming increasingly individualized, while at the same time obtaining a higher degree of control over their lives. Thanks to the comparative study conducted by the Fondation pour l'innovation politique, this diagnosis of second modernity societies can be reviewed and revised. Some young people believe that they are living in a risk society, while other do not feel that way. We may wonder whether the success of the work *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* does not convey this pessimistic atmosphere that surrounds the youth of Central and Southern Europe, as well as Japan. We should even wonder whether the general pessimism, and young people's pessimism in particular, are not voicing

the same crisis of confidence. The observed cleavage therefore is not attributable to a conflict between Eastern individualism and Western individualism, or even an older individualism (based on the Enlightenment philosophy, the American Revolution, or the French Revolution) and a newer one. This international comparative survey urgently needs to be followed up by initiatives that will find a better way to create the necessary political, economic and cultural conditions to rekindle confidence in the future. Otherwise, some societies may very well experience ageing; not just that indicated in their age-sex pyramid, but also that of their world view. Otherwise, nostalgia may infect countries that do not celebrate individualism.

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INTRODUCTION

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Global demographic growth is exponential. The world's population will probably rise from the current figure of 6.7 billion to 9.2 billion people by 2050—an increase equivalent to what the world population was in 1950. Geographical disparities are significant: if the population of the less developed regions is expected to grow from 5.4 billion to 7.9 billion people by 2050, that of more developed regions, on the other hand, is expected to remain stable at 1.2 billion people, and without migratory flows it could even decline (United Nations, 2007). Logically, this imbalance is also reflected in the various age groups. In 2006, 16% of the population was under 15 years old in Europe, versus 20% in North America, 29% in Asia, 30% in Latin America and the Caribbean and 42% in Africa (Population Reference Bureau, 2006).

This trend raises major issues in terms of the formulation of public youth policies, as noted by UNESCO's Joint Programmatic Commission on Youth (JPC): "With over one billion two hundred thousand people between the ages of 15 and 25, youth is an undeniably important reality and a group that cannot be overlooked when searching for comprehensive solutions to the challenges facing our world. On international as well as national levels, young people constitute a constantly changing genuine demographic force." Consequently, "their status must no longer be that of a mere development and youth policy target. Young people have an important part to play as stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of the global policies and programmes that concern them" (JPC on Youth – UNESCO, 2005).

As a result, crucial questions have arisen as to society's capacity to provide support for youth's "entering adulthood" phase (Centre d'analyse stratégique, 2007). Children, adolescents and post-adolescents seem to find it increasingly difficult to grow up and realize their potential in an uncertain world. Hence the growing interest on the part of many countries in these various stages of life. Countless reports, surveys and working papers are attempting to understand the living conditions, perceptions and needs of those who are not yet thought of as adults (Barrington-Leach, Canoy, Hubert and Lerais, 2007; Eurobarometer: European Commission - The Gallup Organization, 2007).

With that end in mind, we must first grasp what is meant by "young" and "youth." The "feeling of childhood" concept only appeared at the end of the 17th century, as living

conditions improved (better diets and hygiene and the gradual end of epidemics and famines). It was in this era that the idea emerged of childhood as a stage of life, with special needs. As for the notion of youth, Olivier Galland reminded us that it is “stems from the emergence of the individual and of familial intimacy as a value, as well as from the idea—developed by Enlightenment philosophers, that education can allow a person to break free of his social condition of origin” (Galland, 2002). Youth gradually began to be thought of as a specific period in life and, as such, became a political issue. Religious institutions, followed later by the State, then attempted to provide a support and orientation framework for young people, while also trying to respect matters viewed as belonging to the familial sphere and—even more so—to paternal authority.

In defining youth categories, public authorities have gradually been modifying the conceptions of this period of life. Age is no longer just a descriptor of an individual’s socio-demographic status. Each age bracket corresponds to a different identity, and, as such, constitutes the basis upon which each person’s attitudes and opinions will be formed. In 1963, Samuel N. Eisenstadt was already asserting that “the cultural definition of age is an important component of a person’s identity, self-perception, psychological needs and aspirations, place in society and, ultimately, of the meaning of his/her life.”

In view of this, what aspirations and opinions are motivating today’s youth? What are their fears and expectations? How do they perceive family, employment, or society as a whole? Have they changed in comparison to their elders? As of what age is one considered “young”? At what age is one no longer young?

In order to tackle these far-reaching issues, we are relying upon a vast international survey of 22,000 people conducted by Kairos Future Institute in partnership with the Fondation pour l’innovation politique: 1,000 young people aged 16 to 29 were interviewed in each of the 17 countries surveyed. In order to bring out more clearly the similarities and variances between the age groups, the survey also included, from the same countries, 300 people aged 30 to 50 (see “Methodology” in the Appendix). Part of the data collected has already been featured in a publication: *Les Européens face à la mondialisation* (Fabry, 2007). This study focuses more specifically on three fundamental issues: young people and society, young people and work, and young people and family. The three texts in the first section are therefore “transversal,” which is to say that they analyze the ways in which young people’s values and attitudes have changed in all of the countries surveyed.

Olivier Galland begins by examining young people’s feeling of social belonging and their capacity to anticipate the future. How do they perceive their future? How do they view society, institutions, other people? There are very clear differences between the countries: some youths are particularly optimistic (notably in Scandinavia or in the United States), whereas others are much more distrustful (in other European countries). Differences of opinion linked to national identity remain stronger than those linked to age group identity, yet at the same time, “in some societies, young people’s responses

distinctly differ from those of the adults, while in others, intergenerational continuity is more pronounced.”

Dominique Épiphané and Emmanuel Sulzer end up with similar conclusions in their analysis of young people’s relationship to work. On a global scale, there are always significant cleavages between emerging countries and long-time industrialized countries “in which young people’s relationship to work is much less affected by materialism.” On a Western-world scale, the authors have noted a transformation in the way work is valued. The latter remains essential for the youngest but, for them, it assumes a different meaning: “Work, yes, but for oneself, too.” Self-realization, advancement potential, and reconciling private and working life are now core concerns.

Since the notion of family can only be understood in a broader societal context, Vincenzo Cicchelli explores the functions attributed to familial socialization. After having identified the qualities that young people and adults feel children should be encouraged to learn, he highlights the “strong correlations” between these qualities and several dimensions: the meanings attributed to individual success, the definition of a domestic environment and the degree to which young people feel that they belong to their society of origin.

In view of the high prevalence of national contexts, it was thought necessary to better understand the particularities of each country’s youth and the manner in which public policies have—or have not—supported them. That is the purpose of the second part of this study, which sheds light on the status of youth in six countries: Italy, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden and the United States.

Loredana Sciolla begins by discussing Italian youth, who have been characterized since the 1980s by the “adulthood” phenomenon. While stressing the negative consequences for young people (increasing dependency), as well as for society (falling birth rate), of this extended length of time young people live with their families, the author effectively shows that this Italian “familism” is not attributable to any specific national culture but, to the contrary, to the inadequacy of public policies targeting job access and professional and personal autonomy.

French youth are both similar and dissimilar to young Italians. Although cohabitation is not as serious a problem for the French, the latter are more pessimistic. Patricia Loncle attributes this apprehension about the future to the State’s reluctance to deal with youth issues, to decentralization (which leads to highly discriminatory treatment), and to the fact that support is now primarily extended by families, thereby keeping young people in a difficult situation of dependency.

The case of Germans is quite different: what is much more at stake there, according to Monika Salzbrunn, is maintaining a better balance between private life and working life, and caring for young children. Another Germany specificity is that its youth, and

particularly students, are actively involved in societal life to the extent that this participation is valued by all of the social actors concerned (employers, public organizations, universities, etc.).

Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel present us with a rather original perspective on British youth. The latter appear to be apathetic, disengaged from politics and even their working lives. They note that: “Young people have a keen awareness of the constraints they face, and they are not optimistic about the future of an individualized society characterized by disconnection, fragmentation and dislocation from collective life; processes that are reflected in a weak sense of belonging and a lack of trust.”

The Swedes express nearly opposite views from the British. Confident in their own future as well as that of their society, young Swedes, according to Mats Trondman, have apparently managed to better handle several basic dichotomies: the disparity between the lives young people are actually experiencing and what they aspire to, the disparity between what they want and what they need to do to obtain it, and the disparity between what they personally believe is possible and what can actually be done in the society in which they live.

Lastly, the United States provides an opportunity to see the various European countries previously surveyed from a more global perspective. Emily Messersmith, Jerald Bachman and John Schulenberg show that, although characterized by an extremely broad socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural diversity, American youth are almost unanimously confident in the future. Driven by the “self-made man” and the empowerment ideology (sustained in turn by familial institutions), young Americans “believe in personal agency, or the power to influence their careers, their lives and the world around them.”

The Kairos Future-Fondation pour l’innovation politique survey not only presents a unique opportunity to analyze what young people value, but a chance to identify what they expect from their governments. The authors of this study have thus highlighted the *three main components of the demand* expressed by these young people. First, a demand for autonomy, in order to make their transition into adulthood less painful and antagonistic. Next, a desire to participate in society, which often translates into new forms of commitment to societal life. Young people want to be heard and valued, regardless of the ways in which they may express their plans or their frustrations. Last but not least is a need for striking a balance between the various components of their lives, inasmuch as work—which young people still view as essential—is taking on a new meaning. Work is now perceived as just one aspect of a broader life plan.

Far from being disengaged, today’s youth is sending strong messages to politicians. It is in this perspective that we have outlined, in our conclusion, four imperatives: autonomy, participation, balance and a collective project—which should guide any public action in favour of youth.

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PART I

TRANSVERSAL ANALYSES

YOUNG PEOPLE AND SOCIETY: CONTRASTING VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

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In the fullest sense of the word, belonging to a society amounts to sharing common values and being motivated by a feeling of collective belonging. Several studies (see, for example, Galland and Roudet, 2005) seem to indicate that the feeling of social belonging is weakening, particularly among young generations. The Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey, conducted on a rather broad panel of countries, allows this issue to be explored on the basis of recent data and on a comparative basis.¹ We will therefore highlight possible interpretations of these national differences and will show that the latter often remain very distinct—even between countries whose economic and social conditions are rather similar. National cultures thus remain extremely vivid and contribute towards creating highly contrasting types of social integration.

The issue of individuals' relationship to their own society can be viewed from several different perspectives.

First, let us consider the general principles that, according to the citizens concerned, must structure their society: some aspire to a community founded upon the respect of traditions, while others, on the contrary, aspire to one that promotes change. Some prefer an economic organization that focuses on free enterprise, others emphasize the role of the State, etc. These are what could be termed "societal trends," which we will examine in the first section in light of the data collected in the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey.

Yet an individual's involvement in society cannot be reduced to abstract principles that he/she abides by out of more or less conviction. The members of a society are also expected to play a role in it through their familial, professional, consumer and civic activities. In these diverse capacities, they may have a more or less strong sense of belonging to the same group, which we might call a "sense of inclusiveness." This will be examined in the second section.

In addition, even if the sense of inclusion is intense, each individual is defined by his/her own personal tendencies: these are components of identity, which we will touch upon

1. The societies specifically analyzed within the framework of this article are the following: Denmark, Sweden, Spain, Finland, Norway, Poland, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Estonia, France, Russia.

in the third section. Lastly, we will consider an issue that has less to do with structural relationships between individuals and society, and which can vary widely, depending upon the circumstances and social and economic situations of each country: What impact will all of this have on the future? What hopes and fears are driving our youth?

In examining these issues, young people obviously constitute a particularly interesting group for study, for they represent the society of the future, even if we should not be so naive as to believe that society changes with each new generation. Moreover, our findings will show that the differences between countries are greater than those between age groups. It will also be noted that, in some societies, young people's responses distinctly differ from those of the adults, while in others, intergenerational continuity is more pronounced. But it would be premature, and in fact false, to conclude from this result that the societies most homogeneous in terms of age (in terms of values and attitudes) are also those in which individuals are the most socially integrated and the most confident in their future. We will see that quite the opposite is actually the case.

SOCIETAL TRENDS: BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Societies are expected to embrace modernity, whose founding principles are said to have first emerged in Europe. Max Weber has described modernity's main components: economic (with production rationalization and intensification), political (with the adoption of representative democracy) and cultural (with the triumph of bourgeois values of individualism, political equality, professionalism and due regard for economy and efficiency). However, the notion of a regular and linear progression towards modernity proposed by modernization theorists of the 1950s and 1960s soon aroused criticism. Societies were not as simple and homogeneous as these theories implied. The Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey findings reconfirm this diversity on three levels: relation to tradition, religious attitudes and economic attitudes, as will be seen below.

a) Relation to tradition

The survey directly asked respondents to choose between two opposing assertions: "the importance of tradition and of stability" on the one hand, and "the importance of change" on the other. According to Max Weber, traditional behaviour is obviously the opposite of modernity: it is based upon a routine conception of life and on the idea that the legacy of the past is sacred and must absolutely be preserved. When specifically considering Western societies, which supposedly epitomize modernity, we might expect the young respondents to reject tradition. But that is far from being the case. In fact, on average, their responses are situated halfway between the two opposite assertions. These findings corroborate other research showing that the European youth's values are always structured around an opposition between tradition and modernity (Galland and Lemel, 2006). One part of them is attached to values from the past and to the institutions responsible for

transmitting them (the family, churches), while the other gives more weight to change and the stimulus of individual autonomy.

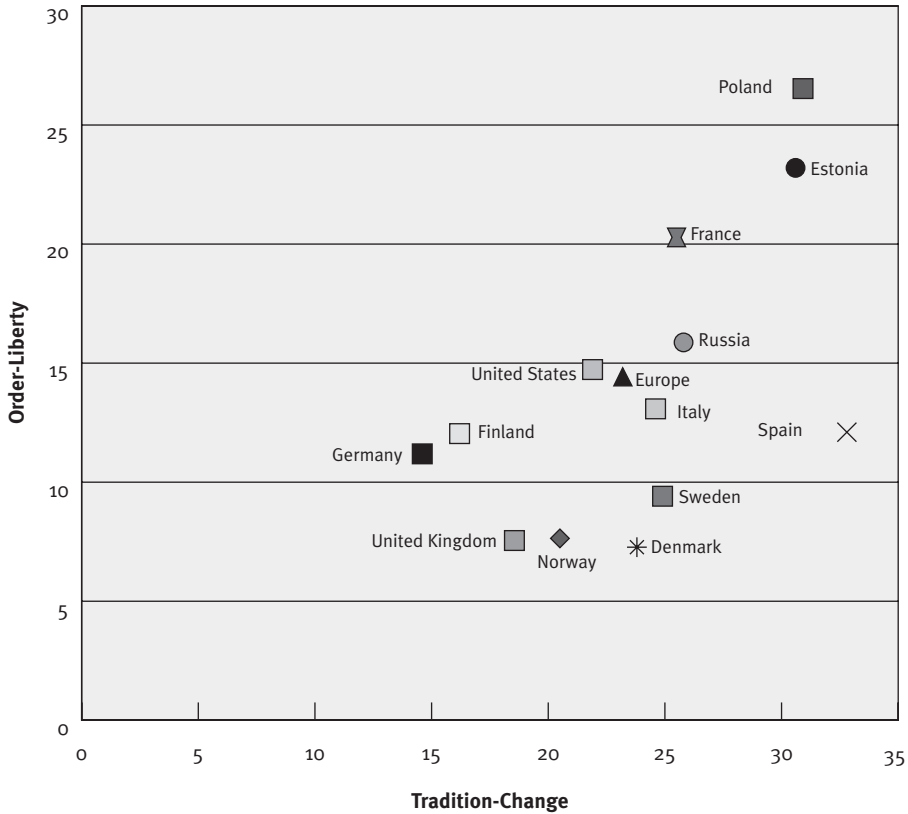
Another survey question, somewhat similar to the preceding one, opposes “law and order” to “individual liberty” and, in this case, the young people’s responses, as well as those of the adults, more clearly favour a traditional view.² This once again confirms previous research findings (notably based upon European values Surveys), which substantiated a rather sharp rise in authority values.

Figure 1 (see next page) presents a breakdown showing how the responses of survey participants from various countries scored in relation to these two scales. Their adherences to freedom and to change are rather closely correlated: the young people from countries that most favour change are also those who most prefer individual liberty over law and order. The young German and English respondents are the most conservative with respect to these two aspects, while young Scandinavians (Norwegians, Danes and Swedes) form a rather uniform group who prefers change, yet also values law and order. This combination is not as contradictory as it might initially seem. Other work has shown that the undeniable increase in moral permissiveness is now generating—including among young people and probably even more so in countries where it has reached its peak—a strong demand for regulating behaviour in the public sphere. A divergence can also be noted between changes in behavioural norms in the private sphere (pursuing the liberalization of mores) and those in the public sphere (increased demand for authority). This divergence is greater in Northern Europe, which experienced the strongest pressure to liberalize mores (Galland and Roudet, 2005). In any event, it appears that in Europe today there is a relatively homogeneous group of Nordic and Anglo-Saxon countries whose youth ranks “law and order” higher than the European mean.

When compared to Scandinavian youth, young people of Mediterranean countries (Italy, Spain and, to some extent, France) are more liberal and, in the case of Spain, far more favourable to change. The responses collected in the latter country are quite remarkable: Spanish youth indicated that they were highly in favour of change, while Spanish society has long been known for being extremely traditional and for allowing religion to have a strong impact on social mores. It would seem that things have changed very rapidly there. France also can be distinguished by the high ranking its respondents gave to the two axes of “individual liberty” and “change.”

2. The mean position of the young respondents between order (1) and liberty (7) is 3.4.

Figure 1: Young people's attitudes towards tradition and change



Reading: On the above two-axis graph, the percentage of young people who clearly chose change over tradition (scores of 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7) is shown on the x-axis, while the percentage of young people who clearly chose individual liberty over law and order is shown on the y-axis.

The cases of Poland and Estonia are more surprising. While these two countries' societies turned out to be the two that most valued change and liberty, other surveys such as the *Chronique de l'actualité* show—for Poles, at any rate (Galland, 2008)—that they are among the most traditional people in Europe.³ Actually, the words “tradition” and “change” probably have a different meaning for these Eastern Europeans. The Poles hope to see wide-ranging economic and social changes, and probably first and foremost, an improvement in their material situation. It may well be what change means to them above all else. Moreover, when they are asked, for example, about the respective role of men and women—a major indicator of

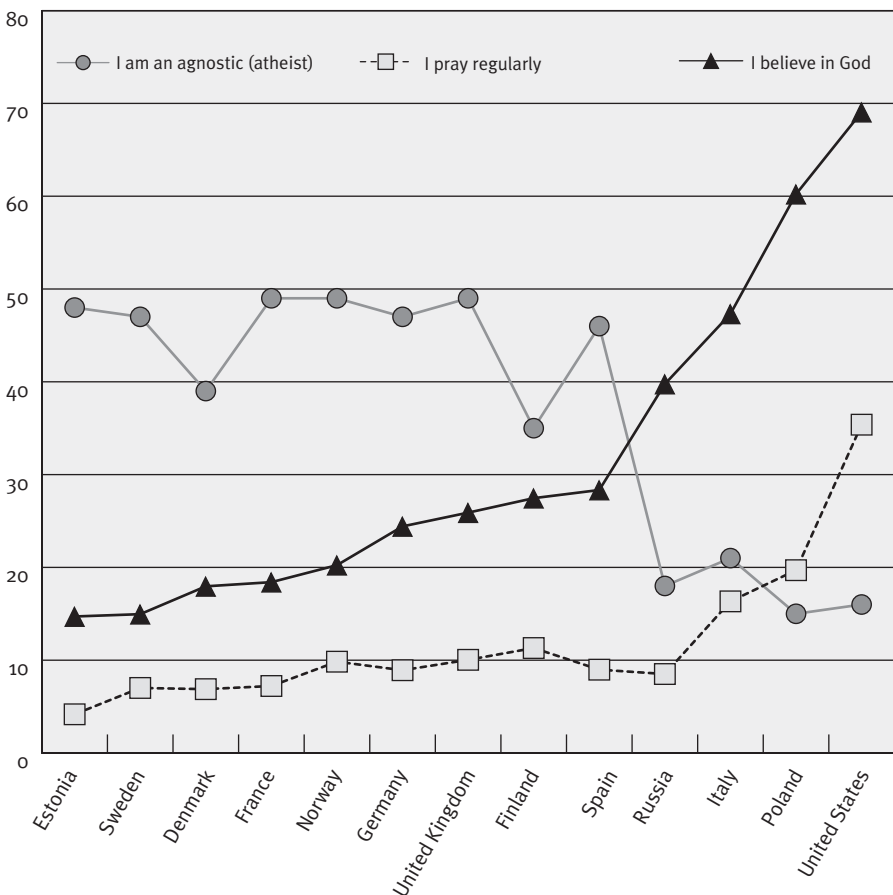
3. Not when asked directly about the terms “tradition” or “change,” but when their responses to numerous questions about their attitudes in the areas of mores, religion and institutions are synthesized (Galland, 2008).

adherence to traditionalism—we note that they are much less “modern” than the European mean: 21% of young Poles are very much in favour of maintaining a strong distinction between men’s and women’s roles, compared to only 10% of all young Europeans and, for example, 5% of the Germans and 3% of the Spaniards. Therefore, in Poland, the economic and social dimension of change is certainly given more importance than the cultural dimension.

b) Religious diversity

Religiosity constitutes another example of the persistence of profound cultural differences between European countries, as well as between the United States and Europe.

Figure 2: Young people’s religiosity



Reading: Percentage of agreement with the questions asked (individuals who gave a score of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7).

Young Poles, like the Americans, and, to a lesser extent, Italians and Russians, are still very religious (see Figure 2 previous page), and it is acknowledged that traditional attitudes have a very close correlation with religiosity (Galland and Lemel, 2007). The young Americans' religiosity level is particularly high. For example, 70% of them state that they "believe in God," as opposed to a far lower response rate of one young Danish male, or one young Swedish male, out of five. Excluding Poland, Italy and Russia—which remain religious countries—these results indicate a wide gap between Europe and the United States.

c) Attitudes about the economy and science

Respondents' attitudes about science and the economy comprise another component of modernity stressed by Max Weber (production rationalization and intensification, and the formation of beliefs in the virtues of science to optimize human activities are, in his opinion, two key components of the modernization process). In this respect, too, the young respondents' attitudes are extremely diverse.

As for the economy, the survey asked respondents to rank their opinions on scales contrasting three pairs of proposals: "individual performance (or merit) as opposed to an equitable distribution of wealth", "low taxes as opposed to a strong welfare system" and "free trade and global competition as opposed to protectionism." These three proposals were linked, making it possible to compare two schematic overviews showing how the economy functions: one based upon the pre-eminence of equality, of a strong welfare system and of the State's role to enforce them, and the other based upon individual and collective competition. But the first result was that there is virtually no country in which the young people surveyed totally adhered to one or the other of these concepts—by and large they chose to take a liberal, or statist-egalitarian view of society. In fact, in no country (excluding France) did they simultaneously choose the three proposals most closely resembling a liberal view of the economy (or conversely, the three proposals most contrary to this view). Their attitudes were nearly always a combination—leaning more or less in one direction or another—of proposals favouring free trade and supporting a strong welfare system and equity. Yet this mixed opinion differed widely from one country to another.

Several typical cases are noteworthy, however. One of the clearest examples was that of Denmark. On two of the items proposed, the Danes seemed to be the most liberal of the young Europeans concerning the economy: they were the ones who most emphatically favoured the idea of competition and of rewarding individual performance (right behind the Russians) and were also the ones least in favour of a protectionist view of the economy. But this rather frank adherence to the principles of free trade was tempered, and probably made possible, by an equally obvious attachment to a "strong welfare system" (as opposed to "low taxes"), which mitigates the negative individual consequences of liberalism.

The American attitudes are distinctly different and form a response profile that is not entirely in line with the very liberal image that the United States may have. While the Americans certainly stressed merit (though perhaps somewhat less than the Danes) and

were quite indifferent (in this case, unlike the Danes) to the value of a strong welfare system, they were also somewhat protectionist—at any event, much more so than many young Europeans.⁴ Lastly, their attitude conformed quite closely to the policy pursued by their country: liberal on the domestic front and occasionally leaning towards a more protectionist approach in terms of global trade. This was also the case, to a lesser extent, with the German and British respondents, whose adherence to protectionism resulted in their countries being ranked fifth and sixth, respectively (of the 13 countries analyzed). It is obvious that the young people who adhere, with the least restrictions, to the principles of free trade (if we consider that competition is one of its key dimensions) are primarily found in Northern Europe rather than in the United States or in the Anglo-Saxon world. The survey's questions on globalization confirm the young Anglo-Saxon's ambiguous support of liberalism. American rankings were in line with the European mean (though well below those of the Danes and Swedes), and the British—along with the French—had the least supportive score of all the countries studied. On the other hand, Nordic attitudes were somewhat disparate, as shown in Table 1 (see next page). The Swedes and Norwegians were less favourable to free trade and global competition than the Danes and much more in favour of “equity” (as opposed to “the rewarding of individual performance”) in the distribution of wealth.

Russian youth, whose attitudes are very different from those of young Western Europeans, also provided distinctive responses. The Russians claimed to be very much in favour of rewarding merit, yet were also very protectionist. Their emphasis on merit seems to express a desire for change that calls for a reassessment of existing social conditions and subsistence allowances in a society that is gradually moving away from a State-controlled economic system. Yet young Russians may also be aware of their economy's weaknesses, which, in their view, precludes their country from participating unimpeded in free global competition. That is why the Russian's very emphatic support of globalization is ambiguous. Review of their individual responses shows that they emphasized the new opportunities created by globalization for societies as well as for individuals themselves (it was young Russians who most often mentioned these two aspects as positive factors). They therefore view globalization as an opportunity for both national and personal development. Yet considering the extent to which Russians favour protectionism, it is evident that globalization cannot, in such a context, be understood as the quintessential liberal model. It no doubt more closely corresponds to the emergence of a new inter-State competitive environment in which power is the weapon of choice.

What distinguishes the young French respondents from their European counterparts is their attitude, which is systematically becoming incompatible with liberal positions. They are simultaneously demanding individual protection (by the State), equity rather

4. The result is very distinct when the Americans' mean score on this scale is compared to those of the young Europeans. The mean American score in support of protectionism is 3.94. This score is near the mid-point of the seven-point scale, yet it is nonetheless one of the highest among the societies covered, topped only by Estonia, Russia and France. By way of comparison, Denmark's score was 2.97.

than reward based on merit, and collective protection. Of all the countries studied, it was the French youth who were most in favour of protectionism. Their very reserved attitude about globalization, feared primarily because they perceive it to be a threat to employment, confirms this mistrust of free-trade principles.

Table 1: Young peoples' attitudes towards the economy and science

	A: Low taxes B: A strong welfare system	A: A society where wealth is evenly distributed B: A society in which individual performance is rewarded	A: Free trade and global competition B: Protection of national industry	A: Science and rationality B: Spiritual values
Denmark	45.7	37.2	7.6	7.3
Sweden	30.3	22.4	12.5	4.9
Spain	31.1	17.8	19.2	7.7
Finland	35.1	32.8	19.7	17.5
Norway	33.8	15.9	20.7	8.9
Poland	23.2	36.3	21.0	11.1
United States	14.1	36.3	21.8	26.9
United Kingdom	18.3	28.7	22.4	10.4
Germany	22.7	29.6	23.1	7.0
Italy	10.0	21.4	23.1	8.7
Estonia	39.9	27.5	28.0	20.7
France	35.3	22.8	28.0	7.8
Russia	40.4	48.2	31.3	14.8
Europe	24.5	26.6	22.2	8.9
Total	29.2	29.0	21.5	11.7

Reading: Percentage of young respondents indicating positions 6 or 7 on the seven-point scales A (1) to B (7). The higher the percentage, the more the respondents of a country adhered to position B. Conversely, the lower the percentage, the more they adhered to position A. Percentages above the mean are shaded in dark grey, while percentages below the mean are shaded in light grey. For example, the Danes gave a higher-than-average ranking to social protection and to reward based on individual performance, but a much lower rating to protectionism.

Ultimately, three rather diverse types of economic attitudes emerged from the survey: a “liberal-social” type, well-exemplified by Denmark, which emphasized the virtues of competition on both an individual and national level, while stressing the value of State protection; a “liberal-protectionist” type, which also underscored the virtues of merit and of reward based on performance, although more on an individual level than on a global competition level; and, lastly, a “statist-egalitarian” type, whose archetype is France, which emphasized protection (of individuals by the State and of the domestic economy against global competition) and advocated equitability rather than merit.⁵

Positions taken with respect to science and rationality represent another aspect of modernity. Overall, the attitudes are less balanced than those examined above relating to change and tradition, or the economy, and lean more clearly in favour of the rationality.⁶ The percentage of Europeans who are resolutely in favour of “spiritual values” (as opposed to “science and rationality”) is quite low (9%, see Table 1 above). However, there is a striking contrast between Europe and the United States: young Americans chose three times more often than their European counterparts the positions on the scale closest to “spiritual values” (27% vs. 9%). This result clearly illustrates the importance of religion in the United States, but may not be entirely unconnected with the recent attacks to which science and the most widely accepted scientific findings have been subjected in this country, as shown by the controversy over creationism. Here, too, a country reputed to epitomize modernity in terms of its economic and social development nonetheless seems rather guarded when it comes to values—in this case, the very “science and rationality” that was supposed to symbolize this modernity. This is additional proof—as Huntington pointed out in 1971—that modernity in no way implies the pure and simple abandonment of traditional values.

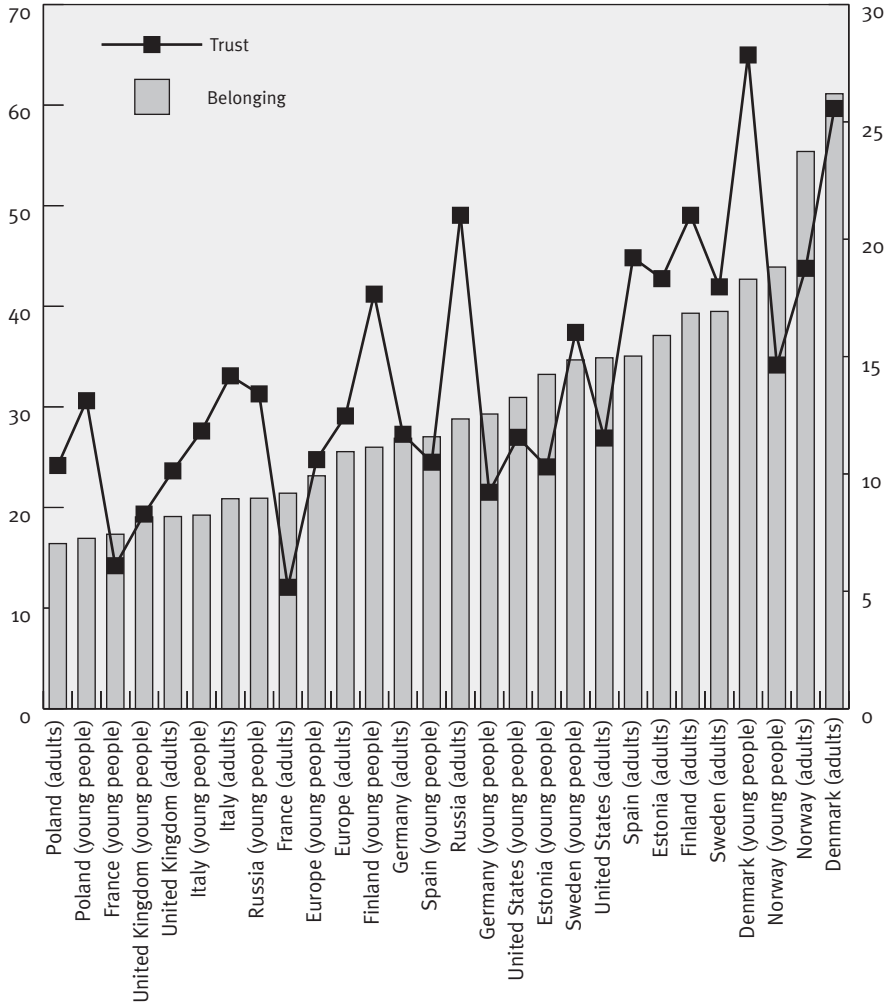
FEELINGS OF BELONGING AND TRUST

Social integration relies for the most part on the feeling of being a member of a common group, sharing values and making contacts with the members of the group to which one belongs. The integration issue can thus be addressed by measuring to what extent the members of the same entity—in this case a country’s society—share the same values and interact with each other without indicating ostracism or mistrust. The youth survey commissioned by the Fondation pour l’innovation politique approached the issue more directly, by asking individuals to what extent they felt they belonged to the society in which they lived. The results reveal sharp contrasts between the societies studied (see Figure 3, next page).

5. These types of economic attitudes correspond somewhat to the types of Welfare State highlighted by Esping-Andersen (1999) (“Conservative,” “Social-Democrat,” and “Liberal”).

6. The mean value of the science-rationality scale (1)/spiritual values (7) is 3.1 in Europe.

Figure 3: Feeling of belonging and trust in other people



Reading: The left scale corresponds to the percentage of individuals who agreed with the statement "I feel that I belong to the society I live in" (score of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). The right scale corresponds to the percentage of individuals who stated that they "trust people in general" (score of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). Unless otherwise indicated, these results concern young people in the 16 to 29 age group.

The Eastern European societies studied in this paper indicate, with the exception of Estonia, a weak feeling of belonging, yet these results are similar to those of Western European countries such as France, the United Kingdom and Italy. These findings confirm

some widely accepted facts: Eastern countries are not as well-integrated because the post-Communism era brought about considerable social, economic and identity-related upheavals that are still causing unrest (Galland and Roudet, 2005). Well-known research works carried out by American political analysts (Banfield, 1958; Almond and Verba, 1963; Putnam, 1993) have shown that Mediterranean societies are characterized by a low level of social integration, and these monography-related findings have been corroborated by surveys conducted on broad samplings, such as the European values Survey or European Social Survey (Galland and Lemel, 2007). In this respect, France unquestionably falls within the group of Mediterranean societies. It may seem more surprising to note that young British respondents are part of this group of socially disconnected Europeans, but this result was confirmed by the other surveys cited, and we will see throughout this section that young French and British respondents often gave very similar responses about how they related to society—much more so than the apparent differences between their respective societies would seem to suggest. It is worth noting that the young Americans had a relatively strong feeling of social belonging—much stronger than that of the European mean. The social capital crisis diagnosed by Putnam has apparently not caused the young Americans' feeling of social belonging to decline.

All the authors of these studies also stressed the notion of “trust” as being a core component of social capital and of the sense of belonging. Figure 3 (see previous page) shows that, on the whole, trust in other people is closely correlated with a feeling of belonging to society: those countries in Eastern and Southern Europe with a low level of “belonging” are also societies with a high level of mistrust. Social belonging is predicated upon a feeling of being able to share values and relations with others, which implies a relatively high level of spontaneous trust. In this respect, France stands out because of its particularly low level of interpersonal confidence (the lowest found in all of the countries studied, for young people and adults alike). This inability of the French to feel a sense of social belonging had already been demonstrated by other data sources (Galland, 2008). It can be explained in part by the society's declining religious and political integration.

Durkheim perceived religion as one of the mainstays of social integration: by communing in common worship, individuals would be celebrating their social inclusion. It is true that France is a very secularized country (see Figure 2 above) and that the erosion—if not disappearance—of religious socialization is bound to have had some societal impact. Analysis of the effects of religiosity on social integration is, however, highly complex. Indeed, certain countries that are still very religious, such as Italy, are poorly integrated, while others that are very secularized, such as the Nordic countries, remain very well integrated. Other factors therefore play a part in the religious impact. In the case of Italy, some pan-Mediterranean cultural factors—which Banfield had dubbed “familial amorality”—are weakening collective identity and practices. Italy is also a country in which the State is weak, and in which local or regional specificities are very pronounced. In Northern European countries, secularization is combined with a very powerful sense of collective identity: even if individual religiosity is weak, the Protestant culture still acts as a cohesive

factor in the collective identity. Max Weber explained this Protestant particularism as the desire to manifest the glory of God in the world (and thereby foster belief in the salvation of the individual soul). Protestant societies' cultural fabric, linked to their religious past, seems likely to persist. Moreover, secularization in this religion has not brought about a radical separation of Church and society—as was the case in France—and continues to convey values based on collective involvement (membership rates in trade unions, for example, are very high in Northern European countries).

However, although the religious argument is important, it cannot be retained as the sole integration factor (otherwise, secularization would almost inevitably lead to the disintegration of Western societies). Based upon data from a soon-to-be-published study (Galland, 2008), we are striving to estimate the respective effects of religiosity and of national identity on a social inclusion score. It was found that although religiosity has the greatest impact (ahead of a sense of national belonging and politicization), once these religious and political factors have been accounted for, the impact of national belonging remains equally powerful. In other words, the differences in social integration between European societies cannot be reduced to a simple religious or political impact (even if these factors exist).

The causes of the French failure to maintain a sense of social belonging must not therefore be sought solely in the (now nearly total) absence of religious socialization, or in the weakening of political socialization. It may also stem from a more general lack of trust in society, its elites and its structures. The findings concerning trust in institutions make it possible to establish a ranking by country that is somewhat similar to that relating to the feeling of belonging: young Scandinavians display a high level of trust in all institutions, but particularly those that obtained the highest trust-related mean scores, such as the United Nations and the police and justice system (see Table 2 next page). In the latter case, there is a particularly high deviation between Scandinavian countries and the European mean.⁷ That is also the case with young American respondents, who, compared to their European counterparts, ranked trust in religious institutions very high (18% trust very much, versus 5.5% for the European mean). France and the United Kingdom came in last, joined this time by Germany. The central core of Europe seems to be suffering from a lack of trust in institutions that is not presumptively justified by its level of prosperity. Poland obviously recorded highly disparate results, inasmuch as young Poles displayed very little trust in their government and police and justice system, but showed a great deal of trust in the media, multinational companies and religious institutions compared to their foreign peers. It was observed that the social uprisings that followed the collapse of Communism probably created at the same time disorder and societal disruptions that undermined the trust placed in the ruling institutions; there were high expectations for those thought to herald the advent of a new society.

7. Mean score: 5 in Denmark, 4.7 in Finland and 4.4 in Norway, versus 3.6 for the European mean.

Table 2: Scores relating to trust in institutions and in various social groups

		Your National Government	Media	Multinational Companies	NGOs	People in General	Police and Justice System	Religious Institutions	Total
1	Finland	12	13	9	6	12	12	9	73
2	Denmark	13	9	3	12	13	13	1	64
3	United States	9	7	11	7	6	8	13	61
4	Estonia	5	11	13	8	4	7	10	58
5	Sweden	10	2	8	11	11	10	2	54
6	Italy	6	6	10	10	7	3	11	53
7	Poland	1	12	12	5	8	2	12	52
8	Norway	11	4	4	4	10	11	7	51
9	Spain	7	8	2	13	5	5	4	44
10	Russia	8	10	7	1	9	1	6	42
11	Germany	3	5	6	3	3	9	5	34
12	United Kingdom	4	3	5	2	2	4	8	28
13	France	2	1	1	9	1	6	3	23

Reading: In each column, the country's score corresponds to its rank according to the percentage of respondents from that country who expressed trust in the institution considered. For example, the young Poles were the least numerous to state that they trust their country's government, while the young Danes were the most numerous in that category. The last column ("Total") is the sum of all institutional scores for each country. The countries are ranked in the table in descending order of total scores.

One interesting point concerning the differences between young people and adults as they appear in Figure 3 (see above) is that the responses given by the young and adult respondents in each country are comparable. In most cases, the responses of young individuals in a given country are more similar to those of their adult compatriots than they are to those of other young people of different nationalities. In other words, national differences are greater than generational differences: an outcome that we will have the occasion to review further on.

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION: RANGING FROM CONFORMITY TO SELF-AFFIRMATION

As shown in Table 3 (see next page), the young respondents have rather traditional identity benchmarks: “Family,” “Education,” “Occupation” and “Marital status” (single, married, etc.) are among those most often mentioned. The family of origin and the future roles that young people will be expected to assume in the future constitute the foundations of their identity. Therefore—contrary to what is sometimes anticipated—young people are not questioning the foundations of adult identity. Regardless of their national origin (including the United States), they define themselves first and foremost by those basic status components represented by family and occupation (education being the means to gain access to a job). Note that “marital status” is not considered as important in certain countries such as Denmark, Italy and Spain—probably because the changes in such status occur early in life in Denmark and very late in life in Italy and Spain.

Friends also constitute a very important identity benchmark for young people. It is obvious that the role friends play in the respondents’ lives has expanded substantially in the last several years, with the peer group playing an increasingly important role in the process of adolescent socialization: to some extent, as far as this period of life is concerned, influence has been transferred from fathers to peers (Pasquier, 2005). That does not prevent adolescents from having a relatively conformist view of their future, but their cultural life and sociability have partially eluded the influence of parents and school. The percentage of young respondents who consider friends to be a very important factor in their identity is, moreover, often very close to that which concerns family—and sometimes higher. Even in very traditional countries such as Poland, the impact of friends is undeniable.

While these general findings are widely known, it is somewhat surprising to observe that “Language” and “Sexual Orientation” were rated rather high in the ranking of young people’s identity benchmarks. The reference to language undoubtedly expresses the logical fact that, for young people as well as adults, cultural landscapes are for the most part defined through linguistic landscapes. Speaking a common language is obviously what primarily unites inhabitants of the same country, and, beyond that, speaking similar languages for those who belong to the same linguistic landscape (that of Roman languages, for example) no doubt contributes to some forms of mutual recognition. It may be reassuring to note that language—a key component of common culture—was viewed by the young respondents themselves as an element of their culture. Naturally, we cannot set aside the possibility that this language to which they refer is not always the official language of the country and that it can also be invented by them to communicate with each other, thanks to the new communication technologies available (chat rooms, SMS, Internet, etc.).

Table 3: Ranking, in descending order and by country, of identity items most often cited by young people

	Family	Friends	Education	Profession	Language	Marital Status	Sexual Orient.	Nationality	Age	Local Community	Religion	European Identity	Ethnic Group
Denmark	1	2	3	4	5	8	7	6	9	11	12	10	13
Estonia	1	2	3	4	5	7	6	8	9	11	13	12	10
France	1	2	5	3	6	4	7	9	8	11	13	10	12
Finland	2	1	5	3	6	4	7	8	9	10	12	11	13
Germany	2	1	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	7	13	11	12
Italy	1	2	3	4	6	8	5	9	7	11	12	10	13
Norway	1	2	5	4	6	3	7	8	9	10	12	13	11
Poland	1	2	3	4	5	7	6	9	12	11	8	10	13
Russia	1	2	3	4	7	6	5	8	10	9	13	11	12
Spain	2	1	3	4	5	9	8	6	7	10	13	11	12
Sweden	1	2	3	4	6	5	7	8	9	10	13	12	11
United Kingdom	1	2	3	4	7	6	8	5	9	11	10	13	12
United States	1	2	3	4	8	6	7	9	10	11	5		12
Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

Reading: Each figure corresponds to the ranking, in descending order, of the item in the country considered. For example, in Denmark, "Family" is the most often-cited item, ahead of "Friends" and "Education". The items appear in the table according to their order of importance in the total population.

The rather frequent reference to sexual orientation (28% of the young Europeans and 36% of the Americans mentioned it as an important factor in their identity) may be more surprising. The question may not have been correctly understood. For "sexual orientation" means choosing a partner according to the latter's gender and therefore refers to a possible homosexual orientation. Contrary to public opinion, homosexual practices are relatively uncommon, and the vast majority of young people thus share the same sexual orientation. According to a recent survey conducted in France by INED and INSERM (Bajos and Bozon, 2007), 4% of men and women aged 18 to 69 stated that they had already had relationships with persons of the same sex (1.6% of the men and 1% of the women in the course of the previous 12 months). The frequency with which sexual orientation is mentioned in young respondents' definition of their identity therefore cannot be explained by homosexual practices that, in reality, are not commonplace among them, inasmuch as such practices are still rare. There are two possible explanations. This choice may translate

the influence of public debate on homosexual issues—or more recently same-sex parenting—and reflect young people’s open-mindedness on this subject. That may also simply be explained by the vague perception young people have of sexuality as a key component of their identity.

Table 4: Deviations between adult and young respondent percentages of agreement (scores of 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7)

	Nationality	Ethnic group	Religion	Education	Language	Family	Friends	Age	Marital Status	Profession	Sexual Orient.	Local Community	European Identity	Sum of Deviations
Spain	-3,95	-0,60	-3,60	-2,21	-1,37	-6,41	2,50	6,94	2,35	0,10	-0,83	-4,21	-0,61	35,68
Europe	-1,20	0,68	-0,17	1,89	0,09	-6,57	6,93	4,97	3,64	4,22	3,89	0,42	-1,11	35,78
United States	2,33	5,45	-3,04	6,28	-1,27	-3,50	4,26	8,37	0,08	5,33	2,27	0,01	0,00	42,19
Russia	5,30	-0,91	-3,30	1,73	-1,42	-10,41	5,40	-2,66	-6,04	-0,43	4,80	1,91	-2,43	46,74
France	-2,49	4,10	2,47	3,76	2,01	-7,31	4,76	5,79	6,22	3,03	1,03	-1,42	-4,38	48,77
Germany	2,66	1,62	3,25	-1,59	0,53	-4,86	8,54	4,97	10,81	1,79	5,20	4,51	-0,34	50,67
Italy	-0,19	-2,40	-3,27	0,94	3,11	-5,75	4,87	0,50	-3,23	9,62	8,29	4,43	-4,90	51,50
United Kingdom	-5,82	-0,84	-3,72	-0,75	-7,00	-6,37	5,24	7,68	-3,45	7,16	-1,09	-3,69	1,61	54,42
Estonia	-3,73	-4,42	3,71	0,08	1,73	-4,08	11,55	6,89	6,02	2,12	12,44	1,08	-1,78	59,63
Poland	1,26	1,95	0,02	6,26	6,76	-6,40	16,92	2,01	7,48	5,72	7,75	1,43	2,35	66,31
Finland	-7,00	-0,01	-1,37	2,38	-5,30	-13,13	4,87	7,17	9,81	3,06	9,02	-1,95	-5,18	70,25
Norway	-1,97	1,00	6,21	9,95	-3,77	-12,22	1,48	8,70	3,14	4,21	5,89	-8,56	-4,76	71,86
Denmark	-1,45	-3,42	1,40	12,62	-7,01	-8,03	10,67	5,91	-1,78	-8,04	7,33	-5,11	-2,80	75,57
Sweden	4,47	6,15	5,57	18,78	0,78	-12,47	4,00	8,14	4,46	5,31	4,44	2,53	5,68	82,78
Total	-0,84	0,60	0,30	4,29	-0,87	-7,68	6,57	5,38	2,82	3,09	5,03	-0,62	-1,33	39,42

Reading: Each figure in this table is equal to the percentage of 6 and 7 scores given by the young respondents, minus the percentage of 6 and 7 scores given by the adults. A positive deviation therefore indicates that the young respondents ranked the item in question as more important, while a negative deviation indicates that the adults ranked it as more important. The widest deviations (5 points or higher) are shaded in dark grey for young respondents, and in light grey for the adults. The last column in the table corresponds to the sum total of the deviations’ absolute values. It therefore indicates the overall “gap” separating the young people’s responses from those of the adults on identity-related questions. Countries are ranked in the table in ascending order based on this overall gap.

Another way to interpret these findings is to compare the young respondents' answers to those of the adults. The former give relatively conformist answers, but do they really differ from those of the adults in their degree of adherence, or with respect to any particular item? Table 4 (see previous page) shows that young people assigned particular importance to two specific items: "Friends" and "Age." They always chose these two aspects of their identity more often than the adults did, and sometimes in very high proportions for "Friends"—as was the case in Poland, Estonia, Denmark and Germany. Only one item was much more frequently chosen by the adult than by the young respondents: "Family." While a survey conducted on any given date cannot be used as a source of information about changes in young people's attitudes, these dual findings nonetheless underscore what is probably the growing importance of the peer group world in identifying juvenile identity benchmarks.

Table 4 can also be used to rank identity deviations between the young and adult respondents: certain European societies—Spanish, Russian, French, German, and Italian—are very, or relatively, homogeneous from a generational viewpoint as far as self-defining criteria are concerned, while others, such as Polish society and those of the Nordic countries, are very heterogeneous. Nordic societies, however, are not conflictual, as French and Italian societies tend to be. We may therefore conclude that an asserted juvenile specificity is not in itself a source of social tension. Perhaps, on the contrary, it is when young people can assert their distinctiveness in a society that accepts it that they are most likely to find their rightful place. Moreover, young Nordic participants were the most numerous (30 to 40%) to state that they have much in common with their compatriots in terms of culture, values and lifestyle, while the French, Germans and English were the least to agree with this statement (only 13 to 20% said that they had much in common), although these young respondents reported few distinctive identity traits. It is also true that Northern European societies are experiencing greater social and professional mobility, which no doubt enables new generations to envision the future in a very different way than their parents did.

However, developing identity does not simply result from a choice or transmission process. It is also the outcome of social interaction: the way people view each other and the way young people view themselves, mediated by external norms, can constitute powerful obstacles—or aids—in self-development.

In matters concerning appearance and self-esteem, modern societies' youth have contrasting feelings: they want to stand out, but they also want to conform to their society's expectations, since the vast majority of them strive to fit into the established social environment, as we have just seen. The results presented in Table 5 (next page) amply illustrate these conflicting views. Self-esteem is a fundamental aspect of personal development, and a large proportion of these young people (mean of 70%) therefore believe that it is extremely important to measure up to their own expectations. Of course, such expectations are for the most part a product of society, even if young people are not necessarily aware of it. This thus points to a powerful conformity factor, which naturally varies

according to the social situations and societies concerned. It is clear that in French society, more social pressure seems to be brought to bear on young people than in other Western societies: young French respondents were less inclined to state that they live up to their own expectations or always do what they want, yet there were more of them than any other respondents—aside from the Russians—who said that it is important to conform to the expectations of others. School pressures and grades—so essential in the eyes of French families and the country’s youth—undoubtedly had something to do with this result. Conversely, American and Danish societies seemed to give more importance to self-evaluation.

Table 5: Importance of appearance and self-esteem among young respondents

	Important for me to live up to my own expectations	Boring to be like everyone else	Important for me to be good-looking	Important to live up to the expectations of others	I do what I want	Not my problem if I provoke others	Important not to stand out too much	Important to be “in style”	Important that my friends are similar to me
Denmark	74.5	42.7	33.8	20.3	14.3	12.6	7.5	9.7	4.2
Estonia	78.9	49.9	47.4	17.9	22.4	12.6	12.7	29.1	7.8
France	67.8	47.8	23.2	31.9	13.4	10.2	23.8	7.3	4.9
Finland	64.5	42.1	14.0	1.7	13.4	20.5	2.4	4.9	5.6
Germany	76.4	47.8	39.5	23.5	24.3	22.0	22.4	7.0	12.5
Italy	71.5	46.8	22.5	24.8	18.5	14.8	13.2	17.0	16.3
Norway	63.8	42.3	40.7	18.7	12.1	14.2	7.1	4.7	4.6
Poland	69.8	62.4	49.2	5.8	25.4	21.1	30.4	17.5	6.4
Russia	75.7	61.8	58.2	40.4	22.0	32.5	16.8	32.6	13.5
Spain	71.3	44.3	33.7	19.7	14.5	13.3	16.3	8.6	4.2
Sweden	63.7	37.8	34.7	19.1	17.6	14.5	6.3	7.1	7.3
United Kingdom	61.4	45.9	28.7	12.9	14.5	7.5	11.3	9.8	9.3
United States	76.9	49.8	37.0	18.2	19.9	12.1	18.9	17.4	17.3
Europe	69.8	47.9	32.0	20.1	18.3	14.9	17.9	10.6	9.1
Total	70.4	47.8	35.3	19.6	17.9	15.9	14.8	13.1	8.8

Reading: Young respondents’ percentage of agreement with these various statements (scores of 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). Percentages more than 5 points above the mean reported in the “Total” column are shaded in grey.

The pressure to conform that is nonetheless exerted in any society conflicts with the desire, increasingly asserted in modern societies, to distinguish oneself: the second most often-chosen item was “[It is] boring to be like everyone else.” The “culture of appearances” (Pasquier, 2005) offers adolescents and young adults the option of cultivating a clothing style and body styling without giving up the benefits of future integration. Therefore it was hardly surprising to note in the survey the importance given to the item “To be good-looking.” In addition, as Dominique Pasquier has so clearly shown, this stylization of appearances is only simulated anticonformity: it truly obeys a powerful peer group “law,” and those stigmatized are first and foremost those who refuse to follow this code or who depart from the physical norm because they are too small or too fat (Galland, 2006). On this point, the highly contradictory aspirations of young people in Eastern European countries, particularly young Russians, stand out: the latter rank conformist ambitions highest (for example, 40% believed “It is important to live up to the expectations of others,” versus 20% for the European mean; 33% believed that “[It is] important to be in style”), while at the same time strongly emphasizing their individualism (“I do what I want”), or even their rebellion (“[It is] not my problem if I provoke others”).

AMBITIONS AND FEARS IN ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE

The young respondents’ ambitions are consistent with what we have just learned about identity: when asked what a good life means to them, most young people responded that it consists of having a family and children, feeling needed, spending time with friends and having an exciting and meaningful job. The purely material ambitions—having a lot of money, for example—were only cited as important by a minority (about 30%), and the less-conformist ambitions (not to have to work, or to become famous) were seldom chosen (12 and 8%). With respect to these rather traditional items as a whole, few differences were recorded between the various countries’ societies.

The results concerning future prospects are far less homogeneous (see Table 6 next page). In certain societies (those of Northern Europe and of the United States), young respondents were much more optimistic about their personal future than in others (the French and Italian societies and those of Eastern European countries). Objective facts can partially explain the young Scandinavians’ optimism: countries like Denmark have managed to reduce youth unemployment in the last twenty years, while it has remained high in France and in Italy (2 to 2.5 times higher than that of adults) (Galland, 2007). Notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that in nearly all of the countries, young respondents were more optimistic than the adults about their personal future. This result may, however, include a life cycle effect: the future of young people is ahead of them, while many adults—already settled in stable jobs and unlikely to experience further promotions—may have the impression that the future will not provide them with any more career advancement opportunities. Moreover, in some countries—notably the United States and Germany—the optimism of young respondents is much greater than that of adults, while in France, for example, it is equal.

Table 6: Young people and the future

	My future looks bright	Society's future looks bright	People can change society	People in my country have the opportunity to choose their own lives	I have complete freedom and control over my own future	I am confident I will have a good job in the future	It is very important to me that I achieve a better material standard than my parents	It is very important to me that I do not have a lower material standard than my parents
Denmark	59.6	25.9	62.9	60.2	44.7	60.0	11.8	18.1
United States	54.1	17.9	63.4	61.3	51.4	59.6	31.5	36.6
Norway	54.1	24.2	57.9	58.5	40.1	45.1	6.9	17.1
Sweden	49.2	17.7	49.6	44.2	35.4	43.2	11.8	24.9
Finland	42.8	17.6	44.5	49.4	38.1	37.5	14.8	24.9
Estonia	41.5	20.7	52.6	34.5	30.1	41.3	42.8	41.1
Germany	36.5	9.7	49.8	22.7	39.0	34.3	15.7	42.6
United Kingdom	35.9	6.9	41.4	40.7	31.1	38.6	19.1	25.4
Spain	31.6	6.8	46.5	30.3	28.8	35.8	19.7	21.9
Russia	28.1	11.2	49.6	29.3	19.3	42.0	66.5	67.7
France	25.6	4.2	39.0	25.8	22.4	27.0	15.9	22.6
Poland	23.6	4.7	41.4	23.5	28.1	25.3	44.5	54.2
Italy	22.6	6.7	43.6	28.3	22.9	26.0	24.2	25.9
Europe	32.0	8.1	44.8	30.6	30.2	33.0	21.3	31.3
Total	38.4	13.0	49.1	38.5	33.0	39.2	24.7	32.4

Reading: Percentage of agreement with these various statements (scores of 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). The dark grey boxes are those in which the young respondents' percentage of responses is 10 points higher than the adults' percentage of responses; the light grey boxes are those in which the young respondents' percentage of responses is 5 points higher. The countries are ranked in the table in descending order of responses to "My future looks bright."

In addition, when considering all the results in Table 6 (above), we note that in certain countries—as different as the United States and Poland—young people are almost systematically more optimistic than the adults about their personal situation and their future opportunities. American results particularly stand out: young respondents displayed a great deal of confidence in their options for success and promotion, as well as in their personal ability to have an influence on the course of their lives. Young French respondents had the opposite view: very little trust in the future and in the possibility of directing the course of their lives in a favourable direction. These results attest to a certain fatalism

among young French respondents, exemplified by the low proportion of them (16%) who stated that it is important to achieve a better material standard than their parents.⁸

What is fuelling this pessimism? Some modicum of an answer may lie in the fact that France, along with Italy and other Mediterranean countries, belongs to the so-called “closed job system” group of countries (Blossfeld and Mills, 2005)—a system that emphasizes job flexibility for young people. This is characterized by relatively high employment protection and a relatively low job mobility rate. The various forms of unstable jobs are highly concentrated among certain groups seeking to gain access to the job market (young people, women and the unemployed). Young people thus constitute one of the economy’s adjustment variables, in a context in which globalization and the growing uncertainty of economic forecasts are leading companies to strive for increasing flexibility in the use of their resources. In “open job system” countries (Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon countries), in which job protection mechanisms are weak, flexibility is made available to the entire population. There are, however, two variants of these open job systems that differ according to the Welfare State regimes concerned. In liberal Anglo-Saxon systems, low wages primarily affect the youth. In Scandinavian countries, the job market is characterized by substantial flexibility, a high level of job protection and unemployment benefits, and by policies that actively help the unemployed get back to work on a case-by-case basis. We have seen how important this protective system is to young Nordic respondents (see Table 1 above).

Young French people therefore have good reasons to be less optimistic than the Danes and Norwegians. This “hexagonal” pessimism is sustained by a deep mistrust of institutions and elites—as seen earlier—but also by a sort of “hyperconformism” among French youth that leads them to give up, as if their fate had been decided in advance without their being able to direct the course of their lives in a favourable direction. This is apparent in the Table 6 results (see previous page): fewer French respondents believed that they have freedom and control over their future or felt that “their fellow citizens” can choose their own life. Other results corroborate these findings. In answering the questions dealing with self-esteem and how others view them, the French were the most numerous among all Europeans to state that it was important for them to live up to the expectations of others and also the most numerous to state that it was important not to stand out too much. These results bring to mind the cultural syndrome brought to light by sociologists such as Philippe d’Iribarne (1989) and Marie Duru-Bellat (2006), concerning the importance of ranking in French culture and the primordial role that education plays in determining such social rankings: in France, a diploma is not designed to be an investment in human

8. The young Norwegian respondents’ low score on this question can be partly explained by the already very high level of prosperity reached by their societies. On the other hand, it is evident that a very high number of young Poles and young Russians hope to achieve a higher material standard than their parents. The answers to this question are therefore obviously related to the standard of living in each country. A counter-example of this is provided by the United States—one of the world’s richest countries—in which a high ratio of young people nonetheless said that it is important to them to achieve a better material standard of comfort than their parents. In that country, there is manifestly a cultural factor much more common than in Europe that is inspiring in American youth the determination to succeed and to advance.

capital to facilitate the holder's access to the job market (an Anglo-Saxon concept), it is a title, akin to that of nobility, which endows the holder with rights and provides access to a given position in the social hierarchy. Marie Duru-Bellat explained this typically French concept of status and hierarchy very thoroughly in her last book, *L'Inflation scolaire. Les désillusions de la méritocratie*. Education in France is primarily conceived as a graduated ladder in which the level attained counts more than the content. This ladder is perceived as a reflection of social stratification. For young French people and their families, the individual's fate hangs on this, and to be ranked according to one's education is tantamount to being ranked according to social class. This ranking concept based on education is perhaps the root cause of French youth's fatalism and pessimism. Their future does not depend on them, but on an institution that assigns them a place in the social hierarchy.

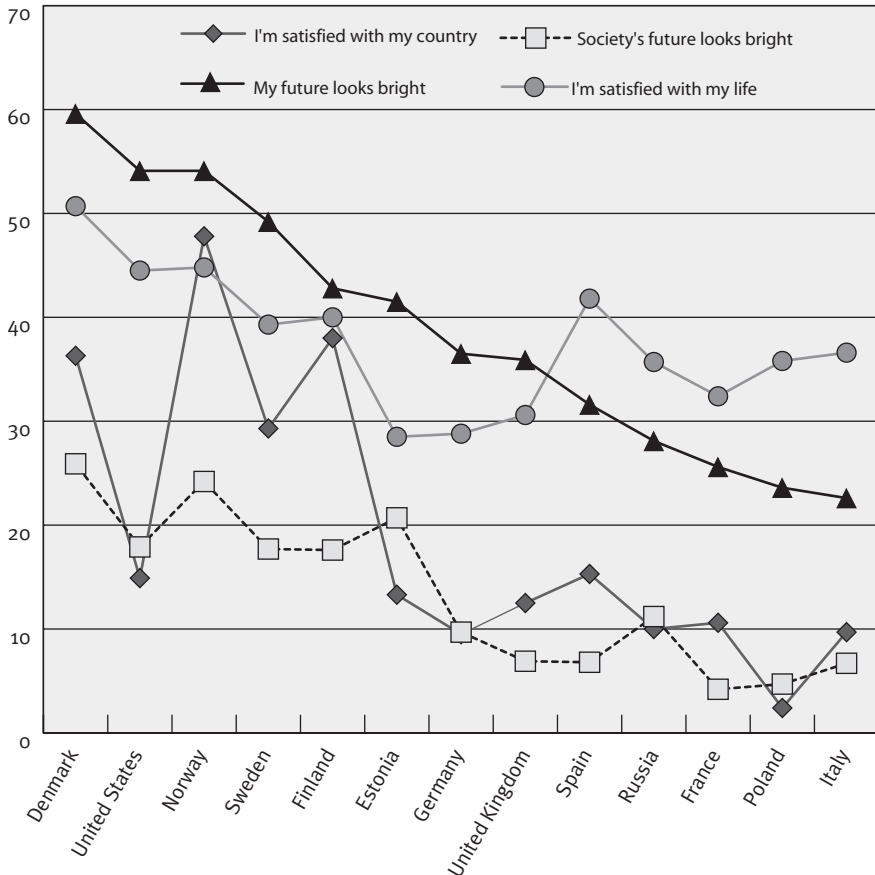
The Poles' responses are also enlightening. Compared to their European peers, young Poles were rather pessimistic. Yet they were almost systematically (to the contrary of the young French respondents) more optimistic than their adult compatriots (this is also the case with the Estonians and, to a lesser extent, the Russians). This may be interpreted as signifying that the attitudes of these Eastern European societies are improving, and that the young generations are differentiating themselves from past generations and believe much more than the latter in their opportunities for success.

Germany, the United Kingdom and Spain occupy an intermediate position, with optimism scores relatively close to the European mean, but with young respondents often much more optimistic than the adults, especially in Germany. This may suggest some vitality at work in these countries' societies. France and Italy, on the contrary, ranked last, their youth apparently as unconvinced as the adults that their situation will improve.

Logically, the satisfaction expressed by young respondents about the lives they are leading, or about society in general, should correlate with their optimism concerning the future (Figure 4 next page).

The country ranking is nearly always the same: Northern European countries and the United States show the largest proportion of optimistic and satisfied young people, while the youth of France, Italy, and the Eastern European countries take the opposite view. However, apart from the Northern European countries and the United States—where young people reported they were very satisfied with their lives—the personal satisfaction rate does not seem to be closely correlated with the optimism indicators. On the contrary, the satisfaction rate with respect to each country's general situation is closely linked to the optimism indicators. In other words—and this result was already observed in other surveys—indicators concerning personal situations and those concerning society as a whole are relatively divergent, and it is apparently the latter that are fuelling young people's pessimism and dissatisfaction in the societies where these indicators are the highest. The dissatisfaction generated in these countries is truly the product of a crisis of confidence in society.

Figure 4 : Young people's satisfaction and optimism



Reading: Percentage of agreement with the question asked (individuals who gave a score of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7).

A study of the threats that, according to respondents, loom over their societies' future also brings to light the causes of their dissatisfaction, when any is present. First of all, as a whole, the societies with which these young people are most satisfied are also those in which they feel the least threatened—such is the case in all Scandinavian countries, where the percentage of young respondents who identified a threat to their society is systematically (and sometimes substantially) lower than the European mean. For example, 18% of the young Danes identified unemployment as a threat, versus 44% of the young French respondents and 47% of the young Italians. This is an example of how employment systems can affect attitudes: in countries where flexibility is focused upon youth, the anguish of losing one's job is much greater than it is in those countries where it constitutes a general labour market operating principle.

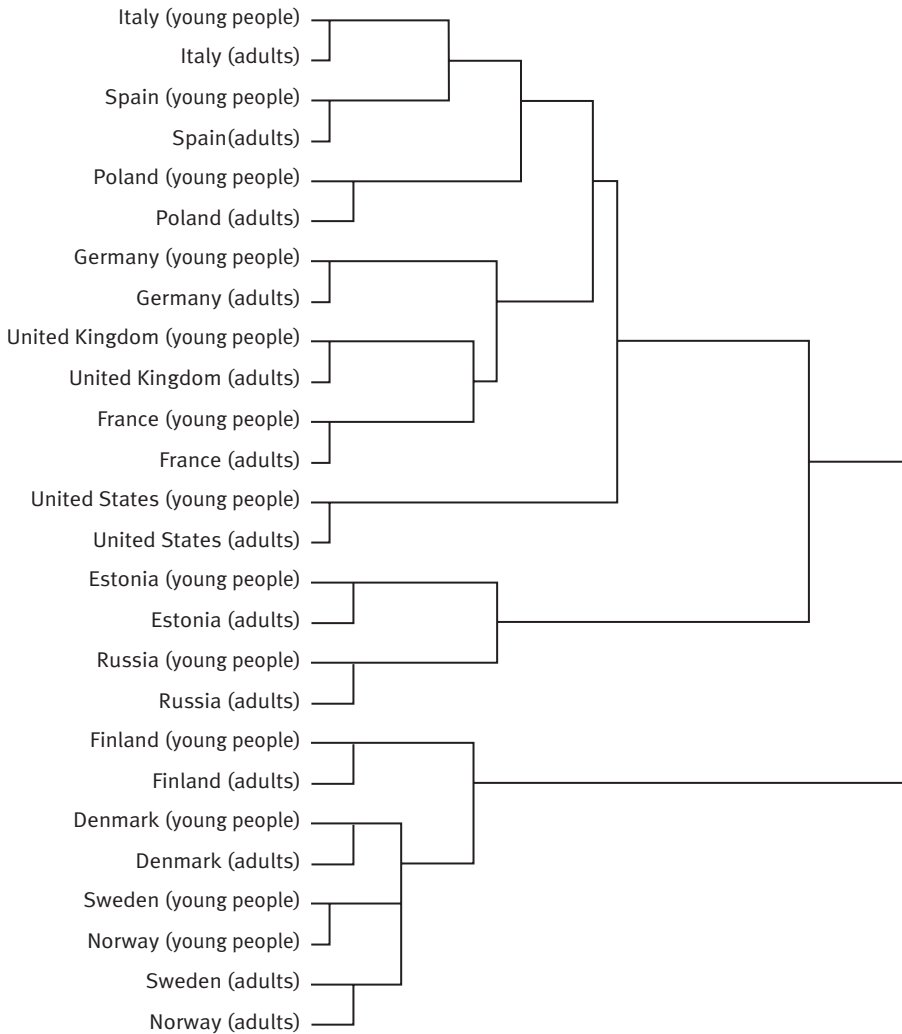
Among those countries with high satisfaction rates, the United States is somewhat of an exception because, despite being very satisfied with their lives, young Americans are more sensitive than the young European mean to certain threats such as war, drugs, and the collapse of the financial system, which clearly reflect the fragilities and particularities of their society. The Spanish respondents presented another exception of this sort: though quite satisfied with their lives, they are highly sensitive to this set of threats.

Young respondents dissatisfied with their lives can be classified in one of two groups of countries. First, those in which the youth is sensitive to a wide range of threats—as in Poland, Italy and Russia. Young people in these countries have the feeling that they are living in a particularly fragile society that is threatened by external aggressions (war, terrorism) as well as by internal aggressions (poverty, pollution, crime, etc.). This societal dissatisfaction probably stems from the feeling that the State is incapable of effectively dealing with this set of aggressions threatening the social cohesion—and at times even the survival—of the society. In the second group of countries, in which youth dissatisfaction is the highest—France, the United Kingdom and Germany—young respondents mentioned more specific threats that can be linked to a particular context: poverty and unemployment in Germany (former Eastern Germany's economic situation undoubtedly being the main cause of this feeling); terrorism and war in the United Kingdom (involved in the war in Iraq and the target of recent terrorist attacks on its own soil); pollution and unemployment in France (where the issue of young people's vocational integration is still a major problem and where a heated debate is underway on the subject of GMOs).

CONCLUSION: PREVALENCE OF NATIONAL SPECIFICITIES

Finally, what conclusions may be drawn from the similarities and differences between countries, as revealed in the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey? Figure 5 offers an empirical response based on a statistical ranking method. This figure first shows that the young people in each country responded in a similar manner to adults of the same nationality. National specificities are therefore stronger than age group identity: the opinions of a young French person more closely resemble those of an adult French respondent than those of a young Italian or a young English respondent. Young Swedish and Norwegian respondents were the sole exceptions: their opinions were more similar to each other's than to those of their adult compatriots.

Figure 5: Dendrogramme of all items using the Ward method, with standardized variables



Reading: A hierarchical ascending classification was used to create a typology grouping certain statistical individuals (in this case, young and adult respondents, by country) through successive comparisons according to the proximity of responses to a major set of variables (in this case, answers to the survey questions). This method was used to obtain a dendrogramme, which is to say a statistical chart that represents, when read left to right, successive comparisons of the “age/country” groups. The groups with the most similar responses are found in the same set on the left side of the statistical chart. The classification aggregates groups with fewer similarities in new sets, shown towards the right.

Most importantly, Figure 5 shows how the countries are broken down into five groups.

The **first group** consists of the Catholic countries: Italy and Spain first, followed by Poland. The youth of these reputedly “traditional” countries may be primarily characterized by a desire for change: in Spain, this change is happening very quickly in the area of mores, as if young people were trying to make up for all the years lost to Francoism; in Poland, where young people are anxious to succeed and advance in a society more open since the collapse of Communism, this change is evident in economic and social areas.

These countries’ societies nonetheless remain strongly influenced by religion (this is especially true of Poland and Italy, but less so for Spain) and by some of their traditional characteristics (weak integration, pessimism about their personal future or that of the country).

The **second group** consists of France and the United Kingdom, followed by Germany. This part of Europe seems to be affected by a generalized crisis of confidence that is particularly evident in France and the United Kingdom. It is surprising to note the proximity of these two countries, as if the Blair era—contrary to the appearance of relative success in terms of domestic policy—had failed to inspire British youth with a new collective momentum. Although it is true that the confidence indicated by young British respondents is considerably greater than that of their French peers, it is not nearly as strong as that shown by young Scandinavians. The proximity of the British and Scandinavian employment systems therefore does not translate into a convergence of attitudes among young people belonging to these two country groups. That may stem from the fact that the Welfare State systems prevalent in these countries are quite different: liberal in one case, and social democratic in the second (Esping-Andersen, 1999). Although young people are affected by unemployment and job insecurity in these countries with an open employment system, their living conditions vary substantially on the basis of these Welfare State regimes and seem to be less favourable in the liberal systems. This central part of “Old Europe” seems, for its part, rather fearful and withdrawn into itself: the French and the British, for example, are the most reluctant with respect to globalization—for reasons that are primarily social and economic for the former, and cultural and institutional for the latter. The French crisis of confidence is particularly critical: French youth are among the least integrated of all young Europeans, the most defiant towards institutions and other people and the most pessimistic about their personal future and that of the society. This French pessimism is intriguing, for it seems to extend beyond what might be inferred from the young people’s objective situation. It has already been pointed out that the way in which the labour market functions is not favourable to French youth, but France is nevertheless a prosperous country, endowed with a strong State, sound institutions, and high-quality infrastructures. Public assistance for young French people is a long way from equalling that available in Scandinavian countries, though it

is still significant.⁹ In all these respects, France is, for example, in a better position than Italy. However, in terms of the confidence and optimism indicators, it remains nearly on the same, if not an even lower, level. Consequently, other parameters need to be considered in assessing the pessimism of French youth. The latter are not easy to identify and we can only make assumptions. One previously suggested concerned the impact of academic standing on the collective psychology of French youth. Another might be mentioned concerning the means by which young people enter into their independent adult life in France. The latter differs from Mediterranean countries such as Italy, as well as from Scandinavian countries. The French particularity stems from the fact that French youth leave their parental home rather early in life (not as early as the Scandinavians, but much earlier than the Italians), without the benefit of a strong protective system like that provided in the Nordic countries. In Denmark, for example, every young person is considered to be independent upon reaching 18 years of age, at which point he/she may then receive a government grant for the purpose of pursuing his/her studies, regardless of his/her parents' income level. Such a system does not exist in France, and young people there consequently experience an initial form of autonomy under more financially challenging conditions than in Denmark, Sweden or Italy (where young people's departure from their parents' homes is postponed until they are much older, thereby allowing them to accumulate resources while continuing to receive family protection, in order to prepare for the moment when they can assume their adult lives). It should also be pointed out that the unemployment compensation system does not work in favour of French youth. Those who have not yet been employed long enough to qualify for unemployment benefits—undoubtedly more and more numerous, given the proliferation of short-term contracts—are likely to find themselves deprived of resources in the event of a job loss.¹⁰ By making the process of achieving autonomy occur *outside* of the family (and not *inside* the family, as in Italy), and without the advantage of a Social-Democratic-type welfare system, French youth may experience a more uneasy passage into adulthood.

Lastly, French pessimism is not confined to the country's youth; it affects all of society. Pierre Cahuc and Yann Algan (2007) recently proposed an interpretation of French society's crisis of confidence by highlighting the failings of the French social model, which relies upon corporatist and statist foundations that lead to societal segmentation and make social relations less intelligible—which in turn promotes rent-seeking, sustains mutual suspicions and undermines solidarity mechanisms.

The **third group** is comprised solely of the United States, which was subsequently aggregated into the two preceding European groups—and then into Northern Europe, which will be discussed next. In comparison to European attitudes, those of America present multiple particularities. Perhaps two traits stand out from the rest: the incomparably greater

9. What sets France apart is its generous student housing allowances.

10. Applicants must have worked six of the previous twenty-two months in order to benefit from back-to-work assistance.

importance given to religion and spiritual values, and the extraordinary optimism and confidence in the future—personal as well as societal—that motivate American youth.

The **fourth group** consists of Russia and Estonia. Russia, in this survey, often gives the impression of being a mixture of contradictory positions: a desire for change countered by what are often highly traditional attitudes; attachment to competition yet also to protectionism, and an ambition to conform without fear of provocation or individualism. Through its youth, Russian society thus seems to be experiencing a strong tension between a desire for change and the pressure exerted by the latter on the one hand, and the fears or strong reactions aroused by the social upheavals resulting from this pressure.

The **fifth and final group** comprises most of the Scandinavian countries, which are characterized by strong integration that fuels individual and collective optimism and confidence. In terms of their youth, these countries are the most open to the outside world and culturally the most in step with globalization.

Overall, there are strong variations between the countries. This was also the findings of the European values Surveys. Analysis of these surveys made over a period of some twenty years showed no net move towards value convergence: all of the countries were evolving in nearly the same direction,¹¹ but the gaps between them were not narrowing. It is therefore not surprising that this survey should indicate that strong contrasts between the countries remained intact. These contrasts notably appear in accordance with a north-south cleavage line also identified in previous studies. This cleavage is not only geographical, but also religious—even if many of the countries concerned are highly secularized. Despite the dwindling direct influence of churches on society, cultural differences associated with religious legacies remain very strong. Max Weber explained that serving the “public good,” which seems preferable to personal or private ownership, is the vivid manifestation of God’s glory in the world, a task to which every Christian should be devoted. Even though personal religiosity is currently very weak in Protestant countries, there is still an intense feeling of church affiliation that continues to be associated with civic values. This Protestant ethos is still evident in the collective consciousness and continues to guide behaviours by limiting—perhaps more than elsewhere—the effects of the increasing individualism on the feeling of social belonging (Bréchon, Galland and Tchernia, 2002).

11. Two major trends were identified in the analysis of the Value Surveys: increased individualization of social mores—the idea that each person must be free to choose how to live and how to think—and increased social integration and involvement.

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YOUNG PEOPLE AND WORK: HIGH ASPIRATIONS WITHIN DIFFERENT SOCIETAL MODELS

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The relationship between young people and work is a complex subject, even when considered within a single national society. An international comparison must examine some of the existing issues and at the same time take into account two analysis axes.

First, it is necessary to focus on the differences between young people and the generations that have preceded them. From one generation to the next, societal changes can indeed transform the conditions of transition into adulthood, even to the point of modifying the very definition of the “youth” category. Research by Olivier Galland (2002) points to a “youth extension” trend resulting from the desynchronization of the adulthood transition phases (job, housing, couple, family), thereby even prolonging an intermediate state at the end of adolescence. Although this is an undeniable trend, its intensity can vary greatly from one country to the next, depending upon the various cultural and institutional models by which young people enter adulthood.

In addition, it is essential to take into account youth heterogeneity within a given society. Young men and young women, unskilled young people and young graduates, for example, are very distinct groups in terms of their relationship with work because they do not occupy the same positions in the production system and because they abide by values associated with their social group of origin.

Another level of complexity is introduced by the ambivalence of the notion of work itself: although it is obviously a means (of physical subsistence first, and secondarily of social existence), it is also an end in itself, in the sense that it constitutes a value as such and a potential means of self-realization. The issue of young people's relationship with work must also be analyzed from the vantage point of this subjective dimension, or—to refer to the distinction made by Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger (2001)—by considering work in its instrumental, social and symbolic dimensions.

Young people's values considered on an international scale—whether they concern work or other aspects of life—are most often analyzed according to two contrasting models: one based on generational trends, and one on societal patterns.

Existing research in this area (notably Tchernia, 2005, and Riffault and Tchernia, 2002) has produced complex findings: young people as a whole are not more opposed to work than their elders, but, at the same time, they assign much more importance to their free time than the latter do. These findings, however, need to be qualified on the basis of the overall educational level in the various countries, and in conjunction with the level of economic development which, according to the researchers, would impact the development of “post-materialistic” values. In other words, young people who are more educated and enjoy better living conditions would not necessarily assign less importance to work as an end in itself, but in the process of working would value its “personal” dimensions more than their elders do, who are more focused on its material dimension.

In order to expand upon these findings, we will first explore the issue of how young people in the 16 to 29 age group relate to work, by using a classification that ranks the various countries according to certain major trends (with an emphasis on the material aspects of the professional activity, on the aspects linked to job quality, and on the symbolic aspects of work, etc.). We will thus see that there are strong consistencies between the perceptions of young people living in countries that recently joined the market economy, and those of young people in countries with a well-established economic regulation.

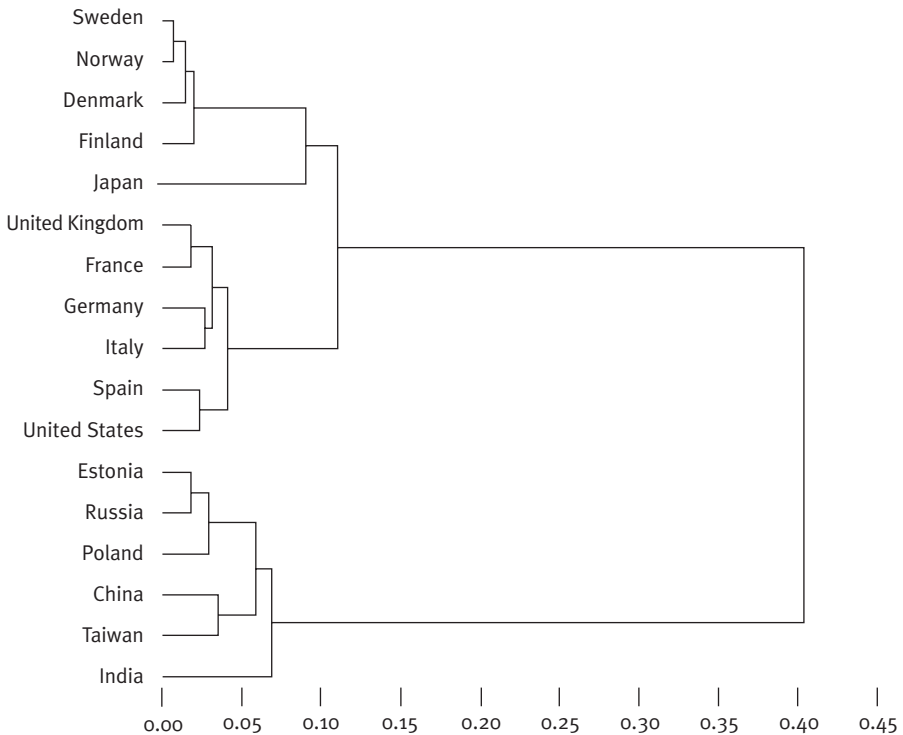
Beyond these general trends, we will then highlight a few variables that will account for the different ways in which young people relate to work. In the process, we will examine the effect of the *diploma level* (do the relationship to work and perception of the job market, etc. vary according to the educational attainment level?). We will also broach the issue of what values young people from different countries associate with work based upon their *employment status* (studies, job or unemployment) to try to identify any deviation that may exist between the ways in which young people still in school perceive work and the ways those who have already been confronted with the reality of the labour market in the course of their first job experiences perceive it. We will then analyze the issue of the relationship with work from the highly structuring angle of *gender*. Our aim will be to highlight—beyond the national specificities associated with the related social organization methods of gender division of labour—young female respondents’ perceptions and what distinguishes them from those of their male peers.

Finally, an intergenerational comparison will be offered in order to test the assumption according to which not only may young people have a different relationship with work than that of their elders, but the values thus favoured by these young people may also be more homogeneous from one country to the next than they are when compared with those favoured by preceding generations.

THE 16 TO 29 AGE GROUP: NATIONAL CONVERGENCES

It should first be recalled that, from one country to the next, including within Western Europe, young people are encountering highly diverse conditions of vocational integration that must be taken into account in analyzing their opinions about work (Moncel, Sulzer, 2006). The role assigned to youth within the employment system may be considered more important in countries that are characterized by both a high labour force participation rate on the part of young people and by a low unemployment rate for this category. Such is notably the case in Denmark and the United Kingdom whose young people begin their working lives earlier (with more of them working and studying at the same time) and find jobs easily. France, Italy, Estonia and Poland, on the contrary, are characterized by both a low labour force participation rate and a high unemployment rate among the young population, which can be attributed, in France at least, to the generalization of full-time studies, which results in the least-qualified youth entering the job market early, thereby placing them at the greatest risk of being unemployed. From this viewpoint, the other European countries (Spain, Germany, Finland and Sweden) occupy an intermediate position.

Figure 1: Dendrogramme on variables relating to work / employment (Ward method)



In order to explore the issue of how young people relate to work in the various countries surveyed, we initially selected, for the 16 to 29 age group, some fifty items concerning work from among all of the questions in the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey. A classification based on all of the items selected permits some twenty countries to be clearly identified, which led to six classes being defined (see Table 1 below). Both India and Japan can be distinguished from all of the other countries because each of them forms a class; China is grouped with Taiwan; the Scandinavian countries (Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark) form a group, as do the Central and Eastern European countries (Estonia, Russia and Poland). The last group consists of the United States and Western European countries; in terms of response proximities, it correlates most closely with France and the United Kingdom, then with Germany and Italy, and lastly with the United States and Spain (see Figure 1 above). Extended to its broadest level, the ranking makes it possible to identify a cleavage between the emerging countries (of Asia and Eastern Europe) and the long-time industrialized countries (Europe, the United States and Japan).

The response profiles in the various 16 to 29 age groups of young respondents enabled us to outline the lines of force that account for these various response proximities (see Table 1 below).

Central and Eastern European countries can be primarily distinguished by the emphasis they place on the material aspects of employment—good working conditions, high salary and high job status—and by the diversity of career strategy goals; it is also in these countries—particularly Russia—that the plan of starting a company is most often cited.

The Asian countries (China, Taiwan, and, to a lesser extent, India) are comparable to this first group in the special weight they give to financial aspects and to the diversity of career strategies but, at the same time, they assign more importance to certain qualitative aspects: fixed working hours, holidays and working conditions are the ones most frequently mentioned.

By contrast, the group comprised of the United States and Western European countries seems to disregard the material aspects of work in favour of its social and symbolic aspects: employment security and sense of pride in one's job are the highest-ranked items. The plan of starting a company is less often cited, while the future often involves acquiring a house/apartment (except in Germany, a country in which the percentage of home owners is the lowest in Europe).

Scandinavian countries are similar to those of Western Europe in that they placed little emphasis—less even than did the preceding group—on the financial aspects or line responsibilities. In these countries (except for Sweden), the positive response rates to the item "In the next 15 years, I want to earn a lot of money" were among the lowest. Conversely, young Scandinavians seem to have a lot of confidence in their finances, as shown by their more frequent choice of the item "I am confident I will have a good job

in the future”, their plan to get an education in order to obtain an interesting job, and the low scores obtained by such items as “Employment security”, and “Unemployment” as representing one of the greatest threats to society.

Lastly, Japan stands out from all the other countries by its very low response rate to most of the items; confidence in the future, the importance of money and high job status were not often chosen by young Japanese respondents, who seem very disillusioned. It should also be noted that it was in this country that the most “traditional” indicator of confidence in the future (the plan to have children) had the lowest rating.

Table 1: Contribution of significant variables to the classification's construction

	Class 1 (Scandinavia)	Class 2 (East. Eur.)	Class 3 (EU-USA)	Class 4 (China-Taiwan)	Class 5 (India)	Class 6 (Japan)
Good life: not to have to work	-	-		+	++	
Good life: an exciting and meaningful job		+				--
Satisfied with my work					++	--
I am confident I will have a good job in the future	+				+	--
Important to have a better material standard than my parents	--	++	-	+	+	-
Important not to have a lower material standard than my parents	-	++	-	+	+	-
A threat to society: unemployment	--				+	
To have a job with a high status	--	++		+	+	-
To feel proud of my job			+		-	--
To have a job with a lot of responsibility			-	++	+	-
Good career opportunities	--	+		++		-
Fixed working hours	--			++	+	
A good boss		+	-	+		--
To lead and develop others	--			++	+	-
Interesting and meaningful work		+			--	--
Employment security	--	+	+	+	-	--
To be able to travel and work all over the world	--	++		++		--
A lot of vacation and free time	-			++		
High salary	--	++		+		-
To be able to influence my working conditions		+	-	++		-
Career strategies: look good	--	+	-	++		
Career strategies: take all the chances I get	--	+		+		-
Career strategies: get a good education and the right qualifications		+				--
Career strategies: constantly renew myself	-	++	-	++		-
Career strategies: know the right people	--	+		++		-
Career strategies: find myself	--	+	-	++		
Education: to earn more money	-	+				--
Education : to get an interesting job	+	+				--
Education: to develop myself	-	+		+		--
Education: to make my family proud	--			+	++	-

Reading: This table differentiates the classes by indicating, for each item, the type of contribution (positive, very positive, neutral, negative or very negative). For example, the insistence on “material standards” (lines 5 and 6) is characteristic of Class 2 (that of Eastern European countries).

This initial overview therefore suggests that certain overall consistencies exist between countries that recently joined the open market economy, in which work is viewed primarily in terms of its monetary aspects, and countries that have inherited (obviously to varying degrees) a tradition of economic regulation in which salaries and working conditions, in particular, have historically been subjected to social compromise, thereby attributing more importance to the social and symbolic aspects of work.

These very general trends can be refined and clarified by analyzing variables grouped around a certain number of themes.

a) Future career

Among the various items proposed in response to the question "How important are the following aspects of your future career?", the choice "Interesting and meaningful work" far outranks other responses in virtually all of the countries. The young respondents least inclined to assign importance to this aspect are, apart from the Japanese, the British and the Spaniards, who are reputed to value a high salary and job stability, respectively. The intrinsic value of their own work does not at all appear to be a secondary criterion in the eyes of young people, and the same holds true (though to a lesser extent) for being able to influence working conditions.

The Eastern and Southern European, as well as Anglo-Saxon, countries have close scores with respect to the importance of good career opportunities. Central and Eastern European scores stand out, however, by showing a marked preference for international careers and independent work, the latter item also being frequently selected by German respondents.

b) Career strategies

This question split the country groups even further, but according to a trend similar to the preceding one: favoured by a majority in all of the countries, the importance of getting a good education and the right qualifications receives less support in Japan, Spain and the United Kingdom. Young respondents of Southern and Eastern Europe also count on knowing the right people, innovation ("constantly renew myself"), opportunities ("take all the chances I can get"), even personal appearance, and, like the French and Germans, believe it is important to "live up to the expectations of others."

To be qualified and prove oneself competent is a "universal" career strategy; however, the young Eastern Europeans plan to use all available means to achieve that goal, whereas the Japanese now seem to count on nothing but good looks and knowing the right people to succeed in their careers.

c) Work as a marketable value and as a value in itself

The importance given to the monetary aspect of work rather clearly differentiates Western Europe from the United States-Eastern Europe group in which the financial

aspects and importance of money are cited much more often. This can be accounted for by the fact that in Estonia, Poland, and even more in Russia, many young people are striving to achieve a better standard of living than their parents, undoubtedly due to recent social and economic upheavals.

If we now consider the items reflecting the intrinsic value of work, a different sort of cleavages appears. The United States is differentiated by its very high rates of item choices related to a “work ethic”, such as: hard work as a quality to be developed (80% gave it a score of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7); hard work as a career strategy (76%); and “everybody should do their best at work regardless of how much money they are paid” (56%, in second place, immediately following Italy). If the young Americans seek material rewards and personal advantages in their work, that does not preclude them from attributing to the latter a strong intrinsic value in which the “Protestant ethic” can be felt (Weber, 1964).

Conversely, the young British seem rather reluctant to attribute to work anything other than an instrumental value. They were the least numerous to think that work provides meaning to their lives, that an exciting job is part of a “good life,” or that a profession constitutes an identity factor. Perhaps their first work experiences, which often consist of “dead-end jobs” in the trade and service sectors, are not motivating them to adopt such a perspective.

The Scandinavian countries, France, the United States and Japan also show relatively weak response rates for the item “work provides meaning to life” even though, for France and Scandinavia at least, having an “exciting and meaningful job” is clearly valued. In the latter case, the “post-materialism” assumption seems to take on special significance insofar as young people apparently tend to give importance to work only when they believe that the latter provides them with the means for personal achievement.

Moreover, French surveys (CEREQ, 2007) show that young people—including those least qualified—seek meaning, symbolic rewards and personal achievement in the exercise of their profession once they find stable employment.

Young Germans and Italians seem to give more emphasis to work’s social aspects; they are the most numerous to consider work as an identity factor and as a factor that gives meaning to their lives.

Estonia, Russia and Poland, like Spain, present rather high response rates concerning work-value indicators, while also differentiating themselves from other countries by their stronger desire to “develop entrepreneurship.” Rather than to seek an explanation for this in terms of materialism or post-materialism, one might be inclined to favour the theory according to which, among young people, a “traditional” work-based culture and an emerging “entrepreneurial” culture co-exist.

d) Similar expectations in terms of working conditions

Beyond these differences of opinion, young people in all of the countries surveyed (with the exception, again, of Japan) seem to be unanimous about the desirable characteristics of a job: feeling proud of one's job, a healthy working environment, a good boss and nice colleagues received high scores virtually everywhere. Employment security is also greatly desired, though slightly less so in Scandinavian countries, particularly Denmark. The latter country is also the one in which young respondents stated that they were the most satisfied both with their work and their social situation; the widely popular "Danish model" of flexicurity seems to find support among the country's youth.

e) Relationship between work and free time

Although the item "A good life: not to have to work" was given relatively low scores by young respondents (8 to 17%), it is interesting to note that the highest response rates were found in Russia, Spain, Italy, the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan, and that in the first four countries, young people also give more importance to a career that comprises a lot of holidays and free time.

Flexible working hours received a majority approval and, once again, young Danish respondents stand out by their rejection of overly inflexible schedules.

Despite the markedly sexual nature of this aspect, which we will examine next, it is worth noting that it is on this leisure time issue that we observe the most clear-cut convergence among European youth, including in Russia and Poland, whose scores come close to the European mean. Although the mechanisms designed to reconcile work and free time are not available to the same degree in each country, young people seem to place them high on their agenda. For example, parental leave received high scores in all the countries, particularly Estonia (where it was only recently put into effect) and in Spain (where this right exists, but without pay).

f) Choice of an occupational sector

The occupational sectors considered by young people differ widely from one country to the next. In Estonia, young respondents were more inclined to choose sectors such as agriculture, construction and transportation, and scored similarly to Russia in number of responses concerning industry, tourism, banking and finance. From this we can infer the coexistence of a traditional production model and of a new alternative model resulting from the economic opening up of the country, even if in Russia there is substantial preference for finding work in public administration (just as in Spain). The emphasis on entrepreneurial values as an ideal or plan does not necessarily exclude more pragmatic expectations depending upon the status of the labour market. In Western Europe and Scandinavia, young people seem to have been aware of the expansion of the service sector and to have favoured the sectors of health, education and research and development. Based upon this classification, it was found that the young respondents indicate, almost everywhere, that they have strong expectations about their (future) job and

that the role of their work in their current and future lives remains essential. Yet these expectations are nonetheless influenced by national specificities, which, in turn, depend upon economic, historic, and sometimes cultural, factors. For example, the importance assigned to the material aspects of work are more characteristic of countries undergoing economic expansion (Asia, Eastern Europe), whereas work as a means of social integration and self-realization seems to be a perception typical of “Old Europe” (or even of the United States, give or take a few nuances). While adhering to the “Old Europe” model, Scandinavian countries can be differentiated by the fact that they show more confidence in the future and a greater rejection of materialism, while “Southern” European countries display more heterogeneity and show reluctance to choose between seeking stability or symbolic rewards.

In order to better grasp these disparities, we need to venture beyond the conditions faced by young people in the various countries’ labour markets and understand the specificities of the national educational systems.

EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS VERSUS WORK REALITIES

Research done by CEREQ (for example Maillard and Sulzer, 2005) tends to show that the relationship of young French to work varies according to what diploma they have and their professional experience during the first few years of their working lives: these two factors are not unrelated in view of the strong connection in France between one’s diploma and one’s status on the labour market. Is this finding valid for countries other than France?

a) A “diploma effect” that has persistent societal implications

In actuality, the broad trends mentioned above are scarcely challenged by introducing the diploma variable. The response percentages for the various items are closer among young respondents within each country regardless of their educational attainment level than they are among young respondents of various countries who have the same educational level. In other words, societal trends seem to outweigh any uniform opinions among young people based upon their education level. The relationship of each country’s young people to work is therefore, for the most part, more closely linked to the context in which they are evolving than to their schooling. However, a few trends can be identified that transcend transnational disparities.

For example, in the vast majority of countries surveyed, the higher their educational attainment level, the more meaningful work is to young people; the better-educated they are, the more often they state that work and studies “provide meaning” to their lives. Similarly, university graduates are also the most numerous to consider their “profession as an identity factor,” to define “a good life” as having “an exciting and meaningful job,” and consider having “interesting and meaningful work” as important to their future career.

Their perception of the job market also seems to be linked to educational level. Young people with few degrees have a pessimistic outlook much more often than secondary school graduates and *systematically* more often than university graduates: they also have a greater tendency to view unemployment as a threat, and much fewer of them are “confident [that they] will have a good job in the future”. Coupled with their lack of confidence in the future, young people with the least number of diplomas also show a greater need for “employment security” since, in general, they are more likely to cite this condition as an important aspect in their future professional career. This need for security is also translated by a strong desire to get a job with “fixed working hours”.

Another major trend is that if the possibility of “being able to influence my working conditions” and of having “a job with a lot of responsibility” is what matters most to the best-educated respondents, the concern about having “a high salary” (as well as defining “a good life” as one in which “I have a lot of money”) is, on the contrary, much more frequently cited by the least-educated respondents. Even the choice of an occupational sector turned out not to be a strongly divisive factor; the most that can be deduced from an overall level is that university graduates seek more jobs in research and development, which is scarcely surprising.

Despite these few nuances, the “diploma effect” is relatively limited on an international level. It is really only meaningful within a given educational system that is in turn part of a specific national socioeconomic system. This is why the young people’s opinions differ more from country to country than in terms of their educational attainment level within the same country. It should, however, be borne in mind that the educational level has a direct impact on young people’s occupations, which makes it necessary to compare the viewpoints of young people who are already working with those who are still completing their studies.

b) Expectations according to young people’s status in the employment system

Several studies have stressed the often substantial difference between the perceptions of work formed by young people while completing their education and the reality that confronts them at the time of their first professional experiences, even in a period of unemployment (Montelh, 2000).

Can the same method be used to discern what values young people of surveyed countries assign to work based upon their occupational status? Let us first point out a few general trends: in most of the countries, work satisfaction is much more obvious (at least a 10-point difference) among young people who are employed than among those who are students. Should we attribute this to their satisfaction at having begun their working lives, or to that of having obtained a position more rewarding than a student job (in the case of wage-earning students)? In any event, the fact of starting one’s working life does not seem to devalue the work itself, because in most countries there are fewer employed young people than there are students who have chosen the item “a good life: not to have to work.”

Moreover, the way students envision a future job differs somewhat from that of young people who are already working. The former no doubt perceive it more as having to be the continuum of the studies that they are completing. They cite much more often, for example, as “career strategies”: “get a good education and the right qualifications”. This opinion is most often expressed in Scandinavian and Western European countries (France, Germany and the United Kingdom), yet not as much as in Southern countries (Italy and Spain) and in Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC)—meaning in a group of countries in which we can assume that the educational apparatus has a less structuring impact.

There are also more students (than wage-earners as regards their work) who consider that their studies “provide meaning” to their lives and they often expect to get a high-status job that will allow them to “travel and work all over the world.”

For their part, young workers place more emphasis on “working conditions” in the broad sense of the term: flexible working hours, high salary, a good boss, employment security and good career opportunities, etc. Perhaps their work experience leads young wage-earners to believe that these aspects (that students do not spontaneously think of) are more important since they concern them directly in their daily lives. In addition, young wage-earners are more prone than students to prefer “a meaningful and stimulating job,” even one “from which you can never really take a break.” Young people therefore seem to share a desire for work involvement and achievement that the jobs offered to them as they start their working lives probably cannot satisfy. Lastly, it is noteworthy that these variances between student and wage-earner responses are based to a greater extent on practical concerns—work-related experimentation—than on values, because there are very narrow variances between opinions such as “everybody should have the right to receive unemployment benefits even if there are work opportunities available,” or “should do their best at work regardless of how much money they are paid,” while the ranking of these items varies substantially from one country to the next.

When considering young people who are neither completing an education, nor working—that is, in most cases, those who are unemployed or inactive—we note that their opinions widely differ from those of young working people,¹ and they are less dissimilar from country to country. Logically enough, these young people are less satisfied with their work and cite “profession” less often as an identity factor. That seems consistent with the idea that they have undoubtedly had unsatisfying job experiences that have led them to aspire to getting better jobs: their main expectations are to get a good boss and exciting work with good career opportunities, as well as flexible working hours, which suggest that some of them have been in highly flexibilized jobs. Employment security is also an aspect favoured by these young people. It is also in this group that the idea “unemployment is a threat to society” gets the highest scores, but only young French and German respondents are mostly inclined to believe that this threat is partially linked to globalization. The item

1. Again, using the student group as a benchmark.

“parental leave” is also often frequently mentioned in this group, revealing that for some young people (mostly females), the first working experiences can cause them to contemplate withdrawing from the job market. That does not mean that they are now refusing to invest any effort into work since—more so than those who are employed—they yearn to find “a meaningful and stimulating job” even if it means one “from which you can never really take a break.”

In all of the countries surveyed (except Russia), unemployed or inactive young people favour “a society where individual performance is rewarded.” This holds true even in France and Italy, where this item is the least often chosen by those employed or in school. It is easy to conclude that these young people, who are just starting their working lives, have already experienced such disappointments as lack of recognition for their professional commitment—a disillusioning experience often expressed by young workers (Eckert, 2006).

These findings seem to confirm Bernard Roudet’s previously mentioned “post-materialist” theory: if young people expect certain rewards associated with having completed their education, they are also willing to invest a great deal of themselves in a job, provided that they can find it meaningful and find in it the means to build both a life and a career.

Despite these sometimes substantial divergences, we need to bear in mind that the impact of educational level and of confrontation with the job market on the opinions expressed remains strongly linked to the national context. As explained below, it will be an entirely different matter when we consider gender variances.

GENDER: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL VARIABLE THAT TRANSCENDS NATIONAL DIFFERENCES

The various (particularly European) countries recently witnessed a considerable increase in female participation in the job market.² In 2005, the female participation rate experienced its twelfth consecutive year of growth, reaching 56.3%, an increase of 2.7 points as compared to 2000 (versus only 0.1 point for the male participation rate).³ Thus the gender-related employment rate gap has never stopped declining through the years, especially within the younger generations.

However, these significant changes in terms of labour market participation have not yet translated into working condition terms. On the one hand, women (even the

2. Although women have always played a role in economic production, their opportunity to earn wages in work done outside of the home constitutes the real change that occurred in the second half of the 20th century.

3. European Commission, “Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men – 2007” (see http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0049en01.pdf).

youngest and best-educated) are still trapped in highly constricted jobs and occupational sectors: nearly four out of ten female wage-earners work in public administration, education, health or social services. If we consider the occupational sectors preferred by all respondents, we note that this trend is still very much alive everywhere: gender variances are much greater than transnational ones, which means that, with the exception of a few national specificities, female and male occupational sectors are the same everywhere. Tradition is valued and women tend to work in the health, education, child care, tourism and public administration fields, whereas men target industry, transportation, research or finance. The European labour market consequently remains highly segregated, horizontally as well as vertically: more than two-thirds of executives are men. This high concentration of female labour accounts in part for the persistence of gender-based wage inequalities: on average, women earn 15% less than men per hour worked.⁴ Additional proof that the European labour market is still strongly gender-segregated is that the part-time worker group consists of an overwhelming majority of women (in 2006, more than one-third of the women were working part-time, versus only 7.7% of the men).

The global landscape with respect to gender equality is not idyllic. Despite all odds, young generations seem, over time, to have contentedly entered the labour market: their female participation rate keeps growing at a regular and systematic pace. Among women in the 25 to 49 age group, a group that used to have the lowest rate of employment, we now encounter very high participation rates, sometimes exceeding those of the other age groups. “No country escapes this trend, which is characterised by a dual convergence—convergence of male and female work patterns: more women have continuous career paths like men, without any interruption at child-bearing age [...]; there is a growing similarity between women in Europe—in spite of the different routes followed, this trend has affected all European Union countries since the beginning of the 1980s. All are going in the same direction, although the results vary. We can therefore conclude that mothers have accounted for most of the increase in the working population in Europe. The upsurge in the number of working women indeed occurred in the 25 to 49 age group. However, among women in this group, it is the participation rates of mothers that have risen the most” (Maruani, 1995, pp. 111–112).

In the various countries in which the female participation rate, by becoming generalized, constitutes one of the foundations of social and economic change, the issue of women’s relationship to work then assumes its full significance. Do young women who, for example in Europe, represent the majority of university graduates (59%), have the same perceptions, expectations, and even the same priorities, as their male counterparts? Beyond the national specificities associated with the gender division of labour’s social organization model, what perceptions do young women share?

4. Relative deviation of the gender-related mean gross hourly wage.

a) Young women's strong relationship to work

The statistical changes in female participation rates that we have just described can be confirmed by asking young female respondents about the importance they assign to the fact that they are working. Overall, nearly half of the respondents of both genders ranked their work as an “identity factor,” more than half stated that “work provides meaning to life,” two-thirds of them said that a “good life” is synonymous with performing an “exciting job,” and three-quarters agreed with the statement that the reason to get an education is to “get an interesting job.” But these percentages were even higher among young females, regardless of the country considered (see Table 2 next page). Young women therefore have a strong relationship to employment—one even stronger than that of males; moreover there are fewer of them than men who think that “a good life means that I will not have to work.” This trend is all the more interesting in that it is coupled with a pessimistic perception of the job market: young women consider unemployment to be more of a threat than their male peers do (+10 points) and state less often than the latter that they are “confident of having a good job in the future” (-6 points). The hardships that they anticipate—or have already encountered on the job market—do not seem to dissuade their professional determination and they associate (more often than the males) “hard work” with a good strategy for success in their future career (+7 points).

Table 2: Opinions of the 16 to 29 age group (and gender variances)

	Importance of a working life					
	Profession as an identity factor	Work provides meaning to life	A good life: an exciting and meaningful job	Getting an education to get an interesting job	A good life: not to have to work	Career strategies: work hard
Europe	42%	52%	63%	73%	13%	59%
<i>Gender var.</i>	3%	8%	4%	6%	-6%	7%
Denmark	33%	44%	62%	80%	9%	52%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-1%	6%	5%	9%	-3%	0%
Finland	39%	44%	64%	73%	8%	54%
<i>Gender var.</i>	15%	16%	12%	15%	-6%	5%
Norway	32%	41%	60%	74%	8%	60%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-4%	9%	6%	9%	-5%	4%
Sweden	34%	42%	65%	77%	9%	59%
<i>Gender var.</i>	5%	11%	12%	11%	-3%	7%
France	35%	47%	70%	78%	13%	54%
<i>Gender var.</i>	3%	11%	5%	9%	-8%	10%
Germany	55%	62%	66%	78%	9%	57%
<i>Gender var.</i>	6%	6%	5%	0%	-5%	5%
Spain	39%	57%	60%	73%	19%	64%
<i>Gender var.</i>	7%	10%	6%	10%	-7%	8%
Italy	52%	61%	70%	63%	16%	60%
<i>Gender var.</i>	2%	6%	5%	7%	-1%	6%
Estonia	48%	59%	74%	77%	11%	65%
<i>Gender var.</i>	12%	19%	11%	11%	-6%	17%
Poland	40%	55%	63%	81%	9%	58%
<i>Gender var.</i>	3%	13%	7%	8%	-7%	11%
United Kingdom	29%	36%	47%	63%	16%	66%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-4%	4%	-3%	4%	-9%	6%
United States	39%	49%	57%	67%	17%	76%
<i>Gender var.</i>	2%	-1%	0%	5%	-3%	9%
Russia	53%	56%	73%	77%	14%	65%
<i>Gender var.</i>	11%	8%	15%	13%	-3%	11%
Japan	27%	45%	34%	32%	17%	42%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-4%	5%	-1%	3%	-5%	5%

Reading: Each cell indicates gender variances between the scores of 6 and 7 (on a scale of 1 to 7).

b) A marked attachment to salary

A study carried out on the European Values Surveys (Pina, 2005) showed that European men and women related to work differently. While men consider work as the key area in which to invest their efforts, and in which the wage level would be directly linked to the quality of work done and to its social usefulness, women have a more distant relationship to money and assign greater value to the social aspects of their professional activity. Regardless of the year and country surveyed, male respondents clearly stated more often than females that “earning a lot of money” is an important criteria (Pina, 2005). The data provided in the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l’innovation politique survey sheds new light on these findings.

On the one hand, it is true that young males seem to much more often assign importance to earning money in their lifetime than young females do: the former want “to earn a lot of money” within the next fifteen years (+9 points). They also, more often than the young females, define “a good life” as having “a lot of money” (+7 points) (see Table 3 next page). Yet, on the other hand, the young females attribute as much importance as their male peers to the exchange value represented by employment: when asked what aspects they consider crucial to their future career, the former cite in almost equal proportions to the latter a “high salary.” It is as if, far from considering—as their elders once did—the fruit of their labour as “supplementary income,” women of younger generations were expecting (as much as men) fair compensation for their work. Research conducted on French data tends to corroborate this point: if women are traditionally less inclined to complain about their wages—despite being paid less, on average, than men—this is no longer systematically the case for more recent generations (Mora and Sulzer, 2007).

Table 3: Opinions of the 16 to 29 age group (and gender variances)

	Perception of the job market		Relationship to money		
	I am confident of having a good job in the future	Threat to society: unemployment	Earning a lot of money in the next 15 years	A good life: having a lot of money	Important to future career: a high salary
Europe	33%	43%	58%	29%	56%
Gender var.	-6%	10%	-9%	-7%	-2%
Denmark	60%	18%	42%	18%	36%
Gender var.	-5%	1%	-20%	-9%	-7%
Finland	38%	23%	48%	20%	58%
Gender var.	2%	12%	-15%	-6%	1%
Norway	45%	22%	47%	21%	40%
Gender var.	-4%	5%	-13%	-7%	-4%
Sweden	43%	29%	55%	35%	49%
Gender var.	-2%	12%	-5%	-1%	5%
France	27%	44%	55%	30%	57%
Gender var.	0%	8%	-19%	-8%	-9%
Germany	34%	55%	66%	30%	50%
Gender var.	-12%	17%	-6%	-8%	-6%
Spain	36%	45%	53%	25%	60%
Gender var.	-8%	8%	-5%	-8%	2%
Italy	26%	47%	54%	33%	58%
Gender var.	-5%	4%	-4%	-2%	4%
Estonia	41%	28%	58%	40%	74%
Gender var.	1%	10%	-14%	-8%	6%
Poland	25%	51%	63%	26%	72%
Gender var.	-8%	10%	-7%	-2%	6%
United Kingdom	39%	29%	60%	26%	47%
Gender var.	-4%	7%	-13%	-14%	-5%
United States	60%	36%	64%	29%	56%
Gender var.	-2%	9%	-13%	-6%	-2%
Russia	42%	33%	67%	47%	85%
Gender var.	-4%	4%	-8%	9%	9%
Japan	9%	32%	28%	23%	37%
Gender var.	-3%	2%	-7%	-11%	-5%

Reading: Each cell indicates gender variances between scores 6 and 7 (on a scale of 1 to 7).

c) When working does not involve the same ambitions

However, young men and women do not seem to have identical priorities as far as their professional careers are concerned. Although more men plan on “starting a company,” or getting “a job with a lot of responsibility” within the next fifteen years (+10% and +11% respectively), women tend to place much more emphasis on having “interesting and meaningful work” (+9 points) or “an exciting and meaningful job” (+4 points) in which they can “find” themselves (+10 points) and “feel proud of [their] job” (+8 points) (see Table 4 next page). Young females also focus much more on the relational aspects of their professional activity: “nice colleagues,” “a good boss,” “a healthy working environment,” and “get along with other people” are conditions that they cite much more often than their male counterparts, regardless of the country surveyed (variances of 7 to 9 points).

Like their elders (Pina, 2005), young women still consider the social aspects of their job, and the opportunities to socialize at work, the two most meaningful aspects. The different ways in which young women perceive professional goals should not be interpreted as feminine “specificities” that, being transnational, would be intrinsically linked to some universal “female relationship” to work and employment. Being a man or a woman primarily means belonging to a social category construct, and it is just such a belonging that leads each gender to “build his/her social relationships within a system of practices and, simultaneously, of conceptions.” (Le Feuvre and Andriocci, 2005).

Table 4: Opinions of the 16 to 29 age group (and gender variances)

	Ambitions				
	Within the next 15 years		Importance to future career		
	Starting a company	Become a manager or team leader	Have interesting and meaningful work	Find myself	To feel proud of my job
Europe	21%	27%	77%	44%	71%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-10%	-11%	9%	10%	8%
Denmark	18%	29%	79%	43%	68%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-9%	-21%	11%	26%	14%
Finland	20%	25%	85%	39%	60%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-12%	-13%	11%	10%	18%
Norway	19%	33%	74%	32%	67%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-11%	-14%	8%	10%	4%
Sweden	24%	27%	74%	38%	70%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-11%	-9%	12%	20%	13%
France	22%	25%	78%	50%	73%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-12%	-16%	7%	11%	9%
Germany	13%	25%	81%	39%	67%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-7%	-10%	8%	5%	5%
Spain	24%	23%	66%	49%	76%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-5%	-11%	10%	11%	9%
Italy	16%	31%	83%	49%	77%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-7%	-9%	10%	12%	7%
Estonia	30%	18%	79%	62%	77%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-20%	-11%	9%	15%	8%
Poland	35%	30%	82%	54%	70%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-14%	-7%	11%	12%	7%
United Kingdom	23%	27%	68%	34%	67%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-15%	-11%	6%	3%	7%
United States	23%	29%	71%	45%	76%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-11%	-14%	8%	6%	10%
Russia	41%	43%	86%	67%	69%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-14%	-3%	7%	15%	3%
Japan	11%	17%	56%	48%	47%
<i>Gender var.</i>	-9%	-13%	1%	-2%	3%

Reading: Each cell indicates gender variances between scores 6 and 7 (on a scale of 1 to 7).

d) The familial sphere: still a woman's concern

As we have seen, although motherhood does not prevent new generations of women from participating in the labour market as much as it once did, the link between the functions of production and reproduction nevertheless remains more challenging for women than it is for men. Various studies on this subject show the ancient character of women's and men's involvement in the domestic and familial spheres (Battagliola, 1984; Kempeneers and Lelièvre, 1991; Couppié and Épiphané, 2007). Even if the priority role assigned to women in this sphere varies according to the era and society concerned, "it nonetheless constitutes one of the clues that allow us to observe a convergence of feminine experiences beyond national variations or specificities" (Le Feuvre and Andriocci, 2005).

Thus, in attempting to grasp how important family is to young people, we find that it is more important among young women than among young men. Women much more often cite family as a constituting factor in their identity in all of the countries surveyed (+13 points on average). They also, much more often than young men, consider that family provides meaning to their lives (+12 points) and plan more on having children within the next 15 years (+11 points). Yet beyond this female-specific attachment to the familial sphere, it is evident that the link between the latter and the productive sphere is very soon seen as problematic, as shown by the young female respondents overwhelmingly expressing the desire to enjoy parental leave in the course of their professional career (+28 points), and to ensure that such leaves are remunerated for one year (+20 points). By following Danièle Kergoat's analyses of atypical forms of work, such as part-time jobs, we can assume that, for many young women, this "choice" of parental leave constitutes the practical translation, on a personal plan, of a major social and collective contradiction (Kergoat, 1984).

In short, it appears that young women seem to have fully integrated and internalized (no doubt to varying degrees, depending upon their social origin, educational attainment level, and the societal context in which they live, etc.) their right to be employed (Le Feuvre and Andriocci, 2005) and to the monetary recognition associated with the latter. Yet, at the same time, it appears that there has been very little change in the gender gap in terms of expectations concerning employment, anticipated professional prospects, or involvement in the domestic sphere.

FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT: RELATIVE CONVERGENCES

As we have just seen, and as far as the relationship to work is concerned, gender variances are becoming increasingly more distinct and structuring than transnational differences. The relative durability of this observation prompts us to again raise the question of intergenerational differences: are young people addressing this issue in both a different way than preceding generations and more homogeneously than was previously the case, from one country to the next?

The comparative data analysis based on age groups shows that this theory of a generational convergence must be taken seriously. Indeed, the differences of opinion between the countries are lower as a whole for the 16 to 29 age group ("young people") than for the 30 to 50 age group ("adults"). One interesting fact is that the greatest variances between these two age groups are found in all of the Scandinavian countries.

This general trend seems difficult to interpret, inasmuch as some contradictory facts emerge from time to time. For example, there are nearly always fewer young people than adults who want to develop, in children, entrepreneurship and a hard work ethic (particularly in France and Germany) while, on the contrary, more young people plan on starting a company in the future, or consider hard work as a good career strategy. This can probably be attributed more to age-related, rather than generation-related considerations, thus creating what is only an apparent contradiction: depending upon whether one is a young person or an adult, these questions do not refer to the same temporalities (projection into a more or less near future for some, or past phases for others).

At the same time, certain consistencies emerge: young people give considerable weight to the importance of work in its own right. More of them than adults believe that "a good life means that [they] can get an exciting and meaningful job". On this point the generational convergence is obvious, for not only is this item chosen more often as the respondent's age decreases, but the variances between the responses of young people and adults are more marked in Anglo-Saxon countries—those in which this item was also chosen the most infrequently by the adult group.

Generational differences can also be observed with respect to work conditions: hours, wages, independence and holidays are the aspects assigned more importance by adults than by young people, while the trend reverses when we focus on work-value aspects such as the job status and career opportunities that work offers (mentioned more often by young people).

However, the clearest difference of opinion between young people and adults concerns work commitment: young people state less often than adults not only that "everybody should be obliged to do their best at work regardless of how much money they are paid," but also that they want "a job that is meaningful and stimulating, but that you can never really take a break from." Conversely, they are advocating for the right to parental leave.

These findings confirm those of Riffault and Tchernia (2002): young people's relationship to work is more "personal," and they apparently favour less than the adults a high level of commitment to work, regardless of what the latter may be. Work is viewed as a "social duty," inducing a personal commitment that enables the individual to derive satisfaction by realizing his/her potential and by advancing professionally, while at the same time reconciling job and family life.

These divergences between young people and adults can be compared on the basis of their various educational attainment levels, the impact of this variable on the relationship to work also being established in the French surveys (Cereq, 2007). Better-educated young people would be more inclined to seek personal rewards in the work world as a continuum of their education. Moreover, they tend to cite more than the others “a good education and the right qualifications” as a career strategy, and also consider that “getting an education” will help them “to get an interesting job.” From young people’s perspective, this work is more likely to be found in sectors such as the media, or research and development, rather than in the manufacturing industry or in public administration; however, with respect to occupational sector preferences, the intergenerational differences remain marginal and are not as clear as those between genders or countries.

As Tchernia pointed out in 2005, certain differences of opinion between young people and adults can also be accounted for by an age effect (a “life-cycle effect,” according to the term he used). This was shown by the analysis of the variances between students and wage-earners: if young people can form certain ambitions and perceptions about work while completing their education, job experience can cause them to form new opinions, particularly in terms of the importance they assign to working conditions.

For the time being, young people seem more optimistic than their elders, stating that they are much more “confident [that they] will have a good job in the future” and that they are taking a more tolerant view of globalization.

CONCLUSION: WORK, YES, BUT FOR ONESELF, TOO

What key lessons can be learned from this brief international overview of the relationship between young people and work? First of all, we note that although gender-based models transcend national differences, the latter remain sufficiently persistent to qualify the impact of the rising educational levels (Chauvel, 1998) and of a certain generational convergence.

There are sharp divergences between the emerging and the long-time industrialized countries in which young people’s relationship to work is much less affected by materialism and more influenced by the importance given to education—the preferred way to gain access to interesting jobs.

If, from this point of view, the United States belongs to this second group, it can still be distinguished by the persistence of a certain *materialism that places it in an intermediary position.*

There are some disparities between the Scandinavian countries, which are dominated by satisfaction and optimism, and the rest of Europe, which is striving—very differently and with mixed results—to cope with its young people’s transition into their working lives.

The strong consistency of national educational systems and their interaction with the production system—the result of a long political and social history—means that *access to studies and higher education will always have a different significance from one country to the next*. Moreover, *the national economic context specificities seem to have retained their structuring power*: the growth sector particularities, the importance of the public sector, tradition of labour relations, etc., are bound to have an impact on young people's expectations. On several occasions, we have been able to point out the gap between the countries that recently opened their economies (Central and Eastern Europe) and Western Europe, whose economies are historically more regulated—though to varying degrees—by actors with whom relations, in some cases, were established many years ago.

One of the main areas of convergence between the countries concerns the changing relationships of young men and young women to work. Although the conceptions of masculine and feminine occupations, like that of the respective gender roles, remain imprinted with the seal of tradition *everywhere, the rooting of women in the work world certainly seems to provide a standard today for young generations*. The “female supplementary income” model is losing ground worldwide, and female wage-earners, who are now striving for more independence, are proving to be more critical when it comes to their wages.

Lastly, even if national specificities have not become obsolete—far from it—some convergences are emerging within the young generations when they are compared to adults of the same nationality. It is evident that *young people are differentiating themselves from their elders by the fact that they seem less willing to commit themselves at all cost to any type of job regardless of the risk involved, and are assigning more importance to their free time*. We must refrain, however, from interpreting such a position as a “devaluation” of work in its own right, inasmuch as young people are investing themselves in the work world with high expectations in terms of their self-realization and potential for advancement. One sign of this redefinition of the importance and role of work is that the latter must not only allow young people to build a family (an aspect that is always essential), but more fundamentally, must allow them to do so while giving them an opportunity to enjoy their personal lives, as well.

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YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY: UNDERSTANDING THE LINK BETWEEN FAMILIAL STRUCTURE AND PERSONAL SUCCESS

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The crossover between the issues of family and of youth has produced a vast body of frequently comparative literature.¹ This research specifically addresses one of the key aspects of the deferred entry into adulthood: the prolonging of young people's dependency on their family of origin (Cicchelli, 2001). As a result, there is a growing awareness of the magnitude of family support afforded young Europeans (Eurobarometer 2001).² Moreover, there has been a growing tendency virtually everywhere for young people to continue living in their parent's home (Maunaye, 2004). Admittedly, there are substantial differences between the countries (Chambaz, 2000; Van de Velde, soon to be published), undoubtedly related to highly diverse social contexts, notably with respect to public policies, educational and training options offered, labour and housing markets and family models (IARD, 2001; Biggart, Bendit, Cairns, Hein and Mörch, 2004; Leccardi and Ruspini, 2006). However, despite such disparities, the family still appears to play a major role throughout Europe in supporting young people's socialization through their long passage into adulthood (Cavalli and Galland, 1993; de Singly and Cicchelli, 2003).

It is thus not surprising to note how important family is to the youth themselves. In 1993, Europeans were already ranking "Family" at the top of their value hierarchy, granting it a 96% preference. It was followed by "Work" (90%) and then by "Friends" (88%) (Malpas and Lambert, 1993). Other European values Surveys confirmed this ranking (Galland and Roudet, 2005; Galland and Lemel, 2007). In the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey, the young respondents still placed "Family" first among their preferences when asked about factors contributing to their identity (68% of young European respondents gave it a score of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7)—slightly ahead of "Friends" (66%) and well ahead of "Education" and "Profession" (respectively 46% and 42%). This ranking was the same for the quasi-totality of the twelve European countries surveyed. In France, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Poland, Estonia and Russia, there was even a significant gap between these values. Only in Germany did "Friends" outrank "Family" by 5%. The importance of family was confirmed when the young people were asked what provided meaning to their lives: again, "Family" was rated higher than "Friends."³ Although the difference between the scores for these two responses was slight for Europe as a whole

1. See the special issues of magazines devoted to these two themes listed in the Biography.
2. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_151_fr.pdf
3. Excluding young Fins, whose ranking was significantly the reverse.

("Family" obtained 77% and "Friends" 74%), the variances were much greater in France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Poland, Estonia and Russia.

These findings therefore call for the family to be considered as a socialization facilitator and reference group for young Europeans. Although this article is largely based on these premises, which are believed to be decisive in shaping young people's attitudes towards their family, it also offers a different perception of the role of private life in shaping the respondents' identities. Indeed, the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey indicators allow us to understand the manner in which family socialization is instrumental in shaping an individual endowed with the necessary qualities to achieve social integration. Just as a Weber or a Sennett might have done, we wondered what type of human being would be in step with contemporary society as young people view it. Such a survey is relevant inasmuch as the sampling of young respondents includes Europeans and Americans as well as Asians (United States, India, China, Taiwan and Japan). We can therefore compare the youths *and* families of strongly contrasting societal systems.

Our point of departure will be the preferences assigned by the young respondents to certain qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Once we have determined the ranking of social virtues supposedly needed to shape an individual, we will examine the *strong correlations* that exist between these qualities and, successively: the meanings attributed to individual success; the definition of a domestic environment; the degree to which the individual is socially integrated within his/her society of origin. A comparison of the three overlapping analytical levels (individual/family/society) will allow us to grasp the functions attributed to familial socialization. This comparison will then make it possible to formulate four broad patterns of contemporary youth (corresponding to the same number of geographic and cultural areas).

QUALITIES THAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT TO CHILDREN: RESPECT FOR OTHER PEOPLE, SELF-ASSERTIVENESS AND HARD WORK

The qualities that children should be encouraged to learn, according to the young respondents, reveal as much about the latter's conception of what should remain private, as it does about their view of how individuals correspond to the form of society in which they live, or would like to live. The survey's findings make it possible to outline a typical personality that would endow an individual with the qualities necessary for his/her social integration and success.

There is a certain consistency in the responses of the young Europeans. In Table 1 (next page), ranked highest are some rather homogeneous qualities primarily associated with individual conformity to a shared morality, to commitments made, and to tolerance and respect for others. These are probity-related qualities that should be shared with others

and possessed by an individual who is accountable in his/her relations with the environment. Next came the qualities affirming the individual's own personality, such as "imagination," "independence," as well as self-control, sense of duty ("self-discipline" and "hard work") and others having to do with concern for others ("unselfishness"): each of these qualities received high scores. Next, "obedience" and "curiosity" topped the list of qualities that the young respondents considered less important; they were ranked higher than "endurance," "thrift" and "entrepreneurship." The lowest-ranked value, positioned far below the others, was "religious faith": only 20% of the respondents thought that it is a quality that should be encouraged in children.

Table 1: Qualities that should be taught to children

	Qualities that children should be encouraged to learn:	Europe	Italy	Spain	France	United Kingdom	Germany	Denmark	Norway	Sweden	Finland	Poland	Estonia	Russia	United States	Japan	China	India	Taiwan
1	Honesty	86%	84%	82%	83%	87%	90%	87%	86%	85%	86%	85%	87%	73%	90%	59%	87%	69%	82%
2	Tolerance and respect	85%	79%	88%	85%	84%	87%	88%	85%	85%	80%	84%	83%	67%	82%	52%	89%	59%	84%
3	Responsibility	81%	79%	86%	73%	81%	83%	87%	73%	79%	84%	85%	87%	83%	89%	64%	91%	64%	87%
4	Loyalty	67%	81%	70%	59%	70%	62%	69%	65%	59%	66%	65%	64%	53%	76%	19%	77%	69%	63%
5	Imagination	59%	61%	61%	55%	65%	56%	58%	51%	59%	62%	62%	50%	53%	71%	54%	71%	55%	55%
6	Independence	58%	56%	52%	46%	66%	64%	70%	49%	65%	64%	59%	54%	58%	72%	57%	84%	68%	71%
7	Self-discipline	58%	60%	58%	50%	68%	55%	60%	51%	50%	52%	57%	72%	68%	79%	55%	81%	66%	78%
8	Hard work	54%	40%	78%	56%	67%	55%	29%	36%	31%	53%	38%	77%	68%	80%	56%	85%	64%	70%
9	Unselfishness	51%	62%	70%	57%	64%	21%	41%	43%	50%	46%	52%	36%	35%	71%	31%	53%	58%	47%
10	Obedience	47%	46%	50%	55%	54%	38%	38%	44%	36%	53%	41%	60%	36%	65%	19%	23%	61%	36%
11	Curiosity	46%	56%	44%	51%	42%	42%	50%	58%	52%	33%	45%	31%	58%	52%	57%	50%	55%	41%
12	Endurance	39%	33%	53%	19%	40%	47%	33%	32%	32%	43%	47%	59%	52%	54%	53%	87%	48%	75%
13	Thrift	36%	32%	51%	27%	27%	40%	18%	21%	30%	42%	45%	48%	47%	35%	30%	60%	45%	53%
14	Entrepreneurship	33%	22%	57%	21%	23%	38%	24%	35%	16%	31%	50%	66%	58%	35%	39%	89%	53%	42%
15	Religious faith	16%	25%	10%	6%	13%	9%	6%	9%	6%	10%	46%	23%	14%	44%	8%	11%	57%	12%

Reading: Percentage of agreement (persons who gave a score of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7) with the qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. For example, 84% of the Italians stated that they wanted children to learn honesty, compared to 86% for all Europeans. Percentages 5 or more points above the European mean are shaded in dark grey, while percentages 5 or more points below the European mean are shaded in light grey.

Despite some heterogeneity in the answers, a rather precise hierarchy of social virtues attributed to the contemporary individual emerged: high rankings were given to qualities relating to concern for others, to a very assertive personality, as well as to a relative rejection of duty, involuntary constraints, and a hard work ethic. These findings corroborate those of other European surveys. In one conducted by Eurobarometer in the early 1990s on Europeans' opinions about family, the encouraged qualities were associated first with acknowledgement of collective life. The sort of child Europeans wanted was "responsible, tolerant and well-educated" (Malpas and Lambert, p. 114).

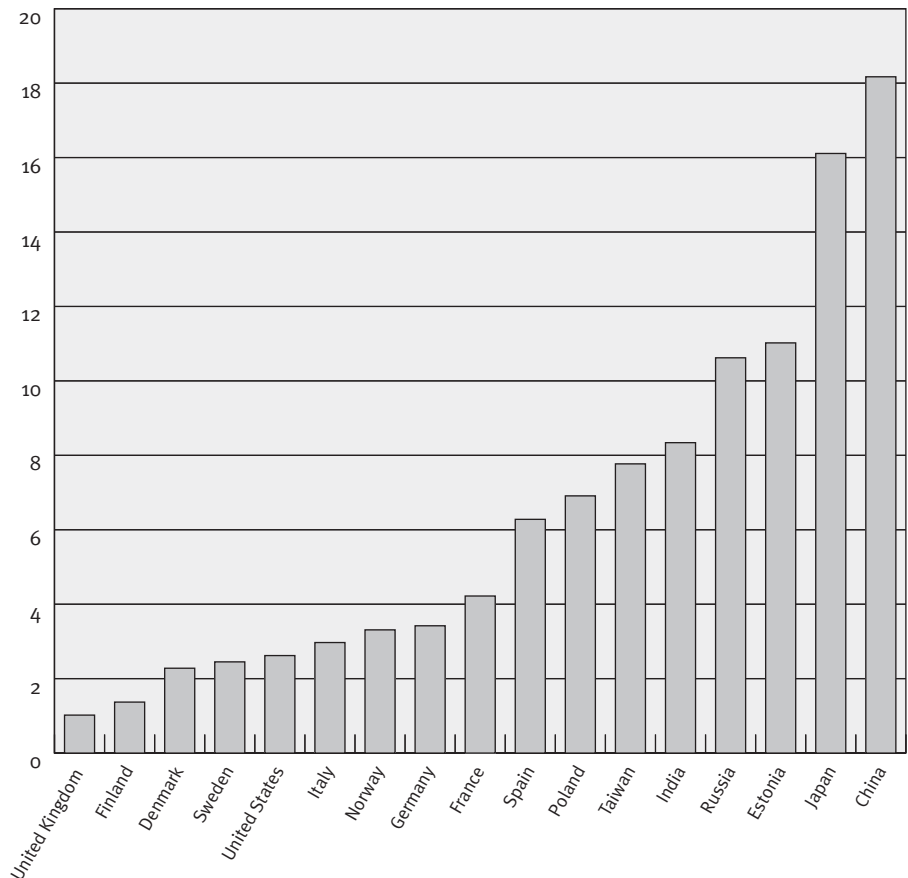
There were strong national variations (that also appear in Table 1, in the set of positive and negative deviations from the European mean). These can be consolidated within broader transnational groups. Some countries strongly value endurance, thrift, resourcefulness, a "hard work" ethic and "self-discipline." Those countries are mainly those of Eastern Europe (Poland, Estonia, Russia), the Far East (India, China, Taiwan), the United States, the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, Spain. This is not so much the case with the countries of Northern Europe or with Japan.

The differences of opinion between the countries mainly concern their relative acceptance or rejection of these values. Indeed, the other forms of self-realization (which have to do with individuals asserting themselves through their relations with others) are valued by young people almost everywhere in Europe and in the United States, *and there is no country that deviates significantly from that view*. On the other hand, these qualities are rejected to a somewhat greater extent in India, Japan and Russia.

Although these initial findings already show that there are internal cleavages in Europe and Asia, and that it would be futile at this stage of the analysis to overhastily assimilate national differences with broader continental groups, another indicator needs to be used in order to propose a few cross-national associations. It thus becomes worthwhile to measure the extent to which each country in the sampling is in "conformity" to the European ranking. Figure 1 (next page) presents each country's overall deviation from the European mean. It appears that Eastern Europe's results are close to those of the Asian countries, which means that the rankings made by the youth of all of these countries deviate substantially from the Europeans' benchmark ranking.⁴ The United States occupies a position midway between the Nordic countries, the United Kingdom (which falls within the European mean) and the countries of continental Europe (with Italy and Norway, which have a somewhat higher ranking). Spain stands out within this continuum that partially follows an East-West geographic orientation. The young Spaniards' rankings are closer to that of their peers in other countries, who value a hard work ethic, than they are to those of their own.

4. It should be pointed out, however, that the young Japanese respondents more frequently rejected the qualities associated with a hard work ethic and self-assertiveness, while the youth of the other countries in this group strongly valued them.

Figure 1: Country deviations from the European mean concerning qualities that children should be encouraged to learn



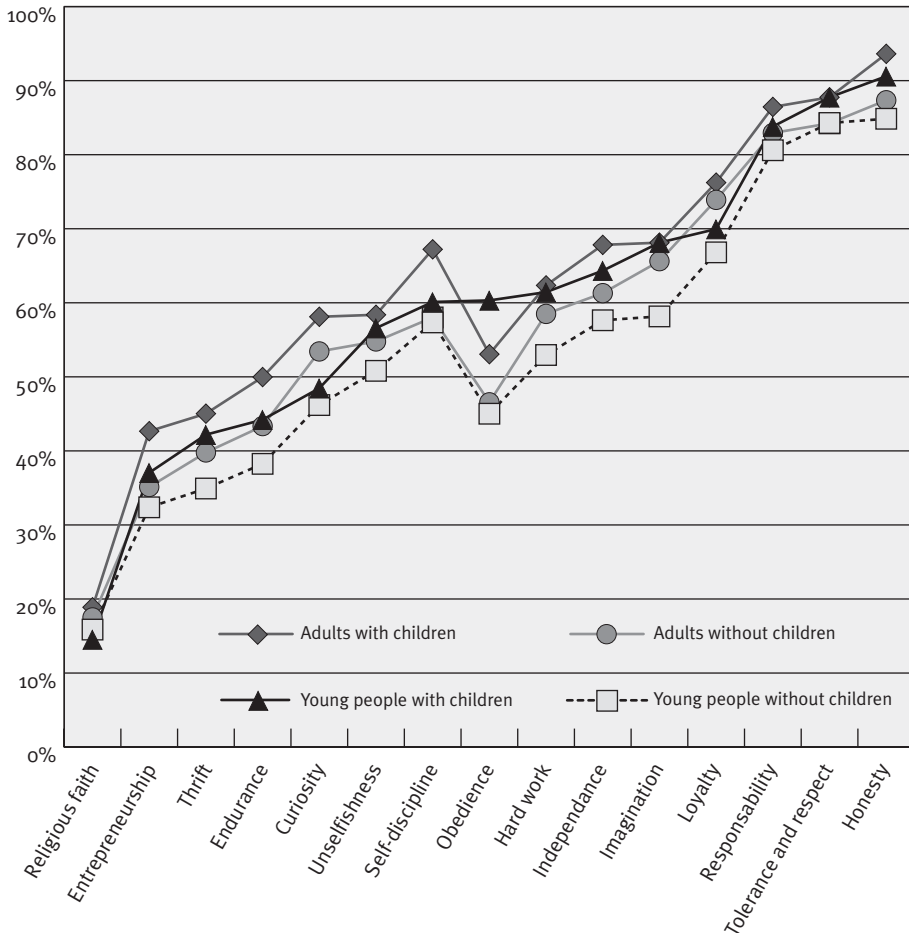
Reading: The y-axis shows each country’s average deviation from the European mean (taking into account all of the qualities that children should be encouraged to learn). For example, there is a mean deviation of 8 points (54.4% with scores 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7) between Taiwanese scores and the mean scores related to qualities that should be taught to children, according to European respondents.

NATIONAL, RATHER THAN GENERATIONAL, DIVERGENCES

Such wide differences between countries call for an explanation. We might first wonder whether these are preferences expressed mainly by young people, or whether these personality traits are also valued by other age groups. If the former, we may assume that we are dealing with a dissemination of “new” values in the societies under consideration.

If the latter, this would more likely be a matter of national specificity, to the extent that the chosen personality traits are also highly ranked by adult respondents.

Figure 2: Qualities that children should be encouraged to learn, based upon respondent age and parental experience (European countries)



Reading: The y-axis shows the percentage of agreement with the various items (persons who gave scores of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1:7). Example: 58% of the adults with children value the trait of curiosity in children, compared to 53% for the adults without children, 48% for young people with children and 46% for young people without children.

This ranking remains the same, overall, when tested against parental experience and age. Whether the respondent is a father (or mother) may have influenced the importance given to certain qualities, and we might have expected a change in the order of the qualities chosen.

However, as shown in Figure 2 (previous page), such is not the case. The sole exception is “Obedience,” which is desired more by young parents than by the other respondents.

Table 2: Qualities that should be taught to children – intergenerational deviations

Qualities	Europe	Italy	Spain	France	United Kingdom	Germany	Denmark	Norway	Sweden	Finland	Poland	Estonia	Russia	United States	Japan	China	India	Taiwan	Mean Value
Curiosity	10	7	14	11	4	8	22	15	13	13	12	9	16	7	4	15	3	4	12
Imagination	8	6	10	11	3	12	11	11	7	11	4	-3	11	2	11	8	3	8	9
Independence	7	8	7	9	5	6	14	12	14	11	2	1	14	7	7	0	10	4	9
Endurance	8	9	8	11	-1	20	7	13	8	13	-1	-2	8	6	5	3	6	3	8
Thrift	7	6	2	11	6	12	6	8	11	6	3	2	10	11	6	5	3	14	8
Honesty	6	3	7	8	3	4	9	8	7	11	9	8	12	7	12	2	1	7	8
Loyalty	8	3	7	15	4	12	1	9	10	9	6	4	9	9	-1	4	1	8	7
Self-discipline	6	3	7	6	5	9	-3	7	3	12	7	4	12	7	8	5	8	6	7
Hard work	7	5	1	18	-1	16	0	1	-2	13	-2	8	14	5	4	4	5	7	7
Unselfishness	5	8	7	7	2	2	5	3	5	10	9	7	7	11	1	14	0	6	7
Responsibility	4	4	1	3	1	6	5	14	11	8	6	2	8	5	9	0	11	3	6
Entrepreneurship	7	3	7	12	0	13	9	16	4	1	6	0	2	4	6	2	7	5	6
Obedience	4	3	5	10	-1	5	-4	3	5	3	2	-7	4	3	-1	7	-3	11	5
Tolerance and respect for other people	2	1	0	3	1	1	3	7	4	13	2	-2	12	8	-1	-1	6	-1	4
Religious faith	3	4	7	1	3	1	-1	-2	-2	2	5	-1	4	9	0	9	6	8	4
Sum mean of the deviations' absolute value		4	5	8	2	8	5	7	6	8	4	2	8	6	5	5	4	6	

Reading: Each cell corresponds to the percentage of adult responses, minus the percentage of young people's responses. A positive deviation therefore indicates that the adult respondents assigned a greater importance to the item concerned, while a negative deviation signifies that the young respondents assigned it a greater importance. The light grey cells represent intergenerational deviations of less than 10%, while dark grey areas designate deviations equal to, or greater than, 10%. The last line of the table corresponds to the sum mean of the deviations' absolute value per country (divided by the number of countries surveyed). It therefore indicates the "overall mean deviation" separating the countries with respect to the qualities that should be taught to children. The last column corresponds to the sum total of the deviations' absolute values per quality (divided by the number of qualities included in the survey). It indicates the "overall mean deviation" that exists between the various qualities.

Although the order in which the respondents ranked the qualities scarcely varied, adult respondents were more convinced than young respondents that they should be an important part of a child's education—in the majority of cases, the deviations are even significant (see Table 2). If we focus instead on how the overall mean deviation varies on a country-by-country basis, we note that it is higher in such countries as France, Germany, Norway and Finland, which have a mean deviation of 8%. This same deviation, on the other hand, is quite low in Eastern European countries, as well as in Asia, the United Kingdom and Italy. In the latter countries, there is thus a stronger intergenerational consensus on the qualities that should be taught to children. However, the personality traits that adult respondents, more than their younger counterparts, would like to develop in children, have more to do with open-mindedness, self-assertiveness and a hard work ethic. Qualities such as "endurance", "entrepreneurship" and "thrift" seem to be ranked slightly higher in countries entering the arena of global economic competition and which recently experienced strong growth (with the noteworthy exception of Russia).⁵

How can we account for the relative value assigned to a hard work ethic in countries so dissimilar in terms of their culture, religion and history, or its rejection in other equally unlike countries? If the prospect of an ideal personality's conformity to an ideal society is to bear fruit, we first need to better understand not only young people's characteristics but also those of the countries surveyed, by more closely examining their youths' aspirations, their definition of family and their integration within each society.

FIRST LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: ASPIRATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS

Of what use are such personality traits as endurance, self-discipline, or a hard work ethic and thrift? And in what situations can such qualities as honesty, unselfishness and "tolerance and respect for other people" be displayed? It may be inferred that what motivated the selection of these items was their beneficial impact on individual behaviour. This assumption can be tested by first selecting indicators that will reveal whether young people associated these qualities with forms of duty, quite apart from any hedonistic or instrumental logic. However, when those surveyed were asked to give their opinion concerning a series of specific obligations, no correlation was recorded between these forms of duties and the desirable personality traits. The qualities that should be developed in children and the way ethical dilemmas should be dealt with are perceived in a very distinct and independent way. This is apparent in Table 3 (next page), which associates the young respondents' answers with three obligations with which the individuals should comply.

The young people's response to the obligation: "do [their] best at work regardless of how much money [they are] paid," is quite clear. In virtually all of the countries surveyed, young

5. A third indicator of generational consensus could have been used. When the rank deviations' sum of squares is calculated among the 30 to 50 age group and compared to the same indicator among the 16 to 29 age group, very similar results are obtained.

people seem rather to have rejected this “work-for-work’s sake” model. This obligation was also rejected in countries that made the hard work ethic the keystone of education.

The following statement might translate the significance of probity-related qualities: “Prevent crime even though it might pose a risk to one’s own safety.” One might have expected young respondents from societies in which a sense of responsibility is valued more highly to have given more weight to this item. Yet such was not the case.

Table 3: Young people and moral obligations

	Do one’s best at work regardless of how much money one is paid	Contribute to a better world	Prevent crime even though it might pose a risk to one’s own safety
Europe	41%	58%	27%
Russia	22%	60%	27%
Poland	27%	55%	26%
Estonia	31%	44%	22%
Japan	32%	20%	6%
China	33%	68%	48%
Denmark	35%	59%	18%
France	36%	59%	35%
India	39%	41%	36%
Norway	40%	56%	16%
United Kingdom	40%	49%	18%
Spain	40%	74%	26%
Taiwan	41%	55%	33%
Sweden	41%	56%	19%
Germany	43%	49%	29%
Finland	49%	44%	12%
United States	56%	66%	27%
Italy	58%	72%	32%

Reading: Percentage of agreement with three moral obligations (persons who gave scores of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). Percentages 5 or more points above the European mean are shaded in dark grey, while percentages 5 or more points below the European mean are shaded in light grey. The countries are ranked in ascending order according to their score in the first column.

The aim of a third statement (“contribute to a better world”) is to test the qualities of unselfishness and altruism. The high or low scores attributed to it do not allow for any categorization based on very specific educational traits.

Self-fulfilment through the achievement of a *collective* morale imperative being somewhat remote from the familial education system that we have identified, it is important to determine whether the qualities to be encouraged in children make it possible to better grasp the nature of success that young people are seeking. In other words, the goal is to know whether the personality traits desired in a child can be of practical use in realizing an *individual's* material success.

Table 4: Individual success and familial identification

	Reason for getting an education: to earn more money	To be proud of the rich people in my country	Importance of a high salary for a future career	Importance of good benefits for a future career	A good life means having a lot of money	A good life means becoming famous	Objective for the next fifteen years: earn a lot of money	Sum mean of the positive deviations	Getting an education will make my family proud
European mean	55%	6%	56%	48%	29%	7%	58%		38%
Norway	48%	10%	40%	50%	21%	4%	47%	0	21%
Denmark	43%	10%	36%	28%	18%	2%	42%	0	21%
Finland	52%	9%	58%	40%	20%	4%	48%	0	23%
France	55%	5%	57%	52%	30%	5%	55%	0	29%
United Kingdom	54%	7%	47%	52%	26%	6%	60%	0	37%
Spain	51%	3%	60%	49%	25%	9%	53%	0	41%
Japan	29%	10%	37%	47%	23%	13%	28%	1	14%
Sweden	49%	9%	49%	42%	35%	10%	55%	1	19%
Italy	40%	8%	58%	48%	33%	12%	54%	1	47%
Germany	63%	4%	50%	38%	30%	5%	65%	2	43%
Estonia	61%	10%	73%	51%	40%	9%	58%	3	38%
Poland	68%	10%	72%	62%	26%	9%	63%	4	45%
United States	69%	11%	56%	76%	29%	10%	64%	4	52%
Russia	71%	20%	85%	49%	47%	15%	67%	6	42%
Taiwan	61%	14%	69%	77%	48%	45%	72%	7	45%
China	67%	24%	77%	77%	48%	22%	79%	7	59%
India	67%	38%	60%	63%	56%	46%	77%	7	71%

Reading: Percentage of agreement with these various statements (persons who gave scores of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). Percentages of 5 or more points above the European mean are shaded in dark grey, while percentages of 5 or more points below the European mean are shaded in light grey. The countries are listed in ascending order according to their score in the second-to-the-last column.

Table 4 (previous page) compares young people's responses per country with a series of indicators relating to individual economic and financial success. This success has been studied on the basis of various factors: the importance of a high salary and of good benefits for a future career, the goal of having a lot of money, and the ability to measure the meaning of a good life. The young Indian, Chinese, Taiwanese and Russian respondents (and, to a lesser extent, their American counterparts) assigned much more importance than the youth of the other countries to this social advancement as measured by monetary gain. Young Norwegians, Danes and Fins, on the other hand, seem quite indifferent to this necessity of growing wealthier.

It is clear that in societies *in which young people favour an education focused on individual effort, personal economic and financial success by means of a well-paid career likely to make them famous is more valued than elsewhere*. Here, ideal education has a purely practical vocation aimed at forging an individual expected to lead a very successful life. The only exception consists of Spain—a country in which young people adhere to a structure of educational values approximating that of Eastern European and Asian countries, but in which material success is devalued.

All of these indicators pointing towards a future that the respondent strongly desires do not simply refer to an individual definition of self-realization. This is the second information that can be derived from Table 4. Young people who scored the highest in terms of economic success also assigned more importance to education (a prerequisite for achieving professional success) as a way of making their families proud. However, in countries where young people rejected this form of social success, education tends to be unassociated with any sense of gratitude towards the families.⁶

Table 4 shows that, in certain countries, social prestige of an economic or financial nature cannot be dissociated from familial pride. *Once again, it is in the United States and in countries with a dynamic emerging market economy that young people more clearly than elsewhere associate their material success with familial reciprocity*. This consequently calls for a closer examination of how young respondents defined family.

SECOND LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: DIFFERENT TYPES OF “FAMILIALISM”

We selected some indicators dealing with intergenerational reciprocity, others addressing the quality of relations in private life, and, lastly, a few measuring how family contributes to a youth's ability to maintain social ties. Five major country groups were thus distinguished:⁷

6. The only noteworthy exception is Estonia, whose young respondents seemed to give special importance to success in the economic domain, but without implying any reciprocity whatsoever with respect to their families.

7. The countries were ranked according to the number of positive deviations between the European mean and the deviations' sum of squares. The first value allows the countries to be grouped according to the set of attitudes about the

In the first group, the countries most unlike the European model are unquestionably the most familialist: these are Russia, India, China, Estonia and Poland. These countries' youth believed that family is a strong element of their individual identity, which led respondents to value its social role more highly. They also considered family as a reference point for evaluating their social status and advancement. It is the family's status and inter-generational aspects that are most important. Here again, the youth of Eastern European countries showed much more affinity with their Chinese and Indian peers than with their neighbours in other European societies.

The United States is a familialist country, but it approximates the European mean. Like the young respondents in the first group, Americans answered that their family played a key role in their life for most of the proposed items. However, the percentage deviations differ widely from those of other Eastern familial countries.

These first two groups therefore relate to models in which the family rewards individual success. The importance of belonging to a group in order to define oneself is evident, as is also appreciation of intergenerational dialogue.

Germany, Sweden, Norway, France, and above all Denmark, comprise a third major group: young people from these countries reject the idea that family is an important factor in their identity and do not attribute to the latter the role of being the foundation of society. Nor do they feel compelled to view their parents as the benchmark of their success. On the other hand, young respondents in Norway, Finland and Denmark stated that they were prepared to pay the pensions of older generations. The Danes and French felt that having children was part of what they plan to achieve in the next 15 years (a plan rejected, however, by the Indians, Chinese, Taiwanese and Japanese). It is another family model that emerged, one less centred on social functions.

The fourth group consists of non-familialist countries that approximate the European mean: Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain and Finland. Few significant correlations can be pointed out in this definition of the family, apart from the fact that the young Italian, British and Spanish respondents did not think it was important not to have a lower material standard than their parents.

Last of all is Japan. This country is just as non-familialist as the four preceding countries, yet it cannot be ranked in the same group because of its extreme divergence from the European mean. This country's youth seem to be quite indifferent to the role that family should play, both from a personal and social vantage point. In this respect, Japanese youth seem to once again differentiate themselves from all the other countries in our sampling.

family chosen by the young respondents. Consequently, some young people are more "familialist" than others. The second value, on the other hand, measures the deviation of each country from the European model.

Table 5: How young people view family

	Family is a factor of individual identity	Family is the foundation of society	Satisfaction with my family	The family provides meaning to life	A good life means having a family	Planning on achieving in the next 15 years: having a child	Important not to have a lower material standard than my parents	Important to achieve a better material standard than my parents	Prepared to pay the pensions of older generations	Sum mean of the positive deviations	Deviations sum of squares
Europe	68%	47%	63%	77%	65%	67%	31%	21%	23%		
Italy	70%	50%	63%	77%	64%	67%	26%	24%	25%	0	60
United Kingdom	66%	47%	61%	78%	64%	61%	25%	19%	27%	0	93
Japan	50%	34%	36%	65%	36%	48%	7%	7%	15%	0	3 448
Spain	69%	44%	69%	79%	60%	66%	22%	20%	21%	1	172
Finland	69%	39%	65%	75%	62%	70%	25%	15%	34%	1	296
Sweden	63%	33%	70%	80%	67%	67%	25%	12%	27%	1	413
Norway	59%	35%	66%	76%	69%	70%	17%	7%	41%	1	983
Germany	70%	54%	60%	78%	60%	65%	43%	16%	25%	2	259
France	60%	35%	61%	72%	72%	72%	23%	16%	11%	2	562
Taiwan	50%	65%	46%	76%	48%	40%	42%	35%	27%	3	2 322
Denmark	66%	34%	72%	78%	72%	72%	18%	12%	35%	4	717
Poland	79%	54%	62%	81%	72%	70%	54%	44%	24%	5	1 295
India	80%	52%	73%	78%	57%	23%	51%	48%	50%	6	4 100
Russia	73%	59%	64%	81%	71%	63%	68%	66%	56%	6	4 645
United States	75%	62%	66%	83%	72%	63%	37%	31%	32%	7	621
Estonia	79%	67%	65%	86%	78%	64%	41%	43%	36%	7	1 519
China	73%	76%	68%	88%	72%	59%	46%	42%	63%	8	3 377

Reading: Percentage of agreement with these statements about the family (persons who gave scores of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). The countries are ranked in ascending order according to their score in the second-to-the-last column. Deviations 5 or more points above the European mean are shaded in dark grey, while deviations of 5 or more points below the European mean are shaded in light grey.

Lastly, a second strong correlation was established. Young people from countries that consider a hard work ethic very important in their ideal concept of children's education and that emphasize material success more often refer to familial models based on the logic of social status and intergenerational reciprocity. Thus there is a pronounced consistency in this group of

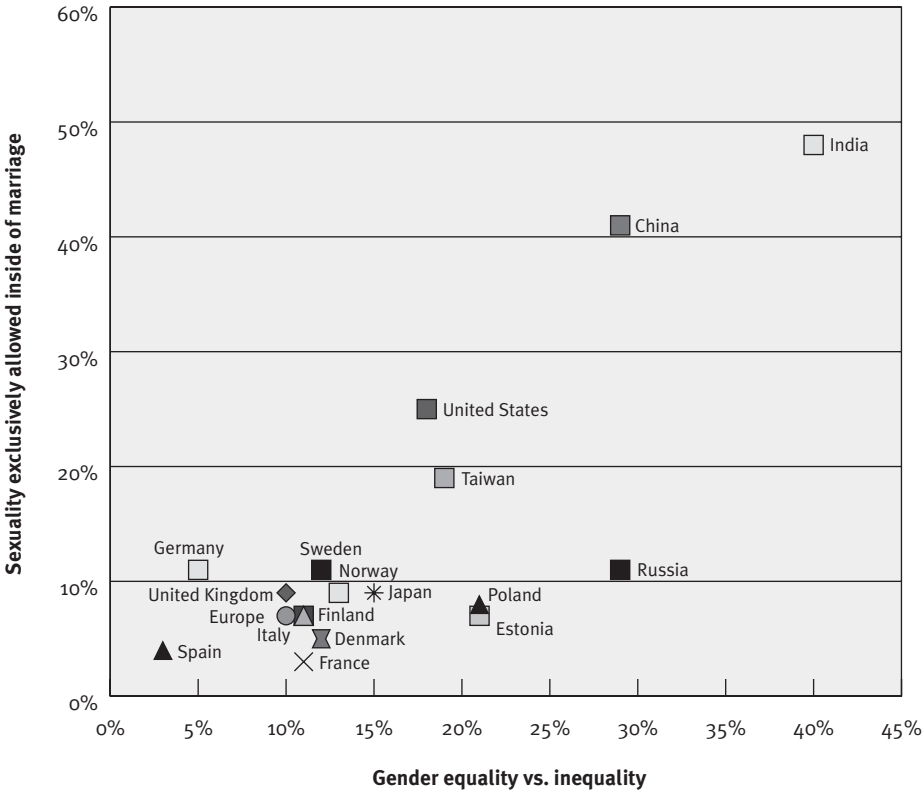
Eastern European countries, as well as in China and India, between the two first levels of analysis. Yet it should also be noted that Mediterranean countries (such as Italy and Spain) in which the family plays a strong role in social integration—corroborated by a large body of literature—are less familialist than commonly believed (see Loredana Sciolla's study in this book).

Although these five definitions of family refer to the link between the individual and his/her relational ties, family relations cannot be viewed solely from this angle. It is also enlightening to compare these results with the answers given by young respondents to the questions concerning gender differences in an ideal society and about sexuality outside of marriage. By intersecting these two aspects, Figure 3 (next page) shows that there is a strong consensus among young Europeans. The differences with respect to the definition of family cannot be found when only marital status is considered. Therefore, young European respondents valued gender equality to the same extent and believed that one's sexual life should not be solely reserved for marriage. Taking the opposite view from that of European societies on this point, India and China did not give high scores to the items related to gender equality and reserved sexuality for a strictly institutional framework. Although more in agreement with the European model, the United States and Taiwan emphasized the specificity of gender roles and were less willing than the Europeans to consider sexual relations acceptable outside of marriage. The young Russians, Poles and Estonians were not very convinced of the need to surround sexuality with a matrimonial framework, but stressed gender differences more than their Western European neighbours.

This shows that the familialist countries of the first group are quite traditionalist, at least concerning one aspect of gender relations (Figure 3 next page). Young Americans continue to stand out from young Europeans, while the Japanese share the same model as the latter. The European familial model, who devalues the social status-related aspects of private life, values, on the other hand, gender equality and a non-institutional perception of sexuality.

If we then focus on the issue of gender equality, *the countries most committed to a hard work ethic, material success, and the family as a contributor of social status have a more traditionalist concept of gender relations. The young respondents can consequently be clearly divided into two groups: traditionalists and modernists.*

Figure 3: Young people’s attitude towards gender equality and sexuality outside of marriage



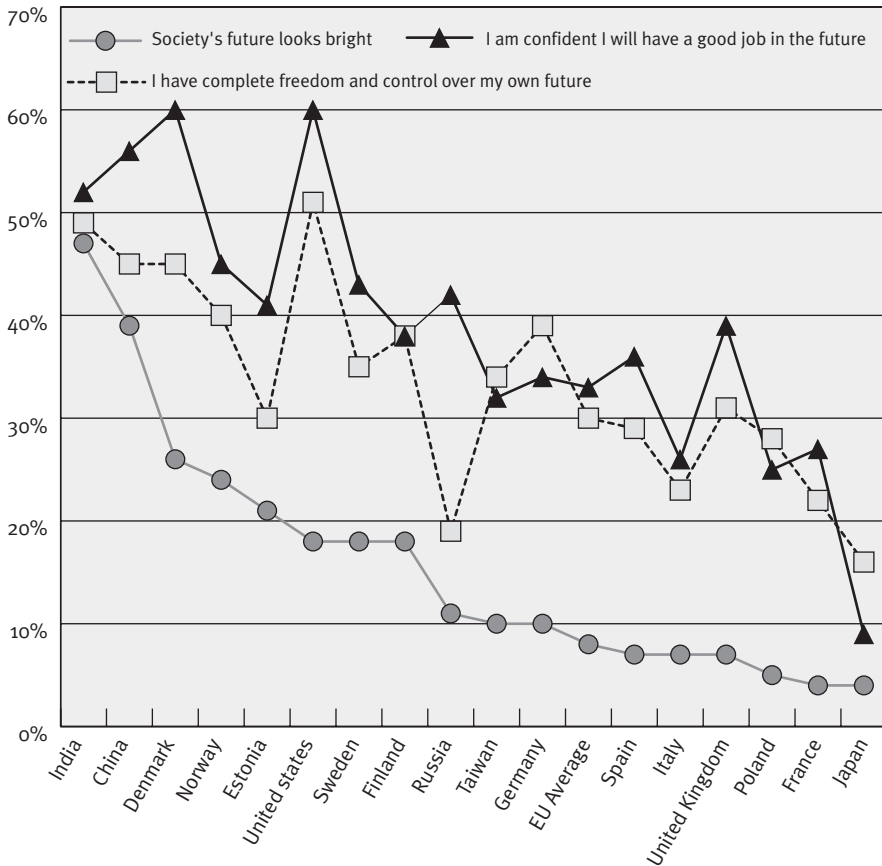
Reading: The x-axis indicates the percentage of young respondents who clearly value gender equality rather than inequality (scores of 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7), and the y-axis indicates the percentage of young respondents who clearly value sexuality exclusively inside of marriage.

THIRD LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: INTEGRATION IN NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The previously highlighted definitions of “domestic environment” reveal a certain consistency between some personality traits that people want to encourage in children: a desire to succeed as an individual and familial identity. However, Table 5 also shows that young people living in countries that do not value a hard work ethic stated that they were quite satisfied with their family: such is the case of the young Danish, Swedish, Spanish, Chinese and Indian respondents, who chose this item more often than the others did. Satisfaction—a factor that could be considered as an indicator of the quality of social connectedness, is thus found in familial types that seem to be diametrically opposed. In

order to better grasp what at first seems rather surprising, we will examine the last level of analysis: the degree to which young people are integrated into their society. These new correlations will allow us to refine the contrasts highlighted in this paper. Our aim at this point is to see how young people characterize the society in which they live, by providing more information on the societal contexts in which educational values, material aspirations for success and familial types have developed.

Figure 4: Young people and optimism

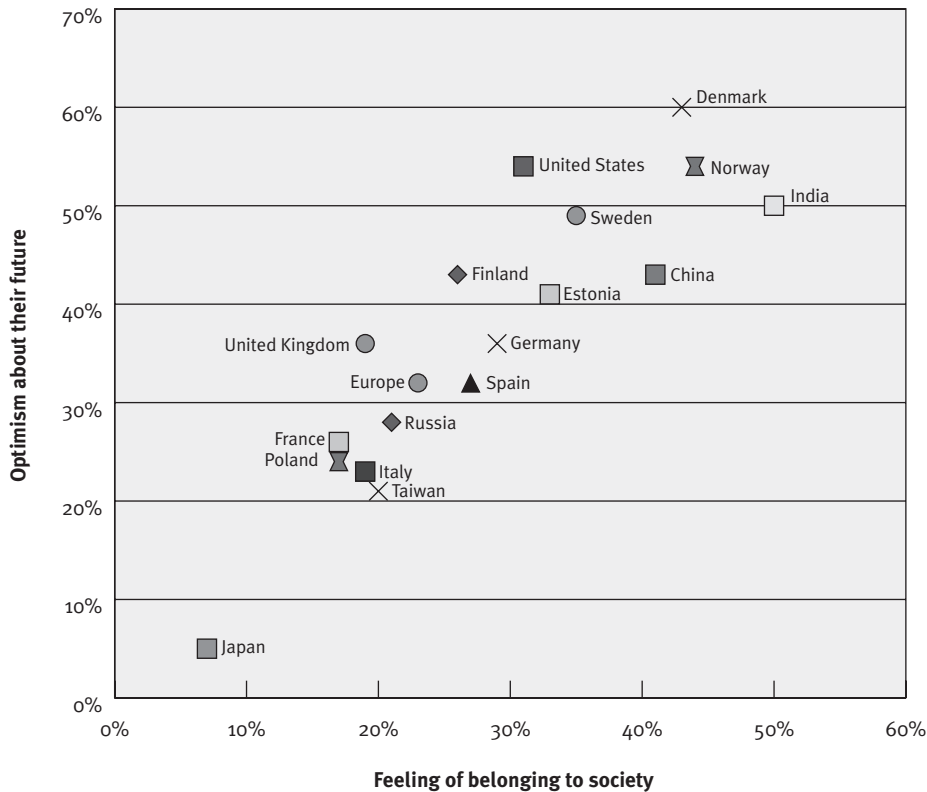


Reading: Percentage of agreement with these three statements among young respondents from various countries (persons who gave scores of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). For example, 60% of the Danes are certain they will have a good job in the future, 45% believe that they have complete freedom and control over their own future and 26% believe that society's future looks bright.

In the questions proposed to the respondents, the term "integration" was meant to signify three forms of attachment and involvement: the way in which young people view the future (with optimism or pessimism), the way in which they view the various aspects of their

daily lives and of the world around them (by expressing their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with them), or whether they feel they belong to, or feel out of step with, their society.

Figure 5: Optimism and the feeling of social belonging



Reading: The x-axis indicates the percentage of young people who feel that they fully belong to their society (scores of 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). The y-axis indicates the percentage of young people who feel resolutely optimistic about their future (scores of 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7).

Let us start with optimism, which can be understood as: 1) the overall control that an individual may have over his/her own destiny; 2) a form of insurance with respect to the prospect of obtaining a job; 3) all positive expectations for the future of the society in which an individual lives. We therefore wondered to what degree a certain amount of confidence in individual destiny might prolong a more general confidence in the future of the community. Figure 4 clearly shows that these two levels are interlinked. If the young respondents appeared to be more confident on a personal level than they were on a collective level, the selected indicators for the most part followed a parallel path. For India and Japan, the scores associated with these three aspects of optimism are close together, at a

high level for the first country and at a very low level for the second (see Figure 5 previous page). On the other hand, young Russians stood out from the rest of their peers by the fact that their certainty of finding a good job surpassed more than it did elsewhere their hope of having complete freedom and control over their own future.

We were thus able to identify the countries in which young respondents proved to be very pessimistic (Japan, France, Poland, United Kingdom and Italy) and the other countries in which, to the contrary, optimism was very high (India, China, Denmark, United States, Estonia, Sweden and Finland). Although control over one's personal future and the confidence of having a job were correlated to a positive vision of society as a whole among the youth of Northern Europe, India and China, it is tempting to wonder whether—in these same societies—such optimism is linked to a feeling of social belonging.

However, the feeling of social belonging varies widely from one country to the next. For example, the young Danes, Norwegians and Swedes chose this indicator more often than the other Europeans, as did the young Chinese and Indian respondents. The Germans and Americans recorded slightly narrower deviations than their aforementioned counterparts. The young Japanese respondents rejected more frequently than their peers any notion of belonging to their own society, and this differentiated them from their peer respondents.

When this feeling of belonging is compared with a question concerning the evaluation of the respondent's personal future, we find that, in those societies in which the young people more strongly indicated a certain degree of confidence, the feeling of belonging is stronger. This is particularly the case, once again, of the young Indians, Chinese, Danes, Norwegians and Swedes (see Olivier Galland's study in this book).

We may conclude this overview of indicators relating to the integration of young people into their society by considering their satisfaction with various aspects such as: their daily life, their family, their close friends and the situation in their country (see Table 6 next page). The country ranking provides overall satisfaction scores. For example, the young Indians, Danes, Norwegians, Spaniards, Fins and Chinese were as a whole more satisfied than their peers. In contrast, the Poles, Russians, English, and especially the Taiwanese and Japanese stood out because of their extreme dissatisfaction.

As shown in the table, satisfaction appears in those countries in which the young respondents indicated that they are optimistic about their future and expressed a strong attachment to their society. Dissatisfaction is symmetrically stronger among young respondents who stated that their feeling of social belonging is weak.

Table 6: Satisfaction scores about various aspects of young people's lives

		Areas of satisfaction								
		Life as a whole	Family	Finances	Health	Work	Leisure time	Friends	General situation of the country	Total
1	India	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	12
2	Denmark	2	4	2	10	2	2	2	4	28
3	Norway	3	1	3	11	3	4	8	1	34
4	Spain	5	7	10	4	13	3	4	7	53
5	Finland	6	2	15	6	12	8	5	2	56
6	China	14	5	6	5	9	6	11	5	61
7	Sweden	7	6	7	14	7	13	12	6	72
8	Italy	8	14	4	2	8	7	16	14	73
9	France	12	12	14	3	6	9	6	12	74
10	Estonia	16	9	5	12	5	15	10	9	81
11	United States	4	8	13	13	11	11	14	8	82
12	European Union	11	11	11	9	10	10	9	11	82
13	Germany	15	16	16	7	4	5	7	16	86
14	Poland	9	18	8	8	14	12	3	18	90
15	Russia	10	13	12	15	15	16	13	13	107
16	United Kingdom	13	10	17	16	17	14	15	10	112
17	Taiwan	17	15	9	18	16	17	17	15	124
18	Japan	18	17	18	17	18	18	18	17	141

Reading: Each cell in the table corresponds to a country's ranking in the satisfaction percentage classification related to the particular aspect concerned: for example, young Indian respondents were ranked first in terms of overall satisfaction with their lives. The last column corresponds to the total of all positions occupied by each country in the ranking. In this table, the countries are ranked in ascending order according to their total score.

Northern European, Indian and Chinese young people seem to be more integrated, unlike their Eastern European and Japanese peers. It therefore appears that *Eurasian youth, who seemed to belong to the same group, are divided—some of them having more similar views to the youth of Northern Europe, and others to those of Eastern Europe.* The countries in which young respondents stated they were more integrated into their society are those in which, overall, they were more satisfied with their family (regardless of the type of family).

Satisfaction with family is therefore part of a global social framework. For one thing, it is not strongly expressed in societies in which material success is viewed as less important, nor is it specifically experienced in other societies that emphasize personal development. The different forms of integration are what cause this feeling to vary. Integration therefore seems to be an extremely important factor for classifying young people. In examining these findings, the cross-national associations change to some extent; it would in fact be erroneous to compare the societies along a geographic continuum stretching from Eastern Europe to the Far East by way of the Indian subcontinent.

CONCLUSION: FOUR YOUTH-RELATED CONFIGURATIONS

We now have all of the components necessary to propose a modelling of the youth in our sampling. In order to do so, let us first recall the stages of the demonstration.

- There is an increasing interdependence between societies that, having all embraced the market economy, are now engaged in global competition. It therefore seemed worthwhile to explore the ways in which young respondents were expecting familial education to help them adapt to their social systems' standard requirements.

- Although probity-related qualities were the ones most often chosen by the young respondents, they were also the most consensual: few countries differentiated themselves by giving a more or less high ranking to honesty or tolerance. However, a hard work ethic and self-assertiveness are some of the discriminating variables between the countries.

- Based on this initial fundamental comparison, and in order to understand the logic of the cross-national associations that ensued, we studied the young respondents' aspirations for material success. The youth of the various countries disagreed over a utilitarian concept of education. Material success is a more important goal among the youth of countries who make hard work the keystone of education. Moreover, this success depends as much upon the effort of the individual seeking it as it does from his/her familial identity group.

- We were able to identify five ways of perceiving family. If there is a strong consistency between a form of standard personality oriented towards a hard work ethic, individual aspirations for success, and a familial model focused on intergenerational dialogue, it is because these factors are found in very specific societies: dissimilar in terms of their religion, culture and history, but nonetheless part of the strong-growth emerging market economies' group. These are societies that, behind their economic drive and the way they cultivate material success, display more traditional conceptions of how gender roles should be divided and who assign the family a social stability function. Consequently, coexisting within these societies are ambitions for social advancement and modernization, as well as a determination to maintain a definition of privacy related to the stability of social ties rather than to the quality of relations and personal development.

- However, these considerations do not take into account the fact that satisfaction with family is sometimes associated with radically opposed familial types. Actually, the youth of the various countries can also be distinguished by their degree of integration into their own societies. Familial satisfaction is a part of a global social framework.
- By taking into account the aspiration for success *and* integration, we can identify four distinct youth attitudinal patterns in contemporary societies.

Table 7: Youth Attitudinal Patterns

		Attitude towards material success	
		Strongly valued	Strongly devalued
Integration level	Well-integrated	Chinese, Indians <div>Satisfied with familialist domestic group</div>	Danes and other Northern Europeans <div>Satisfied with non- familialist domestic group</div>
	Poorly integrated	Russians, Poles <div>Unsatisfied with familialist domestic group</div>	Japanese <div>Unsatisfied with non-familialist domestic group</div>

Young people well-integrated into their society, who bank on social success and view a hard work ethic as an individual’s main traits: These are the Indians and Chinese, who value intergenerational reciprocity in the family, which in turn is subject to traditional gender relationships. They consider themselves satisfied with this familial model.

Young people well-integrated into their society who refuse to accept material success as the foundation of an individual’s social prestige, and who do not particularly value hard work: These are the young respondents from Denmark and other Northern European countries who do not consider the family to be a contributor of social status, and who value gender equality. They also consider themselves satisfied with their family. This would be a somewhat relational and egalitarian familial model (de Singly, 1993).

Young people poorly integrated into their society, for whom personal effort leads to social success, which is viewed as an essential goal: These are primarily the Pole and Russian respondents. Like their Asian peers, they most value more traditional family traits, first by making the family a part of an intergenerational dialogue, and by showing themselves to be traditionalists—though to a lesser degree—in terms of gender relationships. However, unlike their Indian and Chinese counterparts, they do not express satisfaction with respect to their family life.

Poorly integrated youth, who refuse to adhere to the values of success and hard work: These consist solely of the young Japanese respondents. They do not subscribe to material success and devalue personal traits associated with hard work. They are not in favour of viewing the family as a contributor of social status and reject the traditional conception of gender identities. Moreover, they are not satisfied with their family life.

One final comment will explain the absence of all the other youth types involved in this modelling. We retained only those countries whose youth differ substantially from the European mean. Upon completing the three levels of analysis, we highlighted the countries that scored the highest number of deviations. The data at our disposal ultimately failed to identify as systematically as might have been expected the differences between the European countries. Excluding those of Northern European countries—which were often found to have similar opinions, the other countries' youths differentiated themselves more infrequently. A growing convergence of young Europeans' attitudes can be noted—a sign that “Europe” is more than just a word. It is to be hoped, however, that these collective profiles of European youth do not continue to be as pessimistic as they are today.

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PART II

NATIONAL VIEWPOINTS

LIVING IN A BLOCKED SOCIETY HAS NOT DISCOURAGED ITALY'S YOUTH

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When compared to other European youth—particularly that of Northern Europe—Italy's young people are characterized by an “adulthood” phenomenon that became apparent in Italy as from the 1980s. This refers to the fact that young Italians are continuing to cohabit with their families of origin beyond the age of 30. This factor is contributing to the transformation of family interrelationships and intrarelations, delaying the age for getting married and having a first child, and is lowering the fertility rate (which is among the lowest in Europe). Worse still, this phenomenon is undermining young people's aptitude for achieving personal autonomy.

Several factors may explain the reasons for which Italian youth (particularly young males) live longer at home with their parents: the prolonged duration of their education, the difficulty in finding stable employment (which leads to a lack of economic independence) and the absence of social policies and housing support services for the country's youth and young families.

According to traditional explanations, adulthood results from the Italian (and Mediterranean in general) trait of “familism” characterized by very strong ties between members of the same family, especially between parents and children. However, in our view, this culturalist explanation seems greatly exaggerated: these Italian specificities have more to do with public policies that inadequately promote access to employment and professional and personal autonomy. We will show, however, that young Italians are still confident in their ability to contribute to a better world and willingly invest a great deal of effort in new forms of political involvement, despite having to contend with a society that is considered blocked in many ways.

THE FAMILY AS A RESPONSE TO INADEQUATE PUBLIC POLICIES

The Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey highlighted young Italians' very singular attitude towards their families and the role they expect them to play. For young Italians, the family is a fundamental aspect of their identity; it contributes much more meaning to their lives than work, education, friends, material possessions and ambitions (on a scale of 1 to 7, it was noted that 77% of the young respondents gave “Family” a ranking of 6 or 7). As for what provides meaning to life and personal identity, the young

females and couples (married or with children) attained a higher average score. In addition, the component that procures the most satisfaction is still “Family” (5.67). By way of comparison, the satisfaction score linked with the young Italians’ own country is only 3.22.

The tendency to attribute so much importance to the family initially seems to stem from Italian “familism”—in other words, a very strong link between members of the same family (primarily between parents and children). The latter is normally viewed as a cultural factor typical of the Mediterranean region.

This hypothesis—though broadly accepted in sociologists’ writings—has not been confirmed, however. The young Italians’ averages did not really differ from those of other young Europeans concerning their opinion of their family. All respondents considered the family to be an essential factor of stability and a training ground for learning how to become independent. There was no significant variation in how the young Italians expressed this opinion in terms of age, gender and job.

Young Italians hope to build a family, to have children and to become owners of their own home. A recent ISTAT¹ report (2006) shows that many young people want to start their own family, but their economic conditions preclude it. Among their plans for the future, like the majority of other young Europeans, young Italians want above all else to own their own home (74.5% of respondents ranked this 6 or 7), followed by having children (67.4%). This dual ambition was primarily expressed by young adults in the 20 to 24 age group, those involved in a stable emotional relationship and those who were without children. The lack of public policies for young people that also tackle the problem of pensions—which in the Italian system particularly affect young Italians—is the outcome of a iniquitous Welfare State that places the burden of supporting young people in difficulty almost entirely on families (Rosina, 2006).

Parents continue to provide their children with financial support and other forms of aid, even after the latter have started their own families. If the new household is not affluent, it may receive funds from parents’ or grandparents’ pensions. Family support for Italian youth is thus extended throughout their lives: initially, the parents help their children pursue higher education; then they support them while they look for a job; and lastly, the family assists them when purchasing a home. The prolonged presence of young Italians in their parents’ households thus protects them from having to experience economic difficulties while completing their studies, or as they begin their professional career. It also allows them to save money in order to reduce financial risks when they later prepare to enter retirement.

Even after leaving their families of origin, young Italians still consider family an essential asset for coping with economic difficulties, so much so, in fact, that a large percentage of them ultimately develop a chronic dependency on the family solidarity network.

1. National Italian public opinion research institute.

THE SEARCH FOR MEANINGFUL WORK

Italy also has unique work-related characteristics. Several Italian and European surveys (ISTAT, 2007; EUROSTAT, 2005) point out that young Italians' employment situation is less favourable than that of their adult and European counterparts. In Italy, the percentage of unemployed young people is the highest in Europe (nearly 10%), particularly among young females and those living in the south. In addition, wage earners just starting out in their career are paid some of the lowest wages in Europe.

Demographic and production system changes, even more than entering the job market, make it hard to assess the value and stability of the various forms of employment. Although recent labour market reforms have made it easier for Italian youth to begin their working lives (an increase of about 6 points between 1998 and 2005), they have also created a sort of "parallel" temporary job market. If nothing is done within the next 20 to 30 years, the first generations of temporary workers will reach retirement age without having contributed enough to qualify for more than the minimal pension. This may explain why young Italians live with their parents for a long time and why they, more than other young Europeans, believe that work is very important in shaping their identity and rank it (after "Family") in terms of providing meaning in their lives.

A comparison of the importance attributed to work, and of specific choices made with respect to future employment, produces some unexpected results. In response to the question "How important are the following aspects of your future career?" young Italian respondents placed in the top three positions aspects relating to job quality and content: "interesting and meaningful work" (6.29); "to feel proud of my job" (6.13); and "healthy working environment" (6.02). "Employment security" was ranked fourth (5.98).

The more practical aspects ("materialistic," as Ronald Inglehart might say) had lower indices: for example, a "high salary" (5.61) or "to have a job with responsibility" (4.98). These preferences varied according to gender, age, education and marital status. The young females stressed aspects relating more to job content. Among this group, "interesting and meaningful work" was particularly emphasized by those respondents who had higher education, while "employment security", on the contrary, seemed less important to them. Employment security is more important for other young women, married couple or couple with children.

Young Italians who already had a job considered practical aspects more important, such as having a high salary, while married couples or those with children stressed flexible working hours, or parental leave. Among the various work sectors, young Italians preferred working in "research and development," "travel and tourism," the "media," and "public administration." Unlike their young European counterparts, they did not give a high ranking to "agriculture and forestry," or to the "manufacturing industry," which their European counterparts perceive as important.

As for which strategies they consider will help them to succeed in their future careers, one result was surprising. In ranking their choices, the young Italians ranked education, status and personal commitment (“take all the chances I get” and “work hard”) highest, and ranked lowest those aspects least associated with merit: “know the right people” and “be good-looking.” Our “surprise” arises from the inconsistency between the strategies considered effective and the methods actually used to find a job. According to the Iard survey conducted in 2002 (Buzzi, Cavalli and de Lillo, 2002), which corroborates certain previous research findings, the methods most often used to find a job consist of using one’s acquaintances, friends or family. An ISTAT survey (2003) also shows that one-third of the young respondents found a job through their family (60% through the latter’s efforts and more than 20% by being hired directly by the family business). The reality is therefore less “idyllic” than Italian youth might like to think. Moreover, young Italian respondents were less confident they would “have a good job in the future” (4.20) than other young Europeans of the same age (4.51).

STRONG POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT, DESPITE A LACK OF TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Sociologists agree on the fact that trust in other people, or in institutions, is a key “ingredient” in promoting a feeling of citizenship and a fundamental bond within human society. However, several research projects have shown that in most Western democracies citizens tend to lose faith in institutions (particularly political institutions), and that their trust in society as a whole is declining. Eurobarometer and European Values Survey findings show that, for the last twenty years at least, Italian adults and young people have had one of the lowest levels of trust in institutions of any European country (with the exception of trust in the Church and in European institutions). The same is true of interpersonal trust, although the latter has increased over the years (Sciolla, 2004).

What societal attitudes, then, have young Italians adopted? In the survey, young Italians attested to a rather low average level of interpersonal trust (3.92), although it was equal to that of the European average. The same applies to trust in the various institutions, with only slight variations, as the Italians assigned the top three positions to organizations and international institutions as follows: European Union (EU) (4), United Nations (UN) (3.98) and NGOs (3.62). Europeans of the same age, on the other hand, gave first place to the UN (3.83), second place to the police and justice system (3.65), and only third place to the EU (3.61). Italians ranked their country’s government last (2.70). The media occupied the next-to-the-last place (2.87); religious institutions were ranked just above the media, with an average of 2.91. On a European-wide level, on the contrary, it was “religious institutions” that was ranked lowest in terms of trust (2.52). One reason why Italian respondents ranked the EU first (data confirmed by numerous research findings) was undoubtedly because, having been disillusioned with their government, they have chosen to rely on a more abstract entity to meet their expectations in matters of good governance.

Our research has underscored other important components of the feeling of citizenship: a sense of belonging to society, confidence in one's own future and in oneself as a person capable of changing society. With respect to these various aspects, the young Italians demonstrated a remarkably less optimistic attitude than that of the other Europeans. It was particularly in terms of their own future—and therefore of their ability to fully express their individuality within their society—that the Italians indicated less optimism. For example, the response “have complete freedom and control over my own future” scored an average level of 4.25 (the European average was 4.55), a level that was slightly higher among the males (especially those younger), among males/females with a basic education, among males/females who were employed and among those who lived alone and without children.

Moreover, the feeling of citizenship varied according to the way in which respondents perceived the future of society and of its inherent rights and obligations. When asked to choose between two representations of the ideal society, Italian respondents—like their European peers—preferred a “progressive” representation to a “traditional” one. In other words, they envisioned an urban, rather than rural, society, one founded upon science and rationality rather than spiritual values; a society that welcomes change rather than relying on tradition and stability, and one founded upon gender equality rather than roles based on gender. In matters relating to rights and obligations, the Italians favoured, in descending order of importance: a free university education, paid parental leave for 12 months after having children (in this case, also, the ranking was lower than that made by the other young Europeans), free health care, acceptance of the right to display religious symbols in any situation, and lastly, the right to receive unemployment benefits even if there are work opportunities available. All of these social rights were primarily supported by the female respondents and by those males/females who had started a family.

Obligations considered essential were: involvement and participation in work for the public good (“contribute to a better world,” in particular, which recorded a very high average of 6), vote in general elections (keep oneself informed about social issues). One particularly interesting point—the almost total lack of trust in institutions—did not lead to apathetic attitudes or a lack of commitment, contrary to what might have been expected. On the contrary, civic patriotism remained strong. The survey indicated that young Italians have been gaining remarkable awareness of their rights and obligations as citizens, and are more open to change and to improving society. Other Italian studies (Albano, 2005; Sciolla, forthcoming) also show that their lack of trust in political institutions has not resulted in a lack of commitment. On the contrary, according to the survey, Italians are active members of associations, notably between the ages of 16 and 29 (some 40% of the young respondents reported that they were members of an association) and the same applies to their involvement in politics. However, these are not traditional forms of involvement (only 3% of the young Italians replied that they were activists within a political party), but rather “unconventional” forms of involvement, such as strikes, demonstrations, forms of ethical financing, etc.

In conclusion, we can sketch a “profile” of today’s young Italians:

- They consider family very important, not because they are “familistic” and feel a very strong bond to their parents, but because, in general, public policies discourage young people from leaving their parents and impede their economic and professional autonomy;

- They find it extremely difficult to get a job, particularly one that is stable and consistent with their education;

- They believe that they can find work through their own skills and based on their own merit, but in reality they find jobs with the help of acquaintances, friends or family;

- They have little confidence in their ability to control their own future and to change society; however, they firmly believe that they can contribute to a better world;

- They are disillusioned with public—and especially political—institutions, but they do not become less interested as a result. On the contrary, they are trying to develop new ways of becoming actively involved in the democratic debate.

Our findings have revealed high expectations and, at the same time, an inability of political actors to provide these young people with a vision, a plan, or support. The latter are therefore forced to propel themselves into the future with the help of their family or through some method of their own devising.

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ISOLATED AND PESSIMISTIC FRENCH YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR STRUGGLE TO COPE WITH LIMITED STATE SUPPORT

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The Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey yielded both traditional and original results. With respect to the traditional results, readers may refer to two works directed by Olivier Galland and Bernard Roudet on the values of French and European youth (2001 and 2005). This survey once again points to two basic trends already highlighted, notably concerning the pessimism of French youth. As for the original results, the survey reveals some very surprising positions taken by young French respondents relating, among others, to how they rank work, salary and identity groups. While work and salary receive a high ranking, identity groups (family and friends) are not given as much importance as they are by their peers in other countries. In order to expand upon this finding, after having compared the young French respondents' identity references with those of the European respondents, we will successively analyse the ties that link young French people to society and work, and their sense of belonging.

FRENCH YOUTH IS MORE ISOLATED

The point of departure for our analysis will be the identification features rankings assigned by the young respondents.

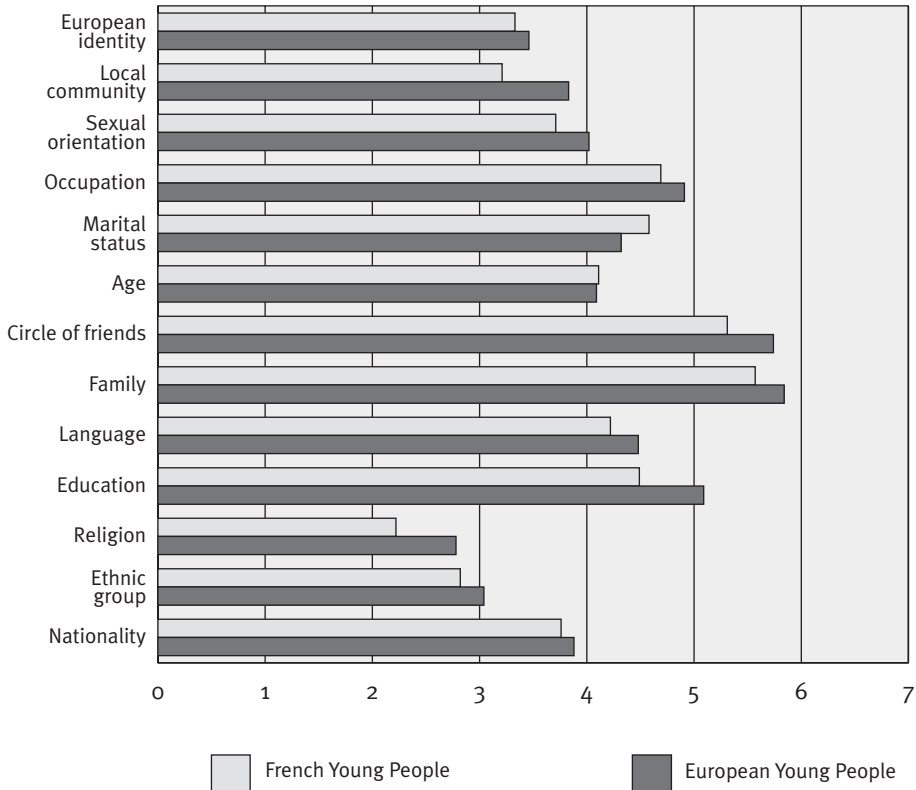
In answering the question "In your opinion, how important are the following factors in determining your identity?", the respondents could reply by ranking in priority order: "Nationality," "Ethnic group," "Religion," "Language," "Family," "Friends," "Age," "Marital status (being single, married, etc.)," "Profession," "Sexual orientation," "Local community," and "European identity" (see table next page).

If we compare the responses of young French respondents with those of all young Europeans, a few revealing trends emerge.

While the first two identity markers are shared by the young French and Europeans ("Family", then "Circle of friends"), the French listed "Education" (ranked third by the Europeans) only in fifth place, after "Marital status". The first key result is the young French respondents' crisis of confidence concerning institutions, particularly in the one capable of guaranteeing them a future: the educational system. This disillusionment seems to have worsened, in that the French 30 to 50 age group surveyed gave education a

fourth-place ranking (4.49 for those in the 16 to 29 age group and 4.36 for those in the 30 to 50 age group).

Figure 1: Identity Markers of Young French and European Respondents



Reading: Scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being the lowest score and 7 the maximum score.

After examining more closely the situations of the young people surveyed, it appears that the boys are more indifferent to education than the girls, as is also the case for those with a primary or secondary school education. Rural youth, and urban youth who live in cities of less than 100,000 inhabitants, show the same distrust. These responses largely reflect the vocational integration problems that these young people are experiencing (Dubet, 2007) and show how aware the latter are of the difficulties that are facing them: the girls are getting better grades at school, even if that does not assure them an easy path to employment, while the young people who have had a primary or secondary education are most affected by unemployment (Lefresne, 2007). Lastly, some rural youth are confronted with major forms of exclusion inasmuch as they are unable to use the school system as a means of vocational integration (Renahy, 2005). It should also be pointed out that this crisis of confidence

experienced by French youth has been made very conspicuous by the anti-CPE demonstrations that took place in the spring of 2006 (Lagrange and Oberti, 2006).

Second surprising trend: the young French respondents assigned nearly all of the identity markers less distinct rankings than those of their European counterparts. Only “Age” and “Marital status” seem to be given more weight by French youth than by their European peers. Concerning “Age”, two possible theories can be offered: the first no doubt concerns all of the young European respondents and refers to the very high ranking assigned by the youngest to peer groups and to “inside” groups (“entre-soi”. Cf. Pasquier, 2005); the second is more specific to France and would suggest that the rigid categorizations that regulate access to mechanisms and other measures, reinforce the significance of age criteria—not only for young people but also for the other generations. In this regard, we can mention: the age of 16, which entitles young people to certain social rights, such as the CIVIS (integration into social life contract), or the FIPJ (French youth vocational integration fund); the age of 18, which gives access to the FAJ (youth social integration fund); the 18 to 21 age group, when French Youth Services consider that a young person has officially come of age; and last but not least, the age of 25—a crucial age for the most vulnerable youth that entitles them to the RMI (minimum vocational integration income).

The markers for which the ratings differed the most from those of the other Europeans are: “Local community” (–0.62 point), “Education” (–0.60), “Religion” (–0.56) and “Friends” (–0.43). These results reflect an image of young French respondents seeing themselves as more isolated than their counterparts when faced with a series of factors that normally constitute strong identity markers (especially homeland, education and peer group) (Galland, 2005). We might add that, from the viewpoint of gender, the identity markers seem to be rather traditional (Pina, 2005): the boys emphasize nationality, ethnic group, language, sexual orientation, local community and the European Union (territorial and sexual values), while the girls stress religion, education, family, friends, age, marital status (relational values) and perhaps, more surprisingly—but revealing in terms of how female work is valued in French society—occupation. Gender issues are equally pervasive in the values assigned to work (see the following paragraph).

These are the reasons why it seems vital to us to analyze in greater detail the way in which young French people view themselves in terms of their ties to society as a whole and to the work world in particular, and then in their relations with the communities to which they belong.

YOUNG FRENCH PEOPLE ARE PARTICULARLY PESSIMISTIC

In their relations with society, young French respondents can be distinguished from their European counterparts on the basis of at least three basic points: work, freedom

of thought and generosity, as well as their pessimistic vision of the future and of French institutions.

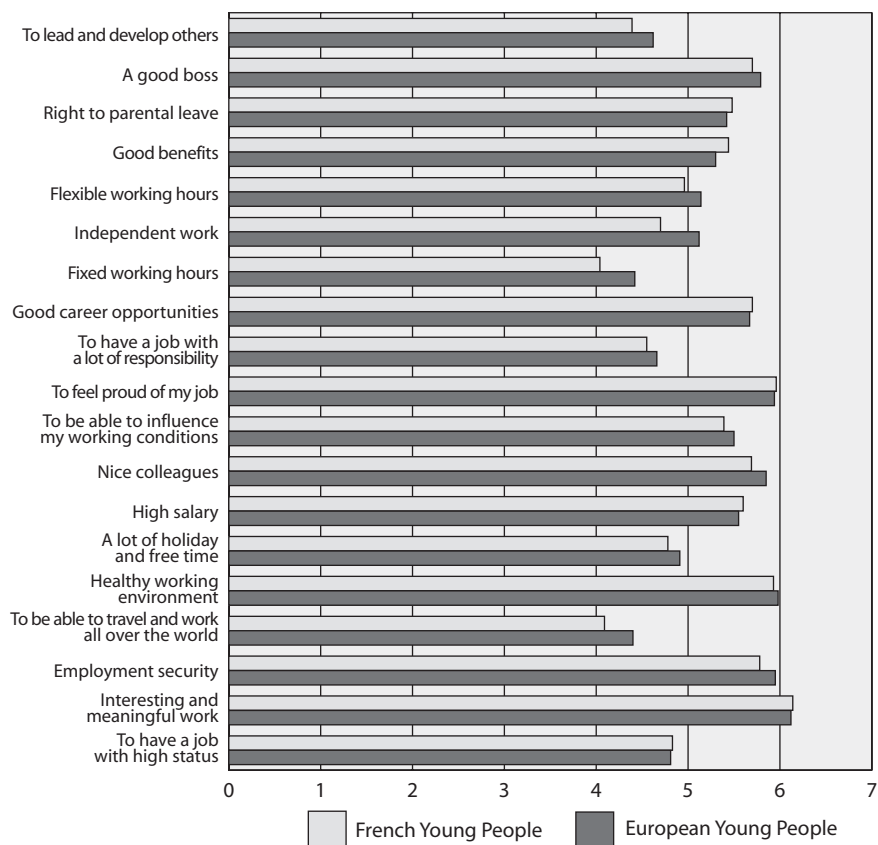
How much work matters to them became evident when they were asked the question "What is important to pass on to children?" and they responded, with greater emphasis than their European counterparts, "conscientious work." Similarly, when asked what a "beautiful life" means to them, they underscored the necessity of having a job that is exciting and meaningful, and earning a lot of money. This result had already been revealed by the surveys on the values of young Europeans (Tchernia, 2005).

When questioned more specifically on their future careers, their answers stand out much more clearly than on the identity markers. They show some degree of elitism and attach special importance to the position held at work, giving their preference to: "Job with a high-ranking position that is interesting and constructive", "High salary", "Good opportunities" and "Feeling pride in one's work". These preferences have a tendency to be more pronounced among the youngest, rather than the oldest, respondents within each age group. The boys' interest is more focused on position and a high salary, while the girls say they prefer an interesting and constructive job, and good career development opportunities. Don't these results contradict the analytical research carried out by Olivier Galland, who contends that he sees in France the archetype of the statist-egalitarian model that stresses equality rather than merit? (see chapter in the present book). We can explore a number of different explanations. This elitism probably confirms what was pointed out by Cécile Van de Velde (2007), according to whom French youth have a conception of their professional future that has been definitively conditioned by their level and field of studies. As for the differences in how the two genders perceive work, they may reflect commonly known phenomena: while girls tend to do better in school as a rule, their professional careers are usually not as successful (Lefresne, 2007), and they try much harder than the boys to find jobs that will allow them to reconcile their family and professional lives. The girls are also the most willing to accept less than full-time or part-time work, as well as parental leave (Dares, 2003 and 2004; Fondation pour l'amélioration des conditions de travail, 2003).

The responses of the young French people surveyed stand out very clearly from those of their counterparts concerning work conditions that they perceive as secondary (particularly having to travel for one's job, -0.31; having fixed working hours, -0.38; having to work independently, -0.42). Only the right to parental leave is considered important (this item having been valued more highly by the girls than by the boys, with a score of 5.97 and 4.98, respectively). Should these positions be interpreted as a consequence of increasing individualization? Or do they more likely result from a keener awareness of the shrinking job market (Paugam, 2007)? Or are we, along with French youth, coming to grips with a State support system from which they know they cannot expect much (David, Loncle and Muniglia, 2007)? Indeed, young French people,

compared to the youth of Nordic countries, are hardly ever assisted by the State while seeking employment.¹ (Charvet, 2001).

Figure 2: How young French and European respondents ranked the following career factors:



Reading: Scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being the lowest score and 7 the maximum score.

Another observation is that freedom of thought and generosity were among the values that particularly matter to French youth. For example, the values they most want to pass on to their children are: “Tolerance and respect of others”, “Generosity” and “Curiosity”. Similarly, they believe that it is acceptable to break the law in order to defend one’s rights

1. Excluding mechanisms that benefit the most excluded (such as CIVIS), or provide case-by-case assistance (such as FIPJ and FAJ) (Loncle, Muniglia, Rivard and Rothé, 2007).

or to fight injustice in society. These findings were confirmed by a Europe-wide survey conducted by EUYOUPART (Political Participation of Young People in Europe - Development of Indicators for Comparative Research in the European Union, 2005). This phenomenon probably finds its source in a French culture of demonstration and protest dating back to the French Revolution. The works of Anne Muxel (2001 and 2002), or those of Jean-Charles Lagrée (2002), show that French youth vote less often than previous young generations, that they are less often members of trade unions and other organized representative bodies (institutionalized or federated associations, district councils); and that they are not well represented among elected officials. In fact, they express a certain inclination for collective forms of protest.

However, these values that may be considered as positive are offset by the pessimism shown by young French respondents with respect to institutions, as well as the future. They thus reply less often than their European counterparts that their own future or that society's future are promising. Although this lack of confidence in the future matches an objective reality of fewer opportunities for today's young French generations as compared to preceding ones (Chauvel, 2002), this lack of confidence is accompanied by a general distrust of institutions. In fact, French youth manifest more distrust than other Europeans towards the following organizations and groups: government, the media, multinational companies, NGOs, "people in general", the police and the judicial system, the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the European Union, religious institutions (for complete scores, see the relevant table in Olivier Galland's article, in this work, page 39). Their most negative opinions centre on religious institutions (-0.33 point as compared to the European average), "people in general" (-0.31), the media (-0.27) and multinational companies (-0.24).

These three sets of positions (importance assigned to personal achievement at work, freedom of thought/generosity, and pessimism/lack of confidence), confirm, in our opinion, Jean-Charles Lagrée's findings (2002): "Individuals carve out niches for themselves that will allow them to realize their personal potential, make full use of their specific skills and preserve their autonomy. In doing so, they implicitly criticize a political system that, in the name of universalism, the general will, and even of ideologies, ultimately rejects those differences."

There is thus a gap between young people's aspirations, their actual living conditions and the social and political models that no longer seem to fit them. The same findings emerge when analyzing the relations young French people have with their identity groups (family, friends, homeland, associations, political organizations and religion).

A STRONG DESIRE TO NO LONGER BE DEPENDENT UPON FAMILY

One of the most surprising findings of the survey lies in French young people's opinion of traditional identity groups such as their family, friends, homeland and even, in

some respects, religion. On this set of items, young French respondents seemed to be less gregarious, less collectively motivated and less concerned.

The attitude towards family and friends was evident in the values respondents wanted to pass down to their children: loyalty was not valued as highly as it was in the European average, family and friends were less often considered as factors that bring meaning to life or as identifying factors, the perception of a successful life was less associated with having a family and children, spending time with friends appeared less often, etc. Lastly, young French respondents did not consider family to be the basis of society as often as their counterparts did. Such attitudes tend to support Cécile Van de Velde's findings (2007) according to which, on the one hand, tensions that arise between parents and children on the subject of family benefits (the promoted model is that of early independence, yet in reality young people are staying at home longer) and, on the other hand, the profound inequality of this "familialization" that, despite discourses on the school of the French Republic, make young people's future dependent upon the financial position of their parents.

These attitudes, however, vary based upon gender and age. If young French respondents assigned slightly less importance to loyalty, that was the case more for boys than for girls, and more for the youngest than for the oldest of those surveyed. Similarly, family is ranked as much more important among the girls than the boys, and this ranking is higher for the age 25 to 29 group (in terms of the time to start a family or at least plan for it). Conversely, boys and girls gave similar rankings to "Friends" and that ranking tended to decrease as their age increased. In this respect, the results corroborate the Values Surveys (Galland and Roudet, 2001 and 2005), as well as the qualitative analyses (Pasquier, 2005).

As for "Area of life" and "Membership and political affiliations," the same trends can be observed: "Local community" was less often mentioned as an identifying factor as was "Feeling of belonging to society", "NGOs" are somewhat distrusted, and "Politics" (in its traditional form, elections, party systems, etc.) is of little interest.

"NGOs" require a clarifying comment. In the questionnaire, associations are included under "NGOs"; however, we would like to suggest the possibility that when the young respondents express distrust of NGOs, they are referring more to associations for adults than to those for young people. In fact, the results of studies on this question show that there are just as many young French respondents as there are of other generations who are members of associations, a fact that makes France stand out from the other European countries (Eurobarometer, 2001; Bréchon, 2005; Loncle and Muniglia, 2007; Loncle, 2007a). However, they "associate" in a different way, in that they prefer local associations that function horizontally, and they sometimes develop alternative social relations models that reject the consumer society (Loncle, 2007b). A similar remark can be made about politics: in our opinion, it is more the institutionalized political interplay that is distrusted than political commitment in the sense of participation in public life. Here, too, a certain amount of research findings have proven that young people are very interested in civic

engagement (Becquet and de Linarès, 2005; Becquet, 2005; Loncle and Muniglia, 2007; Loncle, forthcoming).

Isolated, pessimistic, and compelled to remain dependent on their families, is French youth more individualistic than that of other European countries? On this point, the reader may refer to Olivier Galland's studies, which conclude that French youth is losing out because their society is one of the least integrated in Europe—one in which the interpersonal confidence level is the lowest. Moreover, such attitudes are no doubt attributable to: 1) the State's obvious lack of interest in youth-related issues; 2) decentralization, which leads to instances of highly discriminatory treatment, particularly for young people who are the least protected by their families (Loncle, 2007c; Loncle, Muniglia, Rivard and Rothé, 2007); 3) the "familialization" of French youth's support, which keeps these young people in a difficult situation of dependency, thus reproducing familial inequalities (Van de Velde, 2007).

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CONTEMPORARY GERMAN YOUTH: TORN BETWEEN POLITICAL TRUST AND SOCIAL CLEAVAGES

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Discussing German youth and the public policies that concern them is challenging. German policies, unlike those pursued in France, have not promoted the development of a specific sociological category that could be the target of exclusive measures or contracts. In the area of employment, for example, a few specific mechanisms exist, but their objective is to lead young people who are experiencing difficulties back onto the general vocational training path, as soon as possible, so that those who are unskilled or unemployed can find a job (Salzbrunn, 2007).

Who are today's German youth? What is their place within the society and their relationship to family and to work? How are public policies addressing the needs of this category of individuals? The answers provided through the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey often conflict with preconceived ideas.

First, there are major cleavages concerning actual access to jobs, opinions about work and societal values depending on origin, social level and gender. Next, young German women consider their professional career as a fundamental objective that must remain compatible with their attachment to a family life.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN GERMANY'S POLITICAL AND SOCIETAL LIFE

Young people socialized in Germany assign a great deal of importance to their immediate circle of friends and relatives, as well as the local community.¹ The latter appears to be a far more decisive factor in shaping their identities: there were nearly twice as many German respondents (32%) as other young Europeans (19%) who mentioned this item. The federal system, which affords genuine regional autonomy in several areas, notably in schooling, research and higher education, accounts for the persistence of symbolic expressions of regional or local identity.² Generally speaking, as an identity factor, local

1. See H. Uterwedde (2007, p. 67) on the values of young Germans.

2. By way of example, we should mention the fact that the Franco-German History Handbook published in 2006 is the only history book approved by the sixteen German ministries of secondary education: *Histoire/Geschichte. L'Europe et le monde depuis 1945 /Die Welt und Europa seit 1945*, Paris-Stuttgart, Nathan-Klett, 2006 (see François, 2007).

community is more often emphasized³ than national pride: 19% of the young German respondents chose it, as compared to 24% in the reference group. This feeling of national identity lost ground in the 20th century, notably during the National Socialism era (1933–1945), while the liberal-democratic national movement was the product of a progressist movement in Germany's history.

Overall, young people feel more involved in German political and societal life and they believe, more strongly than their European counterparts, that they can change society and improve the living conditions in the country (50% in Germany versus 45%, on average, in Europe). On this point, there is a clear difference between young women (46%) and young men (54%). This gap may be explained by a greater awareness on the part of the women as a result of their strong involvement in political and community life. Germany is one of the European countries with the highest female participation rate associated with political responsibilities and mandates: 31.6% of the Bundestag's deputies are women and, in the Bremen Regional Parliament, the score jumps to 45%. Moreover, most of the parties and unions have established a quota system to ensure female representation in their decision-making bodies.

When we cross-tabulate the educational level variable with the answer to the question on the likelihood of being able to change society, we note a more optimistic attitude among the best-educated young people (44% for primary school graduates, 53% for secondary school graduates, and 63% for university graduates). These substantial variances based on educational levels are due to the social reproduction associated with Germany's elites, which can be explained by the early distribution of students among the three types of secondary schools upon completion of primary school. The pupils of a school that awards the equivalent of baccalaureate degrees are being taught in an environment that promotes initiative and high-level cultural activities. University students are further encouraged to become involved in politics through the agency of internships or political groups who are very active on campus. Furthermore, employers as well as organizations that award merit scholarships very favourably perceive community involvement or political involvement. Such experiences look impressive on a *curriculum vitae*, and it is not unusual for applicants for a grant, an award or a job, to attach to their application files references referring to their societal involvement.⁴ Among young people from the most disadvantaged social levels, on the contrary, we observe a strong social reproduction that translates into greater pessimism.

Certain regions, such as the city-states of Berlin and Bremen, showed that they cared about this interest that younger Germans take in politics (54% of the 16 to 19 age group

3. Local dialects, for example.

4. Applications for a merit scholarship issued by such German foundations and institutions as the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, German office for international mobility) systematically include a paragraph concerning community involvement (volunteer work, or assumption of responsibilities within an association, sports club, political group, parish, etc.). The application of any candidate lacking this type of experience is very likely to be rejected.

are convinced that society can be changed) by temporarily lowering the voting age to 16 years. The Baasen and Riedel study (2006) shows an electoral turnout rate for Berlin of 45.6% for those aged 16 to 17, which is lower than that of the 18 to 21 age group (49.5%), yet higher than that of the 21 to 25 age group (43.5%). In the districts in which certain political parties have conducted campaigns targeting German youth, the turnout rate is higher. The findings are ultimately mixed: young Germans under 30 vote less often than their elders, but they are very active in political parties and unions.

MAINTAINING THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

While graduates of German universities typically get a late start entering the job market, those who hold Hauptschule and Realschule certificates of competency begin their professional careers earlier than their French counterparts. The proportion of young people with a secondary school diploma that provides access to short vocationally-oriented higher education programmes (Brevet/Mittlere Reife/Hauptschul-Abschluss) is 11% in France and 61% in Germany. This pattern explains the different scores awarded by the young respondents to questions about work in the various countries.

Table 1: Importance of certain aspects to a future career

	European Youth	German Youth	Young German Females	Young German Males
Having interesting and meaningful work	77%	81%	85%	77%
Having a healthy working environment	72%	82%	86%	78%
Having nice colleagues	68%	77%	82%	72%
Having independent work	44%	57%	61%	53%
Having a job with a lot of responsibility	37%	31%	30%	32%
Having a high salary	56%	50%	47%	53%
Having good benefits	48%	38%	41%	35%

Reading: Percentage of agreement with the items (scores of 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7). Young German female response percentages that are 8 or more points above those of their male peers are printed in bold and shaded in grey.

Overall, German youth assigns more importance to having “interesting and meaningful work,” a “healthy working environment,” “nice colleagues,” and “independent work” than their European peers do (see Table 1 previous page). Because of their concrete work experience, working people are even more attached to these aspects than students are. As for young women, they are all the more ambitious and committed to their work inasmuch as they have to endure horizontal discrimination (being paid less wages than a man performing the same job) and vertical discrimination (lesser representation in decision-making structures) on the job market. In addition, they have to overcome numerous institutional and structural obstacles if they want both work and a family.

Among the factors which young people living in Germany consider less important, and to which they give lower scores than the European mean, is the goal of having a job with high status, a high salary, and good benefits.⁵ For this last item, the percentage of agreement is even lower among university graduates (31%). This can be accounted for by the quasi-absence of unemployment periods for this group. This low unemployment rate is due, among other things, to the limited number of these graduates (20.6% in Germany, versus a mean of 34.8% for OECD countries). Actually, supportive measures to help job-seeking students have existed for many years in Germany: alumni clubs, Junior Achievement programmes (particularly in sociology and economics); coaching seminars for future entrepreneurs sponsored by universities in cooperation with regional or local Chambers of Commerce and Industry; on-the-job training certificates supplementing the primary diploma (such as *Studierende und Wirtschaft* [Students and Economics] at Bielefeld University) available to all fields of study; temporary/short-term jobs offered to students during the last two years of their graduate courses. Although the time required to find a job can be shorter or longer, depending upon the discipline chosen, as a whole students enter the labour market without difficulty, thanks on the one hand to these supportive measures, and on the other hand to the employers’ considerable flexibility as well as a broad range of study programmes (that frequently include additional training). A recent study by the Kienbaum Institute⁶ confirms these trends and reveals other differences from France: German employers designate as their most important selection criteria internships accomplished while completing studies, knowledge of foreign languages and the options and areas of specialization chosen from the university curriculum. On the other hand, employers consider the age of applicants when they graduate, their university’s reputation, and the fact that they have completed a traineeship before undertaking advanced studies, as less important criteria.

The (relatively) low unemployment rate (15.54%) among German youth is also the result of a combination of several policies aimed at facilitating the career choices made

5. The right to parental leave is one of the “good benefits” that most Europeans nonetheless consider a priority (57%), particularly for young German female respondents (69%). Interest in this is growing even among young German male respondents, 38% of whom now believe that parental leave is a priority.

6. For more information, consult www.kienbaum.de. It was also cited in the German daily *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger* of 20–21 October 2007.

during a transitional period between school and professional or university life. Throughout German history, social policies have been closely linked to those concerning education, work and family. The work-life balance (balance between one's working life and private life) is thus central to German public policies⁷ and helps young people better navigate the transition between their school lives and their vocational training (or higher education). The effects of these career choices on their private lives are now taken into account by the supportive measures implemented in favour of German youth.⁸

GROWING TENSION BETWEEN CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND FAMILIAL CONSTRAINTS

The relationship between young people and their families is particularly evident in the qualities that need to be taught to the children. Young German respondents, like their European peers, rank the following three qualities highest: "Honesty" (90%), "Tolerance and respect for other people" (87%), and "Responsibility" (83%). The latter three are nonetheless rated differently by other Europeans on several levels: "Independence," "Endurance" and "Entrepreneurship" are viewed as more important (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Qualities that children are encouraged to learn at home

	European Youth	German Youth	Young German Females	Young German Males
Independence	58%	64%	65%	63%
Endurance	39%	47%	44%	50%
Entrepreneurship	33%	38%	39%	37%
Religious faith	16%	9%	10%	8%
Unselfishness	51%	21%	19%	23%
Obedience	47%	38%	40%	36%

Reading: Percentage of agreement (scores of 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7).

Young Germans, on the other hand, view "Religious faith," "Unselfishness" and "Obedience" as less essential. Their attachment to a certain quality of life (including working life) and the lower rating they gave to "Obedience" and "Unselfishness" reveal

7. This criteria comes into play, for example, during the evaluation of university projects in competition for the "Excellence" label, which was obtained in 2007 by Bielefeld University's International Graduate School of Sociology and History, among others, because its project was based on a sound concept that balanced studies and private life (study-life balance)—one of the keys to successfully completing doctoral studies.

8. See the work done by Deutsches Jugendinstitut on this transition issue, notably Jurczyk, Lange and Thiessen (2007). On the relationship between career selection and gender, see Oechsle (soon to be published), Müller (2000), Geissler (2007), Born and Krüger (2001).

a deeply rooted propensity for critical thinking within German society: individuals are more demanding of themselves, as well as of their environment.

Table 3: The most important aspects in life

	European Youth	German Youth	Young German Females	Young German Males
Friends	74%	81%	84%	78%
Family	77%	78%	85%	71%
Work/Studies	52%	62%	64%	59%
Dreams and ambitions	63%	61%	64%	57%
Material possessions	22%	26%	24%	28%

Reading: Percentage of agreement (scores 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7).

Table 3 (above) shows that the most important aspects in life are “Friends” and “Family,” which are ranked far higher than “Work/Studies,” “Dreams and ambitions” and “Material possessions.” All of these aspects are even more important to young women, with the exception of “Material possessions.” These responses once again translate attachment to a good “work-life-balance.”

Lastly, German youth stand out because they assign a greater importance to living and eating well and having lots of options in life. This can be explained by the career diversity and wide variety of career paths available to them.

Table 4: Meaning of a “good life”

	European Youth	German Youth	Young German Females	Young German Males
Can feel free	67%	71%	70%	72%
Can spend time with my friends	64%	69%	73%	65%
Can get an exciting and meaningful job	63%	66%	68%	64%
Can have a family and children	65%	60%	67%	53%

Reading: Percentage of agreement (scores 6 and 7 on a scale of 1 to 7).

With one exception, we find the same hierarchy of values in the answers to the statement “A good life means”: after “[to be] Healthy and in good shape”—which ranked first in the general mean of all European countries—comes “Can feel free,”

or “Can spend time with my friends,” and “Can get an exciting and meaningful job” comes last. Young respondents in Germany ranked the benefit of spending time with family higher than the European mean, but that applied particularly to those with children (87%); only 55% of those without children mention it (identical score to the European mean). This high score of 87% among young mothers and fathers is due to the fact that education is less often entrusted to a source outside of the parental household in Germany than in other countries. This specificity, however, is tending to change, thanks to the new child care arrangements that will enable one-third of the families to actually choose between the parental household and a child-care facility; the remaining two-thirds still intend to raise their children at home, for lack of other options (Salzbrunn, 2007).

Generally, German women attribute a higher value to professional growth, independence and entrepreneurship, and they have more ambition. They simultaneously place greater emphasis on the family (see Table 4 previous page). These differences were evident in the public debates on infant day-care facility regulations that occurred in 2007. Regardless of their political affiliations and social environments, numerous women have expressed their desire to reconcile their working and familial lives. Ursula von der Leyen, Federal Minister for Family Affairs in the Grand Coalition led by Chancellor Angela Merkel, has thus pursued the family-oriented policy of Schröder’s government (von der Leyen and Christensen, 2007; Salles, 2006), offering a maternity and/or paternity leave accompanied by a sizeable allowance with a ceiling at € 1,500 per month for twelve months—or fourteen months, provided that this benefit is shared by both parents and that one of the two parents takes at least a two months’ leave. In addition, Mrs. von der Leyen is planning to triple the number of day-care facilities in Germany by 2013, so that at least one out of three children under the age of three can be cared for in such a facility.

As for inter-generational policies, increasing public awareness of demographic problems (Kaufmann, 2005) has been stirring a debate on fundamental reforms. While children and adolescents used to be the focus of family policies, grandparents are now occupying centre stage, because the public welfare system must cope with the growing costs of caring for an aging population. Public policies therefore are designed to involve families more in dependency care for the elderly. Among the measures recently contemplated is the right to a leave of absence and/or allowance to care for a medically dependent relative. This measure would make it possible to satisfy the older person’s desire to remain in their own homes as long as possible and also offset the lack of health-care personnel in nursing homes.

Germany’s society is highly diverse and composite. We should therefore speak of “young people in Germany” rather than “German youth” or “young Germans.” In certain regions such as North Rhine-Westphalia, one out of every three children

has immigrant parents, but has not (yet) acquired German citizenship.⁹ The public and legislators are only gradually adapting to this new demographic reality that is profoundly altering the country's sociological landscape. The first major public policy challenges therefore consist of acknowledging the needs on the labour market and the extent to which immigrant populations have settled in Germany, and thereby compensate for the growing inequalities associated with the social environment, national origin and gender.

Beyond this diversity, there are some noticeable underlying trends that singularize young people in Germany and that, overall, place them in a position to properly navigate the transition between the various phases of their lives: strong involvement in societal life and confidence in the future of the society; a good study / work balance for the best-qualified, thanks to the many supportive measures and to the willingness of employers to consider a broad range of career paths, and a strong desire to establish a better balance between working life and private life.

This last point is particularly crucial for young women who are even more attached to their career, independence, familial life and friends, even though they are still victimized by structural inequalities (horizontal and vertical discrimination on the job market and a lack of infant day-care facilities, despite the social policies recently implemented). Resolving this extreme tension between work and familial constraints is the second major challenge that must be met by public policies in order to cope with Germany's current and future demographic challenges.

9. The law permitting children born to foreign parents on German soil to acquire citizenship has only just been enacted. This recent development is due to Germany's delay in reforming its nationality code, which has just begun granting a German passport to children born and socialized on its soil. The arrival of the *Aussiedler*, or young Russians of German descent (who often are not German-speaking), is even further complicating the perception of whether or not they belong to the national space (see Weil, 2005; Gosewinkel, 2001, on the issue of nationality).

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YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UK: PESSIMISM AND DISCONNECTION

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In the UK, as in the rest of the developed world, there have been significant changes in the educational and labour market experiences of young people that are often regarded as having led to shifts in core attitudes and values. Given the greater unpredictability and insecurity of the conditions of life and an increased space to negotiate and develop lifestyles linked to extended transitions, it has been argued that a generational shift has taken place in which the modern generation have developed new perspectives towards life and work (Sennett, 1998; Beck, 2000; Trinca and Fox, 2004). These changing orientations may also have implications for emerging family values and may affect overall levels of social cohesion. In this article, we explore some of the ways in which processes of social change have affected the orientations of young people in the UK, highlighting concerns about pessimistic attitudes and social disconnection.

While many of the ideas about changing aspirations lack supporting empirical evidence, the theoretical context has been well rehearsed. Protracted and increasingly complex transitions, together with the emergence of non-standard and more insecure forms of labour market engagement, have resulted in a process of individualization which involves a need for greater reflexivity and flexible negotiation of social and economic life (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). Some commentators have also argued that, as a result, young people have become less focused on work and develop hedonistic life styles in which leisure and consumption are prioritized (Côté, 2000).

In this short article on young people in the UK, the focus will be on their perspectives on work and society with some comparisons being made between the perspectives of British and European youth. To explore the extent to which processes of economic and social change have led to the emergence of new perspectives on work and society among young people, comparisons are made between their views and those held by older age groups.

PESSIMISTIC FEELINGS ABOUT WORK AS A REWARDING ACTIVITY

In many ways, changes in the organization of employment and the emergence of new opportunity structures have been regarded as underpinning the appearance of new perspectives on working life; but changes can have both positive and negative outcomes. On

the one hand, there has been an increased demand for professional and technical workers, which may lead to high expectations on the part of young people, while on the other hand, they are entering an occupational world in which job-changing and non-standard employment has become much more common. The breakdown of old securities and predictabilities force young workers to regularly review and update skills to adapt to changing contexts. An occupational world that is perceived as insecure may lead to feelings of pessimism. In this section, we assess evidence relating to subjective change by asking whether, in comparison to the position of older generations, work and employment still play a central role in the lives of young people and whether work can still be considered as central to their identity.

Responses to questions about engagement with work show that a strong majority hopes for interesting and meaningful work, good career opportunities and a job they can feel proud of. A strong majority also values employment security, having a good boss and a healthy working environment. With none of these questions showing any significant variance by age group, responses suggest that young people in the UK can still be described as having an intrinsic career orientation and valuing security and good working conditions. Moreover, young people in the UK had very similar priorities to their European peers, with one exception: the Europeans were more likely to stress the importance of having interesting and meaningful work (77% of the young Europeans considered this aspect very important; 68% of the youth in the UK). This difference signals that the youth in the UK lack confidence in opportunities to engage in subjectively rewarding work.

With reflexive negotiation and control often underlined as important assets in modern economies, we would expect to find young people highlighting values relating to control and independence. Five questions are available to gauge such orientations (being able to influence working conditions; having a job with a lot of responsibility; independent work; flexible working hours; and being able to lead others). While around one in two valued the ability to influence working conditions and flexible hours, only around a third regarded the other job attributes as important. Few age-related differences were evident, although those between the ages of 30 and 50 placed a greater value on flexible working hours (perhaps due to competing responsibilities), while those under the age of 24 were slightly more likely to want to lead others and help them to develop (perhaps reflecting greater levels of educational involvement). With one exception, differences between respondents in the UK and Europe were small: the Europeans placed a higher value on independent work (44% of the young Europeans considered independent work very important; 35% of the youth in the UK), which again might suggest that the youth in the UK have a weaker confidence in their ability to secure employment offering such conditions.

Highly instrumental orientations towards work tended to be associated with traditional employment relationships in which tangible rewards compensate for the absence of intrinsic job satisfactions. Theoretically, the transition to a modern, high-skilled, economy should be accompanied by a decline in instrumentalism, reflected in strong age-related

differences in attitudes to employment. The UK survey provided little evidence to support such a view. Responses indicative of instrumental values include a desire for a lot of holidays and free time, a high salary and good benefits, none of which displayed any significant age-related variance. Attitudes of young people in the UK were very similar to those of their European peers, with one exception: the Europeans placed a greater value on having a high salary (56% of the young Europeans considered a high salary very important for their future career; 46% of the youth in the UK).

In the main, males and females held similar values about employment and career values. However, young women value a number of factors more highly: these related mainly to environment (nice colleagues, a good boss, healthy environment) and to security (employment security and the right to parental leave).

A GENERALIZED FEELING OF BEING DISCONNECTED FROM SOCIETY

On a theoretical level, there has been much discussion about the weakening of the collective and the growth of individualized approaches to socioeconomic life (Sennett, 1998; Beck, 2000). Implicit is the idea that, as social connections weaken, as economic life fragments and as the future becomes less predictable, young people are forced to take greater responsibility in the shaping of their own lives. In these circumstances, we might expect to encounter a range of subjective adaptations as young people rethink the connections between themselves and the broader society and anticipate new restrictions on their ability to exercise choice. Modernization may affect family relationships and, related to changes in the world of work, we might also expect to encounter pessimistic attitudes towards socioeconomic change, and perhaps the emergence of new perspectives on social justice. These issues are addressed in this section.

When it comes to ideas about the role of the family, there is a fairly even division between those who regard the family as the foundation of society and those who are disinclined to share such a view. While females were more likely to subscribe to this idea, differences between age groups were surprisingly small. With significant changes in family relationships having occurred over the last few decades, greater differences between generations would perhaps have been predicted. Financially, young people today rely much more heavily on their families and, in the main, are unable to make the rapid transitions to independent living that were once commonplace (Jones and Wallace, 1992). From the 1980s onwards, several pieces of legislation were introduced that increased young people's dependency on their families. Unemployment benefits were removed from the under-18s while reduced payments were made to those between 18 and 25. Housing benefits were also restricted, student grants replaced with loans and fees charged for university education. Restricted access to state support for students and the unemployed forces greater reliance on families who are now expected to provide extended financial support. Objectively, the family has increased in importance as a mechanism that connects

young adults on an economic level and, although there is still widespread resentment about enforced financial dependency, these changes may help sustain the view that, in the absence of a comprehensive welfare safety-net for young people, the family has become the foundation of society.

Among social scientists, there has been much discussion about the association between processes of individualization and levels of social connectivity. The evidence reviewed here does suggest that, among young people in both the UK and Europe, the sense of social belonging was extremely weak. In the UK, the majority felt disconnected with only around one in five respondents feeling that they belonged to the society in which they lived. With a poor sense of belonging, around a third of respondents felt there was a need for more common goals to work towards in society. This view was shared with older age groups, but felt more acutely among the over-40s and expressed more strongly by males.

While experiencing a poor sense of social belonging, almost nine in ten rejected the idea that world events had only a small impact on their lives. In other words, young people experienced weak local connections, but had a strong awareness that their lives were being affected at a macro level by events over which they had little control. These were feelings that were shared with their European counterparts. In the UK, the younger age groups tended to feel more disconnected from world events: while around one in ten respondents in the 25 plus age group thought that world events had little impact on their lives, one in five members of the 16 to 24 age group expressed these feelings.

Despite evidence of a weak sense of social belonging and an awareness of the impact of world events on their lives, a significant minority of respondents felt that, as individuals, they were able to make changes and exercise choices. Around four in ten thought that individuals could change society through their choices and actions: slightly fewer than their European counterparts, which might reflect their obvious lack of political influence over events such as the Iraq war. Here, opinions of males and females were very similar, while differences between age groups were complex (the under-20s and over-40s felt more able to bring about change through individual action). In a similar vein, around four in ten British respondents felt that their country provided them with the opportunity to exercise choices in life: significantly higher than in Europe in general. Here, gender and age differences were small. Highlighting a keen sense of agency, around three in ten respondents felt that they had complete freedom and control over their own future: similar to the perspectives of other Europeans. Females were slightly more likely to think that they could control their future, while those below the age of 25 had greater confidence in their ability to control their lives.

Although many young people felt able to exercise choices, views about their own and their society's future were contradictory. As in other parts of Europe, more than a third of respondents thought that their own future looked bright, while less than one in ten thought that their society had a bright future. Levels of personal optimism were highest

among those under the age of 25 while there was little age-related variation in relation to social optimism. Levels of personal optimism correspond closely to confidence in having a good job in the future. Almost four in ten respondents expected to be able to secure a good job, compared with around a third in Europe as a whole. Males and those under the age of 25 were slightly more confident in their ability to secure a good job, which, for older respondents, is likely to reflect the realities of their current situation and limited optimism in the possibility of changing fortunes in later career.

The evidence supports an interpretation that links social pessimism to high levels of distrust of government, national and international organizations, big business and even their fellow citizens and representatives. Underlining their poor sense of belonging, less than one in twenty trusted the national government, the media or multinational companies. Less than one in ten trusted NGO's such as trade unions, the European Union, religious institutions or people in general. The overall picture between the UK and Europe was very similar, with a few exceptions: the British were less likely to trust NGO's, the European Union, the United Nations or people in general. Among the British respondents, gender-related differences were minimal, although males expressed greater trust in people generally. Age-related differences were also small, although the younger age groups had more trust in NGO's, the European Union and the World Trade Organization while the older respondents had more trust in people .

At the level of government and their policy-related priorities, there seems to be something of a gulf between trends in policy and the political perspectives of the respondents, which may be related to low levels of trust and to feelings that governmental bodies are not seen to engage with young people or share their priorities. In the UK and Europe, there has been a tendency to try to reduce public spending on things like education and cutback on providing benefits. In the UK, support for students has been reduced and tuition fees applied, yet almost six in ten believe that everyone should have the right to a free university education. Females were more likely to hold this view and, although age-related differences are very small, those over the age of 40 were more likely to support this position. The right to 12 months paid parental leave was also strongly supported, although females were far more likely than males to back such a policy. In the UK, backing for parental leave was slightly lower than in Europe and, as would be expected, the age groups who supported paid leave most strongly were those in their prime childbearing years who would be the main beneficiaries.

In parts of Europe, so-called "third way" policies, which stress the importance of balancing rights and obligations, have been influential during the last decade, particularly so in the UK. These ideas, which carry the message that people must be self-reliant, seem to have permeated the thinking of citizens of all ages. In the UK, a country with a long tradition of healthcare that is free at the point of use, less than three in ten believed that healthcare should be free regardless of how people take care of their health: in Europe in general, this proposition was supported by more than four in ten respondents. With "third

way” policies focusing strongly on a perceived need to motivate the unemployed, the vast majority of respondents in all age groups (more than nine in ten) rejected the idea that unemployment benefits should be payable even where work opportunities exist. Here, the views of UK citizens were similar to their European counterparts.

In many respects, young people today must negotiate a different set of conditions to those encountered by their parents: social and economic life has changed and the predictabilities that shaped the lives of the previous generation have been eroded. In this context, the assumption that changes in the structure of society will be reflected in subjective orientations has a certain logic. As young people encounter new situations, they may be forced to rethink traditional perspectives on core activities, such as work, and begin to reconceptualize the nature of their ties to the collectivity. Yet, this simplifies the situation. There are certainly important changes that impinge on the lives of young people in the UK, but changes in their perspectives on work and society are not as marked as one might have feared.

Perspectives on work are of crucial significance, both because of the far-reaching changes in employment experiences and because work is a core activity that underpins citizenship and that helps cement social relationships and connections. Yet changes in work and employment contexts have had surprisingly little impact on the work-related perspectives of young people: the similarities between the younger and older generations are far greater than the differences. Good working conditions and satisfaction in the employment situation remain important. Evidence of new expectations regarding working life and expectations of an ability to control, negotiate and work independently was somewhat weak, suggesting pessimistic feelings about work as an intrinsically rewarding activity.

Away from the employment sphere, there is evidence of a feeling of disconnection that suggests the emergence of a new relationship between the individual and society in which previous social contracts have been undermined. Young people have a keen awareness of the constraints they face, and they are not optimistic about the future of an individualized society characterized by disconnection, fragmentation and dislocation from collective life; processes that are reflected in a weak sense of belonging and a lack of trust. These perspectives are not unique to young people in the UK but, by and large, are shared with their European peers. In the UK, processes of disconnection and a lack of trust are perhaps linked to their exclusion from political life: there is a lack of concern about young people’s views and experiences except when they are regarded as a social inconvenience or an economic liability.

From a UK perspective, the main message emerging from this work is that the younger generations are relatively pessimistic about their ability to secure meaningful and rewarding work, despite a strong desire for interesting work and good career opportunities. They

also display signs of political disengagement, have little trust either in their fellow citizens or in the governmental process at any level. Despite greater pessimism and disconnection among British youth, in the main, the similarities between them and their European peers are greater than the differences, suggesting that a Europe-wide commitment to enhance opportunities for youth and engage with them politically is necessary.

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YOUNG PEOPLE IN SWEDEN: BEYOND PESSIMISM AND DISCONTENT?

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Nikidion has a material and institutional and relational life. And this life shapes her, for good or for ill. She is the child of her parents: their love and care, or the absence of it, shape her. She is the child of material circumstances, of need and plenty; she is healthy or ill, hungry or full: and this, once again, shapes her – shapes not only her health, but also her hopes, expectations and fears, her capabilities for reasoning. She is the child of her city and its institutions: and these institutions shape her capacity for humbleness and self-esteem, for stinginess or generosity, for greediness or moderation. This shaping reaches deep into the soul, profoundly affecting what, even with philosophy, it can become.

Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (1994, pp. 99-100).

An analysis of young people in Sweden, based on data from the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey, shows similarities and profound differences both between youth in Sweden and youth in other European countries, as well as between different categories of young people in Sweden. Generally, we learn that young Swedes, just as other young Europeans, have a greater trust in their own individual future than in the future of their society. We also learn that Swedish, as well as other European youths, to a great extent consider family and work to be very significant aspects of their lives.

However, the differences are also important. Gender, education, age, urban environment and civil status are factors that generate differences *within* the category of young Swedes in their perceptions of future, family and work. When compared with other young people, we find that young Swedes have stronger beliefs in both their own future and in the future of their country. There are also differences in terms of family satisfaction and how the role of family in society is understood, as well as in young people's perceptions of the significance of work, careers and career strategies.

The concluding section in this article is a synthesis—or, using the philosopher Charles Taylor's vocabulary, a "social imaginary" (2004)—on how the differences between young Swedes and other young Europeans can be understood. It will be argued that young people in the countries covered by the survey suffer greatly from three *performance gaps* when compared with young people in Sweden (Trondman and Bunar, 1999). First, there is a gap

between real life and beliefs and hopes. Second, there is a gap between what they want to have and what they have to do. Third, a gap between what might feel possible for themselves as individuals, and what might be in fact possible for them in the society in which they live.

There is a living vital centre (Alexander and Smelser, 1999), a shared common ground, among young people in Europe. They believe in the importance of bridging the gaps. They want their lived realities to approach their beliefs and hopes. They want their actions to be closer to what they want to have, and, hence, want to do. They want to believe more in both their own futures and in the future of their societies. Young people in Sweden seem to experience that “bridging” to a greater extent than do young people in the other countries included in the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l’innovation politique survey. This is probably due to the interrelated impact of welfare reforms (such as parental leave, development programmes for urban segregated areas, support for social movements, study loans for all young people who qualify for university) and prioritized youth policies focusing on young people’s participation in and contributions to Swedish society. A dedicated governmental board in Stockholm —Ungdomsstyrelsen—manages these policies for and with the youth.

But young Swedes are not beyond pessimism and discontent. They are simply feeling a bit better. We cannot deny that the split between young people in Sweden and young people in Europe also exists among young Swedes themselves (for instance, Vogel and Häl, 2005; Trondman and Bunar, 2001; Nyberg, 2007; Trondman, 2008), as well as among young people in the other countries studied (Wilkinson, 2005). We are *all* in need of constant repair, both in terms of symbolic representations—what most of us believe in (Alexander, 2006)—and social and material structures (conditions that help young people become more socially productive in their future lives).

Thus, in all social policy work, we need to consider the material and social life of young people, so that we develop institutions that will allow people to acquire autonomy and self-determination, and, at the same time, care for the self-fulfilment of others. To make these things happen, we need the support of strong symbolic structures—“the heart of democratic life” (Alexander, p. ix, 2006)—that provide “a reference for assertion about solidarity and the putative obligations immanent to it [...]” (*ibid*, p. 3). We won’t close the gaps *if we do not believe in the importance of doing so*.

A BRIGHT VISION OF THE FUTURE

On the one hand, the future of young adults can be understood in terms of each individual’s conception of his/her own future. That is to say, to what extent is my own future bright? On the other hand, the future can also be understood as the future of one’s own society. Hence, does the future of my society look bright? The first perception of the future will be called *individual future*. The second is labelled *societal future*.

The survey allows important empirical findings: young people find their *individual* future brighter than their *societal* future; many more young Swedes than young Europeans find both their individual and societal future bright; young Swedes who live in big cities and have a university education perceive both their individual and societal future as bright more frequently than do young Swedes in small cities, municipalities and villages. To some extent, young Swedish women view their individual and societal future as bright more often than do young Swedish men.

As for the individual future, almost one out of two young Swedes (49%) is in complete agreement with the proposition that “my future looks bright”. To what degree does a strong belief in a prosperous future vary along with factors such as urban life, education, gender and being foreign born?

- *Urban life*. A good six out of ten young Swedes (64%) in big cities find their individual future bright. The corresponding percentages for the young in smaller cities or villages are 45 and 42 % respectively.

- *Education*. The number of young Swedes who consider their individual future bright is greater among those with a university education (61%) than among those with only a secondary (42%) or primary education (41%).

- *Gender*. More young women (53%) than young men (46%) in Sweden find their individual future bright.

- *Foreign born*. There is no difference in the perception of individual future between the young, foreign-born Swedes (49%) and those born in Sweden (50%).

As for the societal future, nearly one out of five young Swedes (18%) completely agrees with the proposition that their society’s future looks bright. Thus, young people in Sweden have a much stronger belief in their own future than in the future of their society. Trust in oneself is obviously greater than trust in one’s own country. As in the case of individual future, the belief in a prosperous future of one’s society is related to urban life, education, gender and place of birth.

- *Urban life*. Young Swedes living in big cities (21%) have a slightly stronger belief in the future of their society than those living in smaller towns (17%) and villages (15%).

- *Education*. It is more common for young people with a university education (22%) to have a strong belief in a bright societal future than for those with a secondary (15%) and primary (16%) education.

- *Gender*. One out of five of young women (20%) has a strong belief in a bright future for Sweden, compared with 15% of young men.

– *Foreign born.* 17% of foreign-born Swedes believe the societal future to be bright, compared with 18% for those born in Sweden.

When comparing young Swedes to other young Europeans, two important points need to be made. First, young people, both in Sweden and in Europe, have a much stronger belief in their own future than in the future of their society. Second, young people in Sweden have a stronger belief in both their individual and societal future than do young people in Europe. Almost half of young Swedes (49%), but only one out of three (32%) of young Europeans, consider their individual future to be bright. Almost one out of five young Swedes (18%) completely agrees with the proposition that society's future looks bright. Among the young Europeans the score is 8%. Trust in both individual and societal future is stronger among young Swedes than among other young Europeans.

A GREAT SATISFACTION WITH FAMILY

To what extent does family bring meaning to life of the young? Does family play an important role in shaping their identities? Does having family and children improve the quality of life?

The survey allows important empirical findings: young people in general find family to be of great significance for the meaning of life, the shaping of identities and the quality of life. In Sweden, the most prevalent support for family is found among young women, young adults (25-29), the highly educated, married individuals, and among those having children. A vast majority of young Swedes are very satisfied with their own family; a majority of young Swedes express great interest in spending time with their families; and, in general, both young Swedes and young Europeans give great weight and importance to the significance of family.

When asked about what aspects bring "meaning to life", eight out of ten (80%) young Swedes answer that "family" is very important. Only the significance of "having friends" (74%) comes close. The meaning of things such as "leisure" (59%), "work" (42%), and "material possessions" (22%) is less valued. The tendency is the same when young Swedes are asked about what factors they believe "shape their identity". Again "family" (63%) and "friends" (60%) are ranked as most significant. "Education" (38%), "profession" (34%) and "marital status" (33%) come next. Nearly seven out of ten young Swedes (67%) fully support the proposition that the meaning of a good life is "to have family and children".

The strongest believers in the significance of family are to be found among young Swedes with children. At least nine out of ten (93%) consider family to be of greatest importance for the meaning of life. Moreover, almost nine out of ten young women (89%) in Sweden consider family to be of great importance in giving meaning to life, compared

with young men among whom seven out of ten (71%) hold the same view. Young Swedes are also very satisfied with their families (70%).

Compared with other young Europeans, young people in Sweden are generally more satisfied with their families, although they seem less persuaded that family is the foundation of society:

– *Meaning to life.* Undoubtedly, young Swedes (80%) and young Europeans (77%) strongly support the belief that family is a very important aspect for giving meaning to life.

– *Identity shaper.* At least six out of ten (63%) young Swedes and almost seven out of ten (68%) young Europeans find family to be very important for the shaping of one's identity.

– *Good life.* To a great extent, both young Swedes (67%) and young Europeans (65%) strongly support the idea that a good life means having family and children.

– *Family satisfaction.* The number of young Swedes who are very satisfied with their families (70%) is somewhat larger than the number of young Europeans (63%).

– *Family as the foundation of society.* One out of three young Swedes (33%) fully agrees with the proposition that family is the foundation of society, while nearly half of young Europeans (47%) share the same view.

Compared with other young Europeans included in the survey, we find that young Swedes place strong emphasis on the significance of family as an essential contributor to give meaning to life, shape identity and ensure quality of life. In all these cases, the vast majority of Swedes and Europeans find family to be of great importance. Thus, it is reasonable to emphasize the strong similarities in their views rather than the small differences. These similarities also find echo in the young's interest in spending time with families.

However, despite the similar empirical outcomes among most of the indicators concerning the significance of the family, there are two notable *family differences*: first, young Swedes are somewhat more often fully satisfied with their families, and second, and much more notable, young Swedes are less convinced that family is the foundation of society.

CAREER AND JOB STATUS LESS IMPORTANT

To what extent does work bring meaning to life? Does work play an important role as an identity shaper? Is work considered to be a strong definer of a good life?

The survey provides important empirical findings: young Swedes put a stronger emphasis on family than on work (if the significance of work means meaning of life and one's own identity); young Europeans find work to be more important for the meaning of life and identity than do young Swedes; in terms of future work careers, more young people in Europe put a strong emphasis on the importance of having high salary and high job status than do young people in Sweden; regarding career strategies—beliefs in what needs to be done to be successful in future working life—young Europeans focus more often on looking good, on taking all the jobs chances they get and on constantly renewing themselves.

At least four out of ten young Swedes (42%) find work to be an aspect of greatest importance when it comes to experience *meaning* in life. When asked about decisive factors they believe shape their *identity*, at least one out of three (34 %) gives work the highest grade. A majority (65%) agrees completely that getting an exciting and meaningful job is crucial for having a *good life*.

If these testimonies about work are compared with the degree of significance attributed to family described in the section above, we find that the strong emphasis on family is more widely shared among young Swedes than a strong emphasis on work. Hence, 80% consider family as very important for giving meaning to life, 63% believe family to be a strong identity shaper and 67% find that having family and children is of greatest importance for a good life. Family, predominantly, and work are strong markers gauging life meaning, identity and quality of life.

The strongest believers in the significance of work are notably young women: close to one out of two young Swedish women (48%) thinks work is very important in bringing meaning to her life, compared with 37% of young men. At least one out of three (36%) women considers work to be a significant identity shaper (31% of young men) and seven out of ten young women (72%) find getting an exciting and meaningful job of greatest importance for having a good life (60% among young men).

When compared with other European youths, Swedes are less convinced that work is very important for the meaning of life (42% of young Swedes believe so, 52% of other young Europeans). Moreover, the percentage of young Europeans (42%) who place strong emphasis on work as an identity shaper is higher than the percentage of young Swedes (34%). Job status is also more important to young Europeans than to young Swedes. Close to four out of ten young Europeans (37%) find it very important to have a job with high status. Among Swedes, the ratio drops to one out of five (20%). Furthermore, a higher percentage of young in Europe compared with those in Sweden (56% vs. 49%) considers a high salary to be very important.

Comparing some of the indicators about different career strategies—what the young think they need to do to be successful in their future working life—offers some interesting

differences between young Swedes and young Europeans. First, we find that a majority of both categories (a good six out of ten) puts the same strong emphasis on the importance of having an exciting and meaningful job. Close to one out of four young Europeans (23%) agrees completely with the proposition that one has to be good-looking to succeed in one's future working life; only 15% of young Swedes share this view. About six out of ten young Europeans (59%) fully agree with the proposition that they have to take all the chances they get to be successful in their work career, compared with 46% of the Swedes surveyed. Almost four out of ten young Europeans (38%) fully support the idea that they have to live up to the expectations of others to be successful in their working life, while 28% of young Swedes adhere to this statement. Moreover, to understand the importance of others in young people's life, one can also look at young people's reasons on why they should get an education. Close to four out of ten young Europeans (38%) fully agree that the answer is to make their families proud of them. Among young Swedes, only 19% give the same explanation. Interestingly, many more young people in Europe think the reason to study and do well in school is to make one's family proud.

The conclusions summarize two interesting *work differences*. The first concerns differences within the category of young Swedes. As noted above, gender, education and urban life are important in determining how the significance of work is perceived. The second concerns differences between young Swedes and young Europeans. The disparities concern the role of work in giving meaning to life and in shaping identity, work careers (salary and status) and career status (looks, work opportunities and renewal). In all these cases, young Europeans have a tendency to place stronger emphasis on work as able to give meaning to life and as an identity shaper. They also place stronger emphasis on items such as high salary, high status, good looks, and "alertness" in terms of taking every job opportunity and to constantly renew oneself.

A RELATIVE HARMONY BETWEEN PERSONAL AUTONOMY AND TRUST IN SOCIETY

Analyzing young people and their perceptions of society, family and work has allowed us to note a strong common ground among the young in Sweden and in the other European countries regarding the great significance ascribed to work and family, and the importance of being able to move forward with a feeling of trust in oneself and in one's society.

To formulate a synthesis, I would like to argue that young Europeans, more often than young Swedes, experience and give voice to an *in-between life situation*. They are in-between what they believe in and what they actually have to live with. To close that gap, they seem prepared to accept what they consider to be necessary for their work careers (looks, hard work, etc). But it does not seem to help that much. They distrust their future. In other words, they experience a *three dimensional performance gap*, that is a gap between their real life and their beliefs and hopes, a gap between what they want to have and what

they have to do, and between what they may feel is possible for themselves as individuals and what might actually be possible for them in the society in which they live. These gaps definitely also exist in Sweden, but to a lesser extent.

How, then, can we try to understand these differences in performance gaps? Three short answers are possible. One is empirical, the second philosophical and the third concerns the art of welfare policies in support of autonomy and self-determination. However, these answers are in fact interrelated.

If young Swedes are compared with young people as a whole in the studied European countries, we find that the former are more often than the latter citizens:

- who are members of social movements and political organizations;
- who are readers of national newspapers and magazines;
- who have great trust in their government, people in general and, particularly, the police and justice system;
- who, in terms of the future in a global world, are less afraid of things such as unemployment, poverty, terrorism and war;
- who believe that globalization means increased opportunities for national companies;
- who are more confident that they will have a good job in the future;
- who do not think they need to achieve a better standard than their parents;
- who think they have much in common with their fellow countrymen;
- who are very satisfied with the general situation in the country in which they live;
- who believe in raising children to be independent individuals;
- who think that people in their country have the opportunity to choose their own lives.

To find a more general theoretical logic in these empirical tendencies, one could say that *young Swedes, to a greater extent than young Europeans, experience and believe that material, political and symbolic structures work in favour of—not against—personal autonomy*. They feel it is possible to be raised as an independent individual and to experience the opportunity to choose one's own life. In other words, the performance gaps are narrower when young citizens can grow up in good conditions and when they trust their society's institutions, as

Swedes do to a larger extent than other Europeans. And such societal trust does not work against personal autonomy or freedom. Rather, it seems to make possible, or, at least, contributes to, the autonomy of individuals.

Martha C. Nussbaum is one of the scholars who has strived most to formulate the importance of understanding the relations between strong conditions of existence and personal autonomy. "The goal, she writes in *Sex and Social Justice*, should always be to put people into a position of agency and choice" (1999, p. 11). Or: "It makes good social sense, freeing people to be agents in socially productive ways. Every society, then, needs to decide what struggles people should not have to fight for themselves without social support" (*ibid*, p. 20). Thus, it is of great importance to understand "the equal importance of each life" and "the conditions that make it possible" (*ibid*, p. 10). It means that people's perceptions, preferences and desires of life, transposed here as perceptions of the future, family and work, tend to "respond to their beliefs about social norms and about their own opportunities" (*ibid*). In other words, if young people are "fearful and dependent, [...] it may in part be because they have been formed that way" (*ibid*, p. 12). From M. C. Nussbaum's point of view, the most important question must be: "What are the people of the group or country in question actually able to do and to be?" (*ibid*, p. 33). To answer that question, we have to focus on the distribution of resources and opportunities to the young generation. We also have to understand the significance of being able to trust societal institutions and general welfare (Rothstein and Stolle 2003; Rothstein 2003). This is, as I read it, what the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey to a great extent tells us.

How is it possible to believe in one's own future and not in the future of one's society, or vice versa? This apparent paradox has a solution: if a vast majority of young individuals have trust and faith in their future, it is because they *also have trust in the society in which they live*. And, if most young individuals achieve bright futures, then, naturally, society will prosper. I am convinced that *we need to have trust in the future of our society to trust ourselves*. And, of course, if you do not trust society, at least, you try to have faith in your own future. You turn the future into a personal response. But, as the survey shows, distrust and discontent transpire. *It is hard to be a satisfied individual if you do not feel satisfied with your society and if the possibilities are not there*. We all need to work on those possibilities that make autonomy and society prosper, because they are related, not separate, issues. Finally, autonomy can neither be a complete self-creation nor come out of nothing.

If we trust the empirical outcome of the survey and have faith in Nussbaum's philosophy emphasising the need for strong conditions of existence to free people into a position of social productive agency and care of others, then Sweden is not doing badly compared with other countries. It is reasonable to believe that a general welfare, not too top-down in its approach and strategies (including reforms such as parental leave, development programmes for urban segregated areas, social inclusion and participation, strong traditions of membership in social movements, study loans for all those who qualify for university

etc.) helps to create satisfactory conditions for young people, and also helps to create necessary symbolic structures of trust in institutions, in society and in oneself.

We must also mention that Sweden has well-developed youth policies (*ungdomspolitik*). It puts a special focus on being “young”—the extended life phase in between childhood and adult life—in post-industrial times and in an increasingly multicultural Swedish society. These youth policies have three main goals:

- to give young people good opportunities to live a *self-determined* life;
- to give youth substantial possibilities for participation and real influence in society;
- to see the engagement, the creativity and critical thinking of young people as real and useful resources in society (Regeringens proposition 1998/99:115).

Moreover, a governmental board dedicated to youth affairs (*Ungdomsstyrelsen*) is commissioned to follow up on and evaluate the real outcomes of Swedish youth policies.

But the good that we do have in Sweden can easily be forgotten and left behind. Despite some positive outcomes, we are not beyond pessimism and discontent. Accordingly, again and again *we have to recreate what the young legitimately need and crave*. However, they will only crave it, if the belief in the social imaginary is kept alive—also within the Swedish society, where gaps in many respects seem to widen (Vogel and Häll, 2005). At least the creed is there, not only in Sweden but also in the countries surrounding us. To keep it alive and make it come true, we need to know, as Michael Walzer wrote, “that there couldn’t be a society of free individuals without a socialization process, a culture of individuality, and a supportive political regime which citizens were prepared to be supportive of in their turn. In other words, the society of free individuals would be, for most its members, an *involuntary association*” (2004, p. 17). In both normative and empirical terms, I find this association to be the legitimate foundation for innovative policies of material and symbolic structural possibilities *and* of individual autonomy.

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THE OPTIMISM OF AMERICAN YOUTH

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Adolescents and young adults are at a time in their lives when work and family views and plans play meaningful roles in determining their future. As a group, how do American youth view society, work and family? How are their views on these topics interrelated? In this chapter, we examine the Kairos Future–Fondation pour l’innovation politique survey responses of American youth to understand better how they see their place in society. We find that, despite the socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural diversity of American youth, their views converge on several tendencies. Overall, they are optimistic about the future, both for themselves in terms of employment and for society. They share a value for family and hard work.

FAITH IN SOCIETY

How do American youth view the role of individual members of society? When asked to respond on a 1 to 7 scale, where 1 is the least positive (i.e., disagree) and 7 the most positive (i.e., agree), they strongly support the statement that people can change society through their choices and actions (with an average of 5.69, compared with 5.03 for the European Youth: 63% of the American youth gave a 6 or a 7 as an answer, strongly believing that people can change society, compared with only 45% of the European youth). The American youth also believe that people in the United States have the opportunity to choose their own lives (5.66 in the U.S., 4.45 in Europe; 61% of the American youth strongly believed that people can change their own lives, compared with only 31% of the European youth). These statements indicate that American youth have a sense of personal agency. They believe that their own actions have the power to not only guide their own lives, but also to make broader changes in society. We take these as a sign that American youth are raised in a society with democratic ideals, and that they are optimistic about their place in society and their own future.

What characteristics mark an ideal society? In one section of the survey, participants were asked to endorse one of two conflicting statements about their preferences for an ideal future society. Responses were again on a 7-point scale, ranging from only endorsing

the one statement (a 1 on the scale) to only supporting the other statement (a 7 on the scale), but there was no option to mark “4,” which would be a neutral response. This format did not appear to elicit strong reactions from American youth, whose responses to these items all ranged between an average of 3.28 and 4.49.

However, there are apparent differences in the societal preferences of American youth and youth living in Europe. Americans are more likely than youth in Europe to prefer a society in which individual performance is rewarded (a 7 on the scale) rather than one in which wealth is evenly distributed (a 1 on the scale ; 4.49 in the U.S., 3.88 in Europe). Americans also express less support for a strong welfare system than for a society with low taxes (3.28) compared with the European youth (3.98). The preference for low taxes over a strong welfare system is even more pronounced among American adults aged 30 to 50 than among youth, but this age difference is not apparent in Europe. We see these responses as indications that Americans—especially those in their 30s and 40s—are more likely than Europeans to endorse a meritocracy, where individuals can improve their lot via mechanisms within their personal control (i.e., through hard work). Young Americans’ support for meritocratic ideals may be developed through political rhetoric and media coverage of such rhetoric, as well as because of a cultural heritage that supports individual achievement through personal responsibility and hard work.

An important aspect of society is the rights to which its individual members are entitled. Participants were asked to agree or disagree with the following universal rights: a free university education, unemployment benefits even if there are jobs, displaying religious symbols, 12 months of parental leave and free healthcare. None of these rights are strongly supported by Americans. Youth in Europe appear to express stronger support for rights to education (5.56), parental leave (5.37), and healthcare (4.77) than American youth (respectively, 4.99, 4.82 and 4.19). The lack of support for these particular universal rights is consistent with American youths’ desire for a meritocracy in which education, employment benefits and healthcare are rewards for individuals who work hard.

Interestingly, despite little support for universal rights, American youth do tend to believe in several universal obligations. They believe that everyone should contribute to a better world (5.84) and should do their best at work regardless of how much money they are paid (5.50). The first statement is a plausible obligation in youths’ minds because of their belief that individuals can create change in society, and that they are able to—and therefore should—contribute to a better world. Support for the second obligation suggests American youth believe in a strong work ethic, perhaps because they believe not only that society should reward them for it (as a meritocracy would), but also that there is an inherent good in working hard. In this survey, there are not substantial differences in these obligations by gender or educational attainment. However, there is some evidence the cultural heritage of various ethnic groups may lead to different views of personal responsibility to society (Cokley *et al.*, 2007).

What are the largest perceived threats to society? Two of nine potential threats are strongly endorsed by American youth. The most looming threat, or the one with the highest average rating, is that of war (5.73). In light of the current U.S. military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as unease with North Korea, Iran and other parts of the world, the fact that war is threatening to American youth is no surprise. Likewise, the other strongly supported threat to society is terrorism (5.55). Media coverage of suspected terrorism and military initiatives in the Middle East appear to be more salient (and may have been more common at the time this survey was conducted) than coverage of other threats to society such as drug abuse, unemployment and organized crime.

A discussion of American youth's views about society would not be complete without mentioning the importance of religion. The value of religion to American youth can be seen most clearly in a comparison to the views of youth who live in Europe. American youth are much more likely to believe in God (5.70) or in a higher power (5.83) than the European youth (belief in God: 3.61; belief in higher power: 3.88).

Not only is religion important for youth, they also believe that it should be important for others in society. For instance, American youth feel it is more important to teach children religious faith (4.70) than do youth in Europe (2.95). Furthermore, when asked for their preference between two options for their ideal future society, youth in Europe are less likely to prefer a society based on spiritual values (a 7 on a 7-point scale) to a society based on science and rationality (a 1 on the same scale) than are American youth (2.97 in Europe; 4.04 in US). Although not all American youth are religious or spiritual, religion appears to have a stronger influence overall on American youth than it does on youth in Europe.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS ON WORK

In this section, we review youth's views on their careers, both in what they desire from a job and what they are doing to achieve their career goals. It is useful to note that the majority of American adolescents have experience working in regular part-time jobs during the school year, along with other employment on a temporary basis (i.e., baby-sitting), or during the summer (Bachman, Safron, Sy and Schulenberg, 2003; Staff, Mortimer and Uggen, 2004). Perhaps because many members of this sample have had employment experience, there are few clear differences in the perspectives of workers and students, or in the views of workers and individuals who were neither working nor in school.

Overall, youth appear to expect a lot from their future careers. Of the 19 survey items regarding perceptions of important aspects of a job, 11 are strongly endorsed. The most strongly desired aspect of one's future job is to feel proud of the job (6.10). In terms of tangible rewards, American youth expect employment security (6.08), good benefits (6.07), a

high salary (5.55) and flexible working hours (5.53). It is interesting to note that American youth seek employment security more than youth in countries where employment security is not as common, such as in Denmark (5.38). Possibly, Americans' high desire for security may reflect the cultural norm for relatively stable employment, or a wish to avoid the stigma of unemployment.

American youth also think that less tangible rewards are important, including having interesting and meaningful work to do (5.96), having good career opportunities (5.93) and being able to influence their working conditions (5.62). Also, they think it is important to have a positive social atmosphere at work, including having a good boss (5.93) and nice colleagues (5.64). Finally, they endorse the importance of having a healthy working environment (6.05). While it may seem that American youth expect a lot from their future careers, they are also confident they will have a good job in the future (5.58).

Because these respondents are between the ages of 16 and 29, they have a long time perspective in their thinking about future careers. It may be that they do not expect to have all of these rewards in their first jobs, but they anticipate advancing to a career that provides these opportunities once they are more established. Besides, youth appear to adjust their career expectations with age. Younger youth, aged 16 to 19, think it is more important to have a job with high status (5.13) than do young adults aged 25 to 29 (4.50). Younger youth are also more likely to want a job that allows worldwide travel (4.50) than young adults (3.66). Thus, as youth get more realistic and specific in their career choices and enter the workforce full-time, they may realize that some aspects of their jobs are more important than others, and may be willing to settle for a less-than-perfect job.

What do youth think they can do to succeed in their future careers? As with other survey questions, none of the career strategies listed on the survey lack endorsement—all items have means of 4.59 or higher. The most strongly endorsed item is that hard work is necessary to succeed (6.12). Diligence is important before entering one's career as well—the next most strongly backed strategy is to get a good education and the right qualifications (5.81). These strategies suggest youth feel personal agency in their careers, and believe they can achieve their career goals through their own educational and occupational actions.

The other strongly supported strategy is to get along with other people (5.74). This strategy may reflect the nature of many of the jobs in modern society: compared with the turn of the last century, fewer individuals work in factory and manual labour settings, while more individuals work in professional jobs marked by social cooperation with clients and customers.

FAMILY REMAINS CENTRAL

In this survey, it is very clear that family is important in American youths' lives. The following sections illustrate the importance of family by examining the different aspects of youths' lives in which they think about their families.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to identify which family members youth were referring to in their responses to the survey questions. Younger participants, especially those under 18 years of age, were likely to still live with their parents and less likely than older youth to be married or have children. Thus, younger participants were likely thinking about their families of origin. However, by the late 20s, many individuals may be thinking about their families as a combination of their parents, siblings, spouse and children, or even just as their families of procreation. Therefore, we pay particular attention to apparent differences between youth who had begun their own families (those who were married or parents) and those who had not.

Among youths' views of note is the fact that they strongly support the statement that family is the foundation of society (5.67, compared to 5.08 in Europe). In 1996, promoting marriage was one of the components of welfare reform in the U.S. Under Bush's presidency, additional support for marriage has come in the form of funding for marriage education and research on marriage through the Healthy Marriage Initiative (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/>). By increasing marriage rates and decreasing divorce rates, this policy seeks to benefit both children and society in general. The amount of support for family as the foundation of society in the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey suggests that it is endorsed by American youth with various political affiliations, but the use of similar rhetoric by conservative and Christian politicians in the U.S. may explain why it garners more support in America than it does among European youth.

For American youth, their families are very important to get self-confidence. When asked the degree to which six things provide meaning to their lives, American youth overwhelming say that their families do (6.37). And, when asked about factors that are important to their identities, the most strongly supported factor is family (6.08). In both of these series of questions, friends are strongly endorsed, but families are rated as more meaningful and more central to youth's identities than friends.

When asked how satisfied they are with different aspects of their lives (such as finances, health, and work) American youth are most satisfied with their families (5.79). Such satisfaction appears to vary depending on the type of family that youth are referring to—youth who have a spouse are more satisfied with their families (6.21) than are youth who are in a long-term relationship (5.69) or are single (5.64). Interestingly, American youth are more interested in spending time with their families (6.03) than are youth in Europe (5.45). Since satisfaction is higher in families of procreation, such cultural differences may be confounded by the younger average age at which American youth marry and become parents compared

with youth in some European countries. Though it is difficult to explain why American youth have tended to marry earlier than youth in Europe in recent years, religiosity may be one contributing element. Non-marital cohabitation has increased in America, but it is still unacceptable or undesirable in the eyes of many youth and parents.

Young women appear to have a different view of family when compared with young men. In particular, they recognize the difficulty of balancing careers and family life. For example, young women think it is more important to have a career that allows parental leave (5.85) than do young men (4.97). Similarly, males feel that travel is more important to their future careers (4.29) than do females (3.79), perhaps because traveling interferes with stability in families with young children. Indeed, youth with children find a career that allows travel less desirable (3.54) than do youth who do not have children (4.19).

Young women are also more likely to view their families as important to their identity (6.31) than are young men (5.85). In addition, women are more interested in spending time with their families (6.30) than men (5.76). These differences are confounded by the fact that women tend to marry and become parents at a younger age than men; relatively more of the young women in this sample have begun their own families compared to young men. Indeed, there are many differences in the family perspectives of youth who are married versus single.

American youth are diverse in their cultural heritage, experiences, perspectives and aspirations. Despite this diversity, there is some convergence on views of society, work and family. As a group, they believe in personal agency, or the power to influence their careers, their lives and the world around them. They also value hard work and believe that it should be rewarded. Comparatively, family is remarkably important to their sense of self and clearly influences their views on society and work.

Though it is impossible to uncover all the reasons for these cultural tendencies, there are a few possible contributors to the characteristics of today's youth. First, they have been raised in religious institutions that encourage family values and goodwill. Second, this generation was raised in a time when self-esteem was increasingly considered an important aspect of academic achievement; teachers and parents praised the worth of every child as a special individual, each with unique talents. Such focus on the "self" serves to create empowered and optimistic youth, though there is also some evidence that it encourages selfishness and entitlement as well (McMillan, Singh and Simonetta, 2001). Finally, American youth are surrounded by political ideologies and cultural heritages that promote the idea that each person can "pull oneself up by one's bootstraps" (i.e., work hard to help oneself) and achieve the American Dream. Of course, we are making broad generalizations here, and diversity of experiences and views is a defining characteristic of the American youth. In sum, the portrait of the typical American youth we have portrayed here is one of individuals who are confident about themselves, who are happy with their families and who are relatively optimistic about their own futures and the future of society.

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CONCLUSION: WHAT POLICY PROJECT WOULD BEST SERVE TODAY'S YOUTH?

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Social science researchers always come up against this thorny question: Which “youth” are we talking about? The meaning of “stages of life” can, indeed, vary quite a bit, depending on location and era. Pierre Bourdieu emphasized the fact that youth constitutes “a category of people that defies categorization—a category that statisticians don’t know what to do with because society doesn’t know what to do with them and doesn’t know what to call them” (cited by Thierry Blöss, 1994, p. 266).

The economic and social changes that have taken place in the last few decades have modified age mapping in our societies. The weakening of the wage-earning system has disrupted professional careers, the extension of studies has delayed young people’s entry into the labour market, the courses of married and family life are often marked by crises, etc. The phases that once characterized a young person’s passage into adulthood (access to work, home ownership and financial autonomy, marriage or birth of a child) have become increasingly blurred, less shared by the social system as a whole, and more temporary. The “life cycle” concept therefore can no longer explain the diversity of lifestyles and life trajectories, resulting in an apparently contradictory recategorization and decategorization process. “In some respects, the imprecision and vagueness of former age group boundaries stimulated a recategorization process: some new fragmentation logic has been introducing ever finer distinctions between the ages. This applies to the pre-adolescence, adolescence and post-adolescence sequence, sustained not only by distinctive practices (in terms of sociability between peers and target marketing of products), but also by the interpretation of developmental psychologists. In other respects, the difficulties associated with setting age boundaries have led researchers to point out what they have in common, and making the public more aware of the traits, situations and experiences that they may share: there is even a tendency to blur those borders and to relativize the contrast between the age groups” (CEMS, 2005). As a result, ages are understood in terms of processes: adolescence, maturescence.

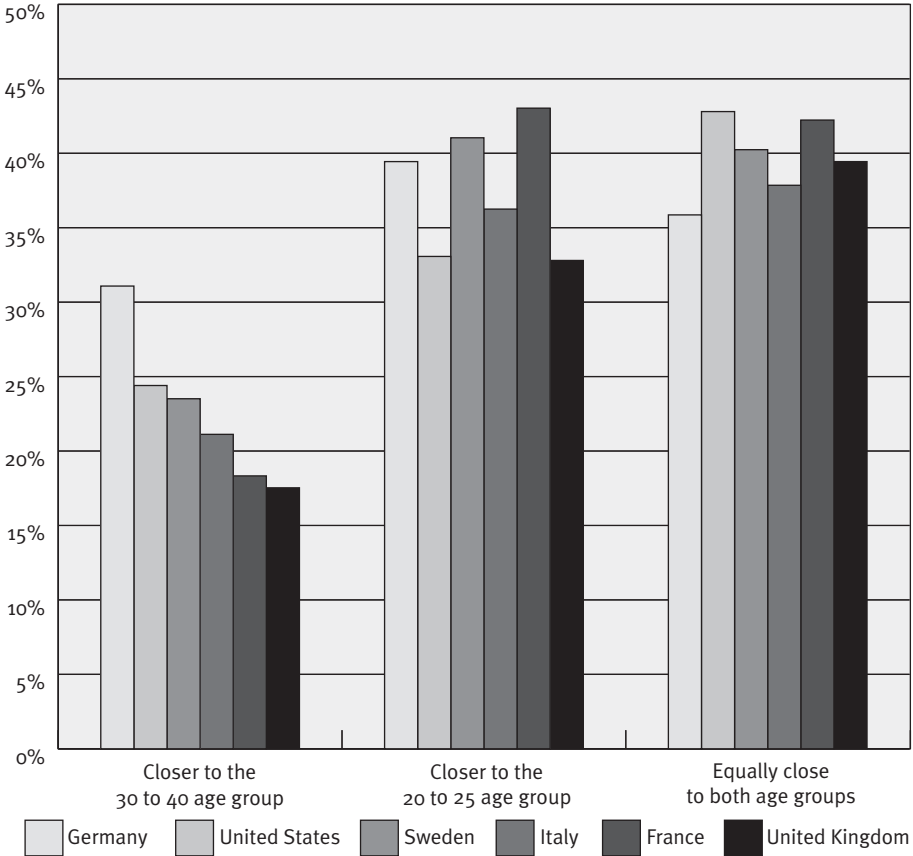
In light of how complex and contradictory these approaches are, it may be worthwhile to wonder whether age in itself is a determining factor. Does it account for the differences in perception, expectation and ways of anticipating the future? Such is the main theme of all of the texts in this collective work. The authors have shown that, if the national

structures play a decisive role in shaping beliefs and perceptions, age also continues to be a critical variable that, in our opinion, needs to be examined further, even by questioning the categories that determined the formulation of our statistical sampling. The Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey is based upon a comparison between two major age groups: the 16 to 29, on one hand, and the 30 to 50, on the other hand. Do the results obtained enable us to compare “young people” and “adults”? Is the 16 to 29 age group truly homogeneous? In other words, does the 16 to 29 age range define youth?

Beyond these two major categories, we now have the data on the intermediary age groups: 16 to 19, 20 to 24, 25 to 29, 30 to 40 and 40 to 50. In attempting to discover whether there are wide disparities between these age subgroups, we can consider the two boundaries of our age group: is the 25 to 29 age group more similar to the younger subgroup (20 to 24) or to the older subgroup (30 to 40)? Can the 16 to 19 age group be clearly distinguished from the 20 to 24 age group?

If we consider the six countries studied more specifically in the second part of this book—Germany, United States, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and Sweden—we note a rather disparate distribution: France and the United Kingdom (and, to a lesser extent, Italy) seem to be the countries in which the values of the 25 to 30 age group vary the most from those of the 30 to 40 age group. In these countries, 30 years would appear to be the youth group's age threshold. This is not true to the same extent in Sweden and in the United States. Germany stands out even more, since about one-third of the questions asked of young respondents in the 25 to 29 age group got answers similar to those of the youngest (20 to 24) age group; a second third are similar to the oldest (30 to 39) age group, and, as for the final third, the responses of the 25 to 29 age group are nearly similar to those of the 20 to 24 *and* the 30 to 39 age group. The age of 30 therefore no longer seems to delineate a generational gap as much. It should be pointed out that these gaps also differ according to the item studied: for example, as far as the item “meaning of life” is concerned, the 25 to 29 French age group are systematically closer to the 20 to 24 age group, while the reverse is true of Germans (whose answers are closer to those of the 30 to 40 age group). The results are quite mixed in Italy and only slightly different in Sweden and in the United Kingdom.

The table on the next page indicates the number of questions in our survey for which the 25 to 29 age group's responses sometimes resemble those of the next youngest age group, and sometimes those of the next oldest age group.



Reading: In 43% of the items, young French respondents in the 25 to 29 age group are closer to the 20 to 25 than to the 30 to 40 age group. In 17.5% of the items, young British respondents in the 25 to 29 age group are closer to the 30 to 40 than to the 20 to 25 age group.

Therefore “youth” thresholds are not the same in all countries (even within European countries) and vary according to the areas considered (family, employment, leisure time, consumption, trust, rights and moral obligations, etc.). Although it may be possible to *globally* demonstrate similarities of opinion among the various age groups, it would be ill-advised to make any rigid and substantializing interpretation that would alienate the 16 to 29 age group from older age groups.

As we look at the 16 to 19-year-olds—in other words, the other boundary of our age group—responses here, too, lead to different findings, depending on the country and the item considered. Three patterns emerge: a low variance between the 16 to 19 and the 20 to 25 age groups (Germany and the United Kingdom); an average variance (United States)

and a high variance (France, Italy, Sweden).¹ It should also be noted that this general distribution may vary according to the item studied. Olivier Galland notes in his working paper, for example, that, when it comes to self-defining criteria, “certain European societies—Spanish, Russian, French, German, and Italian—are very, or relatively, homogeneous from a generational viewpoint as far as self-defining criteria are concerned, while others, such as Polish society and those of the Nordic countries, are very heterogeneous.” If we focus solely on the French case, we see for example that the 16 to 19 age group’s opinions cannot be distinguished from those of the older age groups in terms of consumption practices or citizen rights and obligations, while, on the contrary, there are significant differences when discussing what provides “meaning in life.” “Work/study,” “friends,” “material possessions,” or even “dreams and ambitions” are decidedly more valued.

Despite their simplified format, the cross-tabulation of our two analytical grids makes it possible to identify several ideal types of “youth trajectories” (and, at the same time, the “enter adulthood” types):

		25 to 29 / 30 to 40 age group variations		
		High	Average	Low
16 to 29 / 20 to 24 age group variations	High	France, Italy	Sweden	
	Average		United States	
	Low	United Kingdom		Germany

In France and in Italy, the 20 to 30 age bracket stands out because of the difficulties young people are experiencing, as they attempt to enter the job market, in achieving financial autonomy and in resolving their growing problems with familial dependency. In Sweden, there is a significant specificity among responses of the 16 to 19 age group, as if, once they completed their education, it were relatively easy for them to “enter adulthood.” British young people tend to make their youth last until they are 30—the age when professional and familial stability begins to transform perceptions and expectations. Germany and, to a lesser extent, the United States display the most “continuist” pattern, in the sense that no clear distinctions can be seen between the opinions of these age groups. Olivier Galland also noted this in his study: “in some societies, young people’s responses distinctly differ from those of the adults, while in others, intergenerational continuity is more pronounced.”

One of this study’s main conclusions concerns the importance of national contexts. In this respect, Olivier Galland noted that “young people in each country responded in a similar manner to adults of the same nationality. National specificities are therefore stronger than age group identity: the opinions of a young French person more closely

1. A variance is deemed high when a country has more than 20 items for which the 6 to 7 response rate for the 16 to 19 age group is 10 or more points above, or 10 or more points below, that of the 20 to 25 age group. The variance is considered average when a country has between 11 and 20 items, and small when it has less than 10 items.

resemble those of an adult French respondent than those of a young Italian or a young English respondent." The "youth" in the 16 to 29 age group must not then be considered as an organized social group, but rather as a cohort, as "sand in the social hourglass," to use Louis Chauvel's words (1998). Hence our desire to describe, in the second part of this work, the traits specific to the youth in six countries and the way their needs are being addressed by the governments concerned.

These viewpoints need to be refined in light of various issues. That is why the first part of this work has dealt with the relationship of young people to work, family and society.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND WORK

For the last 30 years—in developed, as well as developing, societies—jobs and employment conditions have been undergoing major upheavals associated with the tertiarization of the economies. Are we consequently observing a change of perception (about work, about what is being expected from a job, etc.) among the younger generations? Not really. As all of the authors have pointed out, work remains fundamental, both as a means to access satisfying material standards of living and to provide meaning to one's life. To be satisfied and proud of one's work, to have good relations with one's colleagues and one's bosses, to be confident one will have a good job in the future are still essential goals for young people, regardless of the age bracket considered.

The latter—and here we notably refer to the 16 to 29 age group—does not, however, exactly share the same opinions as their older peers. As Dominique Épiphané and Emmanuel Sulzer wrote: "Work, yes, but for oneself, too." For today's youth face a dual challenge: work must provide meaning in one's life, not just ensure decent living conditions; work—in other words, job conditions—must make it possible to better reconcile one's private life and work life. Young people, particularly the 16 to 19 age group, value aspects such as independent work, flexible working hours, and the right to parental leave.

Lastly, there is a noticeable dissemination of "feminine" values concerning work. "The rooting of women in the work world certainly seems to provide a standard today for young generations," Dominique Épiphané and Emmanuel Sulzer said. The country-specific analyses clearly support this point: in the United States, Germany, Sweden and in France, the meaning and purpose of work is changing for young women, but is also gradually changing for young men. Even if the latter are still more focused on social status and high salaries, and the young women more in interesting work, their private lives are becoming increasingly important for both sexes.

It is noteworthy, however, that this change is occurring in a particular societal context: that of developed countries (in this case, the United States and Western European countries). Indeed, while the latter emphasize the social and symbolic dimensions of work,

emerging countries place more value on its material and status-conferring dimensions. Even among developed societies, we find that opinions can differ according to the national historico-political background. *“The strong consistency of national educational systems and their interaction with the production system—the result of a long political and social history—means that access to studies and higher education will always have a different significance from one country to the next. Moreover, the national economic context specificities seem to have retained their structuring power: the growth sector particularities, the importance of the public sector, tradition of labour relations, etc., are bound to have an impact on young people’s expectations,”* Dominique Épiphané and Emmanuel Sulzer concluded.

Our survey has led to some surprising findings. According to Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel, a vast majority of young British people want to find interesting and meaningful work, good career opportunities and a job they can be proud of. However, they do not seem very optimistic about the possibility of obtaining this type of work in the future. Consequently, according to our authors, there are *“pessimistic feelings about work as an intrinsically rewarding activity.”* A dynamic labour market allowing a certain degree of job mobility therefore is inadequate to reassure, or inspire confidence in, young people who will be finding, or have just found, a job.

At the same time, we observe a strong need for security. British youth are relatively unconcerned about unemployment (28% as compared to 43% for the European mean), yet they are still hoping for employment security in their future career (65% of young British respondents versus 71% for the young Europeans). This need for job security is extremely strong in all countries, including in those in which the employment rate is high and the unemployment rate low: 74% of young Americans, 77% of young Swedes and 78% of young Germans are demanding more security.

This expectation of job security is surprisingly not linked to the fear of unemployment. In fact, there are sharp variances (in Scandinavian countries, the United Kingdom, and in the United States, as well as in Italy and France) between how young people rank fear of unemployment and a desire for security. Although only 29% of young Scandinavians, for example, believe that unemployment is a threat to society, 64% of them said that they want stable employment. Similar variances can be noted in the United Kingdom (28% and 65%) and in the United States (36% and 74%), which point to the conclusion that there is no obvious link between the employment rate and a feeling of security in career paths.²

In our opinion, this gap between objective economic opportunities and subjective perceptions attests to the fact that young people need support in a context that they perceive

2. Note that, conversely, Italy and France, which are characterized by the highest unemployment rates in Europe, scarcely differentiate themselves on these questions: both countries’ young respondents have very similar answers to these questions. Some 45% of them are extremely concerned about unemployment (identical to the European mean) and between 66% (for France) and 72% (for Italy) want job stability.

as increasingly uncertain. The autonomy they require in order to “enter adulthood” is not incompatible with the demand for true support, as shown also in the relationships young people maintain with their families.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY

As with work, which has undergone profound changes, we might have expected major transformations in familial relationships and young people's perception of family today. In Western countries, family structures changed primarily because of the coexistence of three—and sometimes four—generations, the growing types of conjugal alliances, more frequent family break-ups, etc. Our survey findings, here too, challenge many popular misconceptions. As Vincenzo Cicchelli remarked in his study, for the 16 to 29 age group, the family remains a major institution. When we consider the factors that give meaning to life, shape identity, or bring satisfaction in relation to various groups or situations, family systematically takes first place, for the adults as well as the young people.

Some significant differences emerge, however. All of the authors have stressed that women are still more family-oriented than men. That can be explained not only by the persistence of a traditional division of social roles, but also by public policies that may or may not allow for a reconciliation between one's private life and work life. Monika Salzbrunn underscored the fact, for example, that young German women “are even more attached to their career, independence, familial life and friends, even though they are still victimized by structural inequalities (horizontal and vertical discrimination on the job market and a lack of infant day-care facilities, despite the social policies recently implemented).”

Generational differences are, on the other hand, more difficult to measure, because one cannot clearly know whether the persons surveyed are referring to their family of origin or to one that they may have founded. Nonetheless, in all European countries, lower levels of satisfaction with family were noted among young people, especially among the 16 to 19 age group. Yet it is not so much the *depth* of relational ties that is changing, as the *nature* of those ties. Paradoxical variances are apparent: 80% of young Swedes think that family provides meaning to their lives, yet only 33% of them believe it is the foundation of society. Family is becoming a value and a personal resource, but not a social model. “In all environments, family is ceasing to be a place in which authority can be exercised and discipline taught, and is becoming the preferred space for private life defined as real life because this is where individuals can develop the essential component of their personality: affectivity” (Baudelot and Establet, 2000, p. 76). Family then takes on more meanings, because young people, particularly the 16 to 19 age group, attribute other functions to it. For François de Singly, that relates to the advent of a second modernity phase that would no longer be characterized by a liberation process

(in relation to hierarchical communities such as family, village, monarchy or Church), but by and individualizing process. Not only can it be said that “individuals are no longer defined primarily by their group of origin,” but they “want to be able to express other distinctive traits” (de Singly, 2004, p. 235), express their individuality and their preferences.

This in no way implies a breaking away from preceding generations (parents or grandparents), but rather reveals a desire to be different from, and acknowledged by, others. Solidarities remain strong, as all the recent surveys have confirmed (Arrondel and Masson, 2006; Wolff and Attias-Donfut, 2007). “The passage from a growth climate to one of recession dominated by unemployment and under-employment has not altered in any way the trust and solidarity shared by children, parents and grandparents” (Baudelot and Establet, *Op. Cit.*, p. 70). Young people’s wish for independence is accompanied by the desire to maintain solidarity. And, conversely, transferring (money or non-monetary aid) is, for the parents, a way of “facilitating the recipients’ independence, which becomes a core value of family ethics” (*ibid.*, p. 80).

However, family solidarities are ambiguous: although they may help young people become financially, and later physically, independent (option to live outside of the family home), they also simultaneously create a symbolic dependence. The example of the young Italians confirms this viewpoint. Loredana Sciolla clearly shows in her study that family is a fundamental aspect of young people’s identity, notably in terms of stability and education. Yet, when excessive, this bond becomes problematic: the lack of public policies for Italian youth “places the burden of helping disadvantaged young people almost entirely on the family.” It also poses problems for both the former (limited autonomy) and the collectivity (decreasing birth rates, need to fund pensions and public health issues pertaining to the advanced age of the first child, etc.). This can hardly be said to strengthen familial relations. Young Italians’ opinions about family are no different from those of their European counterparts; however, their responses show less concern about family than those of their elders.

Italian “familism” is therefore not, as Loredana Sciolla wrote, the consequence of a culture unique to this country, but is much more the effect of a resigned welfare state. This situation is not peculiar to Italy. In the United Kingdom, for example, several laws have increased young people’s dependency on their families since the 1980s. Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel wrote: “Objectively, the family has increased in importance as a mechanism that connects young adults on an economic level and [...] there is still widespread resentment about enforced financial dependency.” In France, there are sharp tensions between parents and children over who should benefit from family support allowances: an early independence model is valued, but the duration of emotional dependency is lengthening (Van de Velde, 2007). In her working paper, Patricia Loncle sees in this the consequence of “1) the State’s obvious lack of interest in youth-related issues; 2) decentralization, which leads to instances of highly discriminatory treatment, particularly for young people who are the least protected by their families (Loncle, 2007c; Loncle, Muniglia, Rivard and Rothé,

2007); 3) the “familialization” of French youth’s support, which keeps these young people in a difficult situation of dependency, thus reproducing familial inequalities.”

Two countries in our sampling particularly stand out and illustrate two contrasting models. As Vincenzo Cicchelli pointed out in his working paper, it is in the United States that “young people more clearly than elsewhere associate their material success with familial reciprocity.” As different from Eastern countries as it is from European countries, the United States remains a “familialist” country “in which the family validates individual success. The impact of belonging to a group in defining oneself and improving intergenerational dialogue is obvious.” Emily Messersmith, Jerald Bachman and John Schulenberg agree about how family-oriented young Americans are: 62% of the latter believe that family is the foundation of society, versus 47% of the young Europeans. “The use of similar rhetoric by conservative and Christian politicians in the U.S. may explain why it garners more support in America than it does among European youth.” Here, too, the role of the State is crucial, as demonstrated by the Healthy Marriage Initiative, launched by President George W. Bush with the aim of promoting marriage and reducing the divorce rate. The message seems to be quite well received by American youth, since the United States is the only country in the sampling of which the 16 to 19 age group displays more attachment to family than the older respondents do.

To a certain extent, young Swedes constitute an opposite case. Rather than valuing family in its own right, the public policies place the individual at the core of their philosophy and of their mechanisms. The satisfaction of young Swedish respondents is that much greater because they do not feel they are dependent upon their families (70% of the 16 to 29 age group—more than in the other European countries analyzed—are satisfied with their families, and 80% think their families provide meaning to their lives). To them, independence therefore does not signify breaking away and disaffiliation, but quite the opposite. They view family as a socialization institution that endows individuals with value and confidence.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND SOCIETY

The issue of the relationship between youth and society dominates to some extent those reviewed up to this point. It has to do with the general feeling of satisfaction, social integration and confidence and, ultimately, with the manner in which individuals function in the present and perceive the future. Do young people feel they belong in the society in which they live? Do they feel they are members of a “common entity” in which they share common values? Can they identify with their society, trust its institutions and participate in its development?

The social integration level, or, in other words, the feeling of belonging and of trust (in individuals as well as institutions), differs considerably according to the country surveyed.

The crisis of confidence in society and in its elites deeply felt in several European countries (France, Germany and the United Kingdom) has, according to Olivier Galland, led to a form of resignation, "as if their fate had been decided in advance without their being able to direct the course of their lives in a favourable direction." The vision of the future is gloomy, particularly among young French people since "fewer French respondents believed that they have freedom and control over their future or felt that "their fellow citizens" can choose their own life."

In his analysis, Olivier Galland stressed the noticeable differences between the societies in which young people feel optimistic about their personal future (Northern European countries and the United States) and those in which they have a more negative outlook (France, Italy and Eastern European countries). He offered several levels of analysis to explain this gap. First, young people are subject to objective constraints: a low unemployment rate naturally provides better future prospects. Conversely, the challenges they must face when entering the job market, such as in France or in Italy, fuel their concerns. In addition, young people are suffering in varying degrees from a widespread crisis of confidence in institutions and elites, which is causing them to have a fatalistic attitude. The German, British and French youths therefore come in last, in terms of both trust in national, European and international institutions, and in the media or even in NGOs. "The central core of Europe seems to be suffering from a lack of trust in institutions that is not presumptively justified by its level of prosperity." At the other extreme, Nordic countries and the United States are ranked highest in this respect.

This background briefing allows us to better grasp a few national particularities. Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel observed that British youth have more extreme opinions, inasmuch as they feel disconnected from their society and the institutions that govern it. Far from feeling rebellious, they express a particularly pessimistic degree of apathy. This is mainly due to the many restrictions that they have had to endure since the early 1980s: elimination of unemployment benefits for young people under 18, reduction of housing benefits, student grants and, in general, of public assistance. In addition to these cuts and the absence of any real welfare system for these young people, Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel observed that "there seems to be something of a gulf between trends in policy and the political perspectives of the respondents". If British youth no longer believe in the future, it is because they have the impression of having been neglected by their government.

It is worth noting, however, that low confidence in the institutions does not systematically lead to youth disengagement. The Italian case shows, for example, that the desire for associative participation can be expressed in various ways. Loredana Sciolla mentioned that "Italians are active members of associations, notably between the ages of 16 and 29 (some 40% of the young respondents reported that they were members of an association) and the same applies to their involvement in politics." These are "not traditional forms of involvement (only 3% of the young Italians replied that they were activists within a

political party), but rather “unconventional” forms of involvement, such as strikes, demonstrations, forms of ethical financing, etc” In the case of young French people, Patricia Loncle noted that, unlike their European peers, they, as often as their elders, are members of an association. “[They] associate in a different way, in that they prefer local associations that function horizontally, and they sometimes develop alternative social relations models that reject the consumer society.” The interpretation proposed by Patricia Loncle is that “it is more the institutionalized political interplay that is distrusted than political commitment in the sense of participation in public life.” In both cases—the Italian and the French—the authors ultimately emphasized young people’s strong interest in civic participation, though under renewed forms.

Monika Salzbrunn also noted a strong involvement of German youth in societal life and politics—an involvement that can also take various forms. Made aware early in their lives of the importance of taking initiative and of being active in cultural activities, upon entering universities, German students are “encouraged to become involved in politics through the agency of internships or political groups who are very active on campus”—a commitment that employers very favourably perceive: “It is not unusual for applicants for a grant, an award or a job, to attach to their application files references referring to their societal involvement.” Public authorities also value their desire to be involved: the voting age has consequently been lowered to 16 in some Länder [regions]. Monika Salzbrunn points out that in the “districts in which certain political parties have conducted campaigns targeting German youth, the turnout rate is higher.”

Young Scandinavians express more trust in institutions than their British, French, Italian or German counterparts. Mats Trondman offered several explanations for this, including one of a purely political nature: in Sweden, youth public policies implemented by the government can be qualified as “bottom-up,” meaning that they are based upon young people’s aspirations and needs, and not “top-down,” by presumptively treating young people like victims.

Young Americans are also clearly more optimistic than Europeans as a whole. It makes sense to compare them to young Scandinavians, since they are all optimistic about their own future, just as they are about the future of their society, and they all express great satisfaction with their lives. Analyses made by Mats Trondman, as well as by Emily Messersmith, Jerald Bachman and John Schulenberg, point to the same explanation. This optimism may be accounted for by the effectiveness of their respective collective myths, that are constantly being renewed: the *collective project myth* developed by the Scandinavian government and the *American Dream myth* linked to the grassroot movements in the United States.

The origin and reformulation of these myths differ considerably inasmuch as they stem from national histories. In the case of Sweden, the myth is deeply rooted in Scandinavian Liberal Socialism and was strengthened by Per Albin Hansson, a Swedish politician and

defender of the Welfare State, who, fifty years ago, laid the first stone of the collective project, known as the *folkhemmet* (literal meaning: “the people’s home”). Because the latter is permanently renewed through the creation of a *ungdomsstyrelse* (a National Board for Youth Affairs that replaced the National Youth Council that was created in 1959), and more globally, thanks to policies promoting Swedish youth development, the myth is still very much alive among young Swedes. Emily Messersmith, Jerald Bachman and John Schulenberg have explained that American youth have been conditioned by the American dream of a “self-made man”: the 16 to 29 age group was educated and socialized in the United States in an era when students’ parents and teachers were constantly saying that every individual and every child is unique and possesses special talents. This individual “empowerment” discourse about the possible and necessary achievement of personal success by means of one’s will and hard work both reinforced and renewed the cultural heritage and political ideology that produced the collective myth.

What these myths have in common is that they have been rethought and reformulated on an ongoing basis and therefore have lost none of their power. Not only do they make sense as a collective ideal, but they structure and guide individual behaviours. It has been common knowledge for a long time that myths—or collective projects—are essential. Perhaps what is more surprising is to learn that young people, who precisely might have been expected to stand out from their elders by having a more distant attitude towards founding stories and myths, express on the contrary a need to believe in a common project and ideal. On the subject of Sweden, Mats Trondman affirms that it is difficult to believe in yourself and your personal future if you do not believe in the future of the society in which you live. Confidence in one’s future and in one’s personal success therefore depends upon the existence of a common goal, which is in turn dependent upon a collective myth.

FOUR IMPERATIVES FOR AN EFFECTIVE YOUTH-ORIENTED PUBLIC POLICY

In most countries, increasing financial support is now being directed at youth. However, the latter paradoxically are not widely recognized as a future resource. In reality, society most often perceives them either as victims (who must be protected), or as a threat (from which society must be protected). By reinforcing these two conflicting images of youth, public policies run the risk of becoming increasingly narrow in scope and categorical. This makes it difficult to grasp their main objectives, orientation, and means of implementation. What is the use of deploring the lack of benchmarks for youth if public authorities are unable to provide them with a direction, a framework, or clear goals? Rather than helping to prolong youth by means of arbitration and restrictions, public policies should make youth the lever for reform (Labadie, 2001).

To that end, we need policies that adequately target the specific “age segment” known as youth. Failing that, as for example in the United Kingdom, young people cannot do

otherwise than advocate policies that take their expectations and needs into account. When the State relies on families to provide all the support, as in Italy, the generation gap widens. But, as shown by the French case, it is not enough to invest substantial financial resources and to create *ad hoc* institutions to make young people feel understood, socially integrated and confident in the future. So youth policies are needed, but which ones? In light of the Kairos Future-Fondation pour l'innovation politique survey findings, it seems advisable to favour objective-focused policies (job access, housing, health care, etc.) rather than on beneficiary categories. In her working paper, Patricia Loncle highlighted, for example, the compartmentalized and stigmatizing nature of support mechanisms in France.

On a more fundamental basis, new conceptions of youth must be created. Youth is rarely seen for what it primarily is: a stage of life simultaneously characterized by great vulnerability and by a no less great vitality. On this point, the Swedish case is particularly informative. As Mats Trondman has shown, this country has clearly made youth the focus of its objectives and considers "the commitment, creativity and critical thinking of youth as a real and useful resource for society." Young people are important to us today for what they are now, and not just because they are the key to ensuring generational renewal, as they will be tomorrow's adults, or—to put it more prosaically—because our pensions depend upon their future jobs. Youth, in all of its diversity, need to have a say about the world that is now being built. But we first must want—and be able—to hear them. To make sure we do, four imperatives need to be taken into account: autonomy, involvement, balance and a collective project.

Autonomy

In the course of the 20th century, individuals freed themselves from their relations of personal dependency (paternalism in the workplace and paternalism in the family). Our survey shows that early 21st century youth are still expressing a strong need for autonomy. The tensions associated with the labour market (unemployment, part-time positions) particularly penalize young people, who are finding themselves isolated (as in the United Kingdom) or trapped within the familial circle (as in Italy). Even in countries in which the employment rate is rising, there is a basic demand for autonomy.

Favouring autonomy does not mean leaving young people, unassisted, in making their decisions concerning education, training or housing, even if they are given individual financial support. Making youth "accountable" does not mean that they must be thought of as adults with financial, professional, and even emotional, stability. On the contrary, they need to be assisted in a way that takes into account their personal plans. Similarly, it is not a question of alienating them from their family, whom they still consider—as we have seen—a fundamental factor in shaping their identity, but rather of intervening as a complementary resource to their family. Those countries that have opted to treat youth-related problems through familialization (by providing support to families rather than to individuals) must therefore, in our opinion, reconsider their overall philosophy.

This support must be comprehensive—training, job access, housing, health care, etc.—and provided by structures accessible to young people. A “one-stop shop” approach needs to be formulated, that could replace the multiple mechanisms currently available to young people, supervised by individuals who are truly trained and can act as consultants (and not just simply as administrative agents). In actuality, a variety of tools are available that merit careful assessment. Among them are the concept of an education capital guaranteed by the State (Charvet, 2001) or that of a capital endowment. The latter would involve, for example, giving some capital to all newborns so that when they are older they can finance their education, acquire a home or prepare for their retirement (Child Trust Fund in the United Kingdom). The initial investment could be reimbursed from future inheritances and any future contribution (by the individual, his/her family, public authorities or businesses) could be exempt from taxation. Another possible suggestion might be youth loans based upon the model used in Scandinavia. These loans enable borrowers to begin or continue their studies. Generally speaking, what is needed is to develop young people’s social capital, which is both an individual asset (density of social networks facilitating coordination and cooperation) and a collective asset (density of the social body).

Participation

Young people have not abandoned their commitment to society: far from substantiating popular misconceptions about youth, our survey has shown that, although they express strong mistrust towards institutions and traditional forms of commitment, young people are not disinterested in political and social life. In fact, their desire to be involved remains strong and new forms of participation are emerging. In Italy, many young people belong to associations and they express their political commitment in non-conventional ways (strikes, forms of ethical financing, etc.). French youth, who are distrustful of institutionalized politics, prefer to participate in local associations that function horizontally. In Germany, internships, political groups and cultural organizations attract large numbers of young people. Accepting these new forms of participation is the first step in implementing a public policy that values the contribution young people are making to society.

Does this mean we need to abandon traditional forms of participation? The German decision to lower the voting age to 16 is proof to the contrary. The objective with respect to young people is threefold: motivate them to take part in the decision-making process; maintain a demographic balance between generations, and readjust young people’s rights and duties. The second step therefore consists of rethinking the debate over the majority’s criteria—civil, criminal and fiscal. “The setting of majority ages must make sense: those fixed at 18 no longer relate to freedom, because our society has failed to understand the effects of this age adjustment on adults or on young people. That is one reason for the partial—and therefore discriminatory—majority age determinations in our laws” (Sassier, 2006, p. 21).

Consequently, in broader terms, we need to take into account the multiple and diverse ways in which young people are now participating in society and realize that they will be the citizens of tomorrow. Any involvement in an association, a humanitarian organization, or in a local advocacy group should, for example, be mentioned on a *curriculum vitae*, a career path or civics education description or even a professional experience statement when applying for an allowance.

Balance

The need for autonomy referred to above is evident in all social activities. It can be seen primarily in the relationship to work. Young people want to have interesting and stimulating jobs, work under pleasant conditions, and integrate smoothly into their work environment. They long for some stability. Thus there is a certain inconsistency in wanting young people to formulate personal, familial and career plans and only offering them temporary or part-time contracts as they start their working lives. This dichotomy is all the greater in that, as the authors have stressed throughout this study, the meaning of work has changed. Young people are clearly expressing the need to reconcile their private and professional lives—to rebalance the terms of that relationship.

It is therefore necessary to rethink the way in which leisure time, the social environment and working conditions interrelate, which supposes adapting administration and business opening hours to the needs of the public, as well as implementing a work schedule that takes familial obligations into account. "Flexibility" must be organized around individual and familial constraints and not just adjusted to suit corporate needs. This calls for a genuine policy encompassing all aspects of life, including the freedom to choose one's working hours. It would focus on early childhood so as to allow parents to more easily enter (or re-enter) the job market; facilitate the study/job relationship; make it possible to find half-time jobs or (re)training or professional recycling periods and permit sabbatical leaves (for example, to take care of older relatives or for humanitarian endeavours).

Collective project

These three imperatives of public policy are insufficient in the absence of a collective project that provides a framework and a driving force for individual projects. The optimism of young Swedes and Americans can be explained for the most part by the existence of a collective myth: the personal success myth originating from the grassroot movements in the United States and the myth of a common project public authorities have been developing for half a century in Sweden. These young people believe both in their own future and in that of society.

However, our survey shows that, where the collective project is vague or non-existent, young people rely only on themselves and on the members of their inner circle. Their uneasiness then becomes that much more evident. In France, the republican integration

myth has played a role, but was not renewed often enough to give young people hope and future prospects. Today, only one out of six French young people feel that they belong to the society in which they live. The “Third Way” has also failed to convince British youth, who are feeling more and more isolated. Lastly, the European Union is not yet prepared to be this common goal that will give meaning to individual and collective action.

Creating a collective project is as essential as it is difficult. Several delicate points of equilibrium need to be found between a common national history and multiple individual experiences, between a long-term collective vision and the urgency of specific situations, and between values shared and diverse actors. As its goal will be young people’s success, this collective project cannot be founded upon a policy of victimization or categorization. In dealing with value transformations (relating to society, employment and family), the collective project must be constantly renewed and revised in order to allow young people to believe in themselves, in their personal future, and in the future of society.

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APPENDIX

METHODOLOGY

The analyses presented in this study are based on the *European Youth in a Global Context 2007* opinion survey conducted in the autumn of 2006 by the Swedish polling organization Kairos Future International, in partnership with the Fondation pour l'innovation politique. This survey was carried out according to the criteria of the International Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice of the ICC (International Chamber of Commerce, www.iccwbo.org) and of ESOMAR (European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research, www.esomar.org).

Over 22,000 people were surveyed in 17 countries (in Europe, Asia and the United States): 1,000 people aged 16 to 29, as well as 300 people aged 30 to 50, in each country. The first panel is thus composed of 1,000 people born between 1977 and 1990; the second panel, of 300 people born between 1956 and 1976. The latter constitutes the reference panel in relation to which the young people's results were interpreted.

The 17 countries selected for this survey are: Germany, Denmark, China, Spain, Estonia, the United States, Finland, France, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, the United Kingdom, Russia, Sweden and Taiwan.

The data was collected on the following dates:

China: 18 December – 26 December 2006

Denmark: 3 November – 12 November 2006

Estonia: 8 November – 27 November 2006

Finland: 3 November – 11 November 2006

France: 24 October – 31 October 2006

Germany: 27 October – 6 November 2006

India: 31 October – 20 November 2006

Italy: 31 October – 7 November 2006

Japan: 24 November – 1st December 2006

Norway: 3 November – 14 November 2006

Poland: 13 November – 21 November 2006

Russia: 9 November – 24 November 2006

Spain: 27 October – 6 November 2006

Sweden: 10 October – 26 October 2006

Taiwan: 17 January – 25 January 2007

United Kingdom: 26 October – 15 November 2006

United States: 7 November – 24 November 2006

The questionnaire was submitted via e-mail. The objective was to constitute, for each country, representative samplings of the total population on the basis of age, gender and place of residence. The advantages of this type of survey are known: shorter timeframes,

reduced costs, opportunity to interview people in geographical dispersed locations, option for the latter to respond when they wish and at their own pace, etc. One restriction, however, should be mentioned: in Russia, China and India, the low Internet penetration rate in rural areas means that the selected sampling does not exactly represent the total population and that the middle classes living in major cities are therefore over-represented. Similarly the 16 to 19 year age bracket is slightly under-represented, inasmuch as it did not participate as much as others in the survey.

The questionnaire consists of five categories. The first concerns the biographical data of the individuals surveyed: age, sex, education level, marital status, main occupation, etc.). The four other categories correspond to the following topics (see the list of questions at the end of the text):

Future Perspectives:

- Values and qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home 15 items
- Meaning in life 6 items
- Identity shapers..... 13 items
- Religious belief 5 items
- Religious denomination..... 14 items
- A good life 13 items
- Life satisfaction 8 items
- General attitudes to society and life at large..... 15 items
- Life attitudes..... 15 items

Future Citizen:

- Cultural similarity11 items
- Ideal future society 10 items
- Trust 10 items
- Human rights 5 items
- Human obligations..... 5 items
- Views of globalization..... 12 items
- Regulators of globalization 9 items
- Threats to the future 9 items

Future Workforce:

- International experience 3 items
- Good job 19 items
- Job opportunities vs. living environment
- Stimulating job vs. clear boundaries
- Living abroad 4 items

- Career strategies..... 9 items
- Life and work goals in 15 years 8 items
- Reasons for higher education..... 4 items
- Preferred sector to work in 16 items

Future Consumer:

- Possessions 9 items
- Interests 22 items
- Consumption attitudes 20 items
- Views on time and money 2 items
- Money to spend weekly

The respondents systematically scored their answers on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being the lowest score and 7 being the highest. Based on these raw scores, two statistical uses were possible.

- First, the average score (on a scale of 1 to 7) for each of the population categories surveyed. A low average therefore indicates that the respondent group does not agree with the statement proposed in the questionnaire. A high average, on the contrary, indicates strong agreement with this statement.

- Next, the percentage of respondents who gave a score of 6 or 7; in other words, those who “agree completely” with the statement.

The authors therefore either used one of the available measures, or both. For example, for the statement “My future looks bright,” two types of statistical results are available and useable. In the case of young Swedes (16 to 29 age group) we find, for example :

- 5.20, or the mean given on the 1 to 7 scale; or
- 49%, the percentage of respondents who gave a score of 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 7.

In addition to national scores, a European score is proposed to facilitate comparisons. This mean was calculated based on the number of votes allotted to each of the various countries within the European Parliament. The scores corresponding to the European Union are therefore not a simple arithmetic average, but are directly linked to the scores of the countries with the highest number of votes: Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

	16 to 29 age group	30 to 50 age group
	Percentage	Percentage
Sweden	3.90%	4.00%
France	15.80%	15.80%
Spain	10.0%	10.90%
Germany	20.0%	20.0%
Italy	15.80%	15.80%
United Kingdom	15.80%	15.80%
Finland	2.80%	2.80%
Denmark	2.80%	2.80%
Poland	10.90%	10.90%
Estonia	1.20%	1.20%
Total	100%	100%

Lastly, we should mention a few constraints associated with the formulation of the international questionnaires. Certain words or concepts may not necessarily be understood in the same way from one country to the next, or even within the various social groups.

For example, some results concerning the family may be tricky to interpret. It is, indeed, difficult to know to which family members young people are referring in their responses. The youngest respondents—particularly those who are under 18—are probably still living with their parents and are less likely than their older peers to be married or to have children. Thus the youngest respondents are most likely thinking of their family of origin. Conversely, respondents approaching the age of 30 may be thinking of their family of origin, yet also—or even first of all—of their spouse or their children. This naturally complicates the interpretation of the data concerning how young people perceive their family.

Another problem concerns the item on trust in non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Do young people include “associations” among “NGOs”? Patricia Loncle, in her analysis of French youth, pointed out that, in her view, when young people express mistrust of NGOs, they are thinking more of adult associations than youth associations. According to her, the results of various surveys actually show that there are as many French young people who belong to associations as there are individuals in other generations who do. Mistrust of NGOs therefore does not systematically mean mistrust of associations—at least as far as France is concerned.

In conclusion, difficulties arise when comparing very dissimilar socio-educational systems. Monika Salzbrunn stressed in her study that, in the case of Germany, ranking based upon educational attainment level or occupational activity (studies, employment or other) is problematic. For example, while 63.5% of young French people are currently following, or have completed, their higher education, the corresponding figure in Germany is only 11%.

A comparison of the percentage of young people who have completed their primary school studies is even more striking: according to the survey data, 1% of the French, and 48% of the German respondents aged 16 to 29 terminated their studies at the primary school level. According to Monika Salzbrunn, this considerable variance may be due to a semantic misunderstanding. In actuality, according to school statistics for the year 2004–2005, only 8.2% of pupils enrolled in Germany left with only a primary school diploma, having failed to obtain the Hauptschule diploma (after nine or ten years of schooling, depending upon the type of school and region). The breakdown of those surveyed according to their main activity seems to confirm, in the author's opinion, the erroneous nature of the categorizations, for it appears here that 33.4% of German respondents aged 16 to 29 stated that they were students—a figure that corresponds rather closely to the actual breakdown.

Despite these limitations, which are inevitable in any scientific work of this sort, the survey contains valuable information and makes it possible to tackle a significant number of questions. Below are those analyzed at greater length in this study.

Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Please indicate how important you think they are.

1. Independence
2. Hard work
3. Responsibility
4. Imagination
5. Tolerance and respect for other people
6. Thrift
7. Endurance
8. Religious faith
9. Unselfishness
10. Obedience
11. Curiosity
12. Honesty
13. Loyalty
14. Self-discipline
15. Entrepreneurship

How important are the following in order to provide meaning in your life?

1. Work/studies
2. Spare time
3. Family
4. Friends
5. Material possessions
6. Dreams and ambitions

How important do you feel that the following factors are for your identity?

1. Nationality
2. Ethnic group
3. Religion
4. Education
5. Language
6. Family
7. Friends
8. Age
9. Marital status (being single, married, etc.)
10. Profession
11. Sexual orientation
12. Local community
13. European identity

Beliefs. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. I believe in God
2. I believe in a higher power
3. I believe in life after death
4. I have a religious upbringing
5. I pray regularly

What is your religious orientation? Do you consider yourself:

1. A seeker
2. Agnostic
3. Atheist
4. Buddhist
5. Christian
6. Hindu
7. Jew
8. Muslim
9. Religious person, without denomination
10. Shinto
11. Sikh
12. Other religion
13. Not religious
14. I don't know

A good life means that I...

1. am healthy and in good shape
2. become famous
3. can feel free
4. can find inner harmony
5. can get an exciting and meaningful job
6. can have a family and children
7. can live and eat well
8. can realise my ideas
9. can spend time with my friends
10. feel needed
11. have a lot of money
12. have many options in life
13. will not have to work

About people and society. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. I feel that I belong to the society I live in
2. My future looks bright
3. Society's future looks bright
4. People can change society through their choices and actions
5. People in my country have the opportunity to choose their own lives
6. I have complete freedom and control over my own future
7. I am confident I will have a good job in the future
8. It is acceptable to break the law to defend one's rights or to fight injustice in society
9. Our society could really use a common goal to work for
10. What happens in the world around me does not actually have much impact on my life
11. Spiritual values should be given greater importance in society
12. Family is the foundation of society
13. I am prepared to pay the taxes needed to pay the pensions of older generations
14. Sexual relationships should only be allowed within marriage
15. People would be happier without modern technology

How satisfied or discontent are you with the following aspects of your life?

1. Your life as a whole
2. Your finances
3. Your health
4. Your work
5. Your leisure time
6. Your friends

7. Your family
8. The general situation in your country

Your opinions. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. It is important for me to look good
2. It is important to live up to the expectations of others
3. It is important for me to live up to my own expectations
4. It is important not to stand out too much
5. It is important to be "in style"
6. It is not my problem if I provoke others
7. It is important for me that my friends are similar to me
8. I always do what I want
9. It is boring to be like everyone else
10. It is important to have specific life goals to strive for
11. It is very important to me that I achieve a better material standard than my parents
12. It is very important to me that I do not have a lower material standard than my parents
13. I am proud of the rich people in my country
14. It is important for me that my family accepts my spouse/girlfriend/boyfriend
15. I have difficulty being happy unless I can contribute to other people's happiness

What characterises your ideal future society? Please mark your choice on the scale between the two opposing statements.

1. Country life
2. Law and order
3. Low taxes
4. Science and rationality
5. Emphasis on tradition and stability
6. Society where wealth is evenly distributed
7. Women and men have the same roles
8. Native citizens and immigrants have equal opportunities
9. Free trade and global competition

Opposing statements:

1. City life
2. Individual liberty
3. Strong welfare system
4. Spiritual values
5. Emphasis on change
6. Society where individual performance is rewarded
7. Women and men have different roles

8. Native citizens and immigrants have different opportunities
9. Protect your national industry

To what extent do you trust the following groups and institutions?

1. Your national government
2. Media
3. Multinational companies
4. NGOs (social movements, trade unions, etc.)
5. People in general
6. The police and justice system
7. United Nations
8. World Trade Organization (WTO)
9. European Union (EU)
10. Religious institutions

What is your view on rights? I feel that everybody should have the right to:

1. a free university education
2. receive unemployment benefits even if there are work opportunities available
3. display religious symbols in any situation
4. get paid parental leave for 12 months on having children
5. get free health care regardless of how you take care of your health

What is your view on obligations?

1. do their best at work regardless of how much money they are paid
2. prevent crime even though it might pose a risk to one's own safety
3. vote in general elections
4. keep oneself informed about important societal issues
5. contribute to a better world

Which are the greatest threats to the society of the future?

1. Environmental pollution
2. Poverty and famine
3. Terrorism
4. Aids and pandemics
5. Drug abuse
6. War
7. Unemployment
8. Organised crime
9. Collapse of the international financial system

Which sector would you prefer to work in? Select a maximum of three alternatives.

1. Manufacturing industry
2. Public administration
3. Media
4. Retail
5. Childcare, healthcare, etc.
6. Police and justice
7. Travel and tourism
8. Construction
9. Defence
10. Professional services (management consulting, accounting, etc.)
11. Schooling and education
12. NGOs (social movements, labour organizations, etc.)
13. Research and development
14. Transportation and logistics
15. Banking, finance and insurance
16. Agriculture and forestry
17. Other

How important are the following aspects of your future career?

1. To have a job with high status
2. Interesting and meaningful work
3. Employment security
4. To be able to travel and work all over the world
5. Healthy working environment
6. A lot of holiday and free time
7. High salary
8. Nice colleagues
9. To be able to influence my working conditions
10. To feel proud of my job
11. To have a job with a lot of responsibility
12. Good career opportunities
13. Fixed working hours
14. Independent work
15. Flexible working hours
16. Good benefits
17. Right to parental leave
18. A good boss
19. To lead and develop others

What are your preferences in future choice of living environment?

Good work opportunities but poor living environment (A)

1. Only A
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
6. Only B

Good living environment but lack of opportunities (B)

If you had to choose between the following jobs, which would you choose:

A job that is meaningful and stimulating, but that you can never really take a break from (A)

1. Only A
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
6. Only B

A job with clear boundaries that you can leave when you go home (B)

How interested are you in the following?

1. Spending time with your family
2. Spending time with your friends
3. Reading and writing
4. Cultural activities
5. Animals
6. Music
7. Travel
8. Sports
9. Playing computer games
10. Surfing the Internet
11. Cars and motorcycles
12. Fashion
13. Watching TV
14. Movies
15. Finance
16. Food
17. Technology
18. Outdoor activities
19. Arts and crafts

20. Religious activities
21. Politics
22. Environment and sustainable development

Mobility. I would like to live...

1. most of my life in the town I live in now
2. most of my life somewhere else in my country
3. most of my life abroad
4. abroad for periods, but will always return home

What are your career strategies? To succeed in my life, I need to...

1. look good
2. take all the chances I get
3. get a good education and the right qualifications
4. constantly renew myself
5. get along with other people
6. work hard
7. know the right people
8. live up to the expectations of others
9. find myself

What are you planning on achieving in the next 15 years? You can choose multiple options.

1. Starting a company
2. Earning a lot of money
3. Moving abroad
4. Completing a university degree or other postsecondary education
5. Completing a doctoral degree
6. Having children
7. Becoming a manager or team leader
8. Owning a house / flat
9. None of the above
10. Don't know

What are the reasons for getting an education? For me, the most important reasons to get an education are:

1. to earn more money
2. to get an interesting job
3. to develop myself
4. to make my family proud

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Critique sociale du savoir-être," *Éducation permanente*, no. 140, 1999. Since 2003, Mr. Sulzer has been contributing to research on average or poorly skilled young people's relations with businesses and the job market.

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