Chapter V

GENERATIONS

1. The term *generation* refers to specific groups of people with a major characteristic in common. A *generation of persons* (*or cohort*[1]) can relate to all the people born at a certain time, who pass through life experiencing changes at the same time, or refer to all persons at a particular stage of their lives at different times[2]. Generations can take the measure of a population's growth and structure: populations who would have children at a young age and live long could have many generations, say 5 or 6, who coexist, whereas populations who would have children late and die young could have few coexisting generations, and as few as 2. However, as early childbearing is generally found in populations with low life expectancy and later childbearing in populations with high life expectancy, the extremes are rarely found. It is societies with 3 to 4 coexisting generations that are commonplace.

2. Chapter V seeks less to be exhaustive with respect to social and related aspects of generations as than to elaborate a series of points regarding generations that have current relevance. The meaning of *generations* used here is best conveyed by the definition referring to different groups of persons who are of the same age at a particular time. Specifically, the time is the beginning of the twenty-first century and the different groups are (a) youth and young adults (the young), (b) the middle years (the working ages) and (c) the young and oldest old (the old). The chronological ages of these generations are, roughly, 15 to 29 years, 30 to 59 years, and 60 years and over, respectively.

The shared experience of a generation

3. It is probably a commonplace to point out that a generation is shaped by the common experience of its members, and that this influence is manifest at the various ages through which the generation lives. Generations that share their time of birth and life experience tend to acquire common characteristics as they move up through the age-sets of childhood, youth and adulthood, because they encounter collectively the innovations and events of their time, including access to schooling and education, exposure to the media and major occurrences, such as war or famine. As a result, as a birth generation passes through life, it creates its own profile at culturally important stages: in adolescence, later youth and young adulthood, in the working age years and then in older age. In a country where such

phenomena have been the subject of much study, such as the United States, for example, generations can be characterized on that basis. Accordingly, in the United States, the generation shaped by the experience of the Second World War became known as the "silent generation", whereas those who were young during the war, and were influenced by its impact on their elders were called the "lost generation". The more assertive children of the silent generation became known as the "me generation", which was followed, in turn, by an unpredictable "generation X". Today's "Y generation" is gaining a reputation for multiculturalism and for creating interesting fusions between many heritages.

4. Generational identities tend to be consolidated through long years spent together in age-based institutions: schools when young, workplaces when adult, rest and retirement places when older. It can be argued that age-graded institutions have been used structurally in industrialized societies as major pillars of its productivity to achieve, first, *economies of scale*, by grouping together individuals of like developmental mentality and functional capacity and, second, as a means to colonize time: resorting to age-based institutions has enabled societies to capture the working generation, commanding it for the central 8 hours of the day, on the 5 working days of the week for about 50 weeks of the year, relegating schools, families, the elderly, and communities to the peripheries of evening, weekend and vacation time. It remains to be seen, however, whether age-segmented institutions will be sustained into a post-industrial and ageing world.

5. Trends affecting generations and in turn being affected by their behaviour and their imprint on the world include fertility, mortality, health and housing, livelihood and work opportunities, savings and investments, national and international migration, to name a few. Virtually every socio-economic domain, as well as the environment and the world ecosystem, can be viewed through a generational lens.

Cultures of the contemporary young and the old generations

6. In recent decades, the young and the old have each become forces nationally and globally, for apparently different reasons. At first glance, their emerging strong profiles are in contradiction because the

world population is ageing. The increasingly distinguishable global culture of youth that has arisen today appears therefore somewhat paradoxical.

7.   However, the distinctive contemporary cultures of both the young and the old command attention to their needs, even if their demographic weights are shifting in opposing directions. As noted in chapter I, the proportion of the young is globally declining due to universal long-term fertility decline, whereas the proportion of the old has increased and is expected to increase even more sharply in the next five decades, not only because of lower fertility but also because of increased longevity at all ages and because of the ageing of large post-Second World War "baby-boom" generations.

8.   It is likely that social forces for individual valuation have worked in favour of the development of cultures of both the young and the old despite demographic shifts, so that the young project an especially powerful image, even though birth rates are declining and societies raise fewer children, while at the same time the sharpening image of the qualities and assets of the old serves to draw attention to the needs of a fast-growing elderly population. In this regard, the very large generations of children born in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s probably fostered and facilitated the strengthened image of the young, which in turn established a precedent for the generations that began to age in those decades and helped them to strengthen their own image by example.

Coexistence of generations and multigenerational residence: opposing trends

9.   Another seeming paradox is raised by the demographic and social trends relating to multigenerational co-residence. Today, when longevity makes the co-residence of generations possible – the survival of both children and of older people assures more individuals of co-existing with the generations preceding and following them – multigenerational residence is declining, probably due to social and economic mobility, urbanization, international migration and globalization.

10.   Another factor favouring co-residence is that the mere reduction in the size of arriving generations into the home (desired family size has declined) makes multigenerational co-residence feasible on a practical level because an increased housing surface is not necessarily required.

11.   However, desire, interest in and commitment to multigenerational living is clearly waning. Worldwide, household size is declining as a consequence, albeit at quite different levels, depending on the structure of the

family and the fertility of the society. Again, the social trends in individual valuation, accompanying industrialization, globalization, and new lifestyle options have catalysed this phenomenon that is occurring

worldwide, although at varying rates in more and less developed economies, and for different family structures, as well as differentially for female and male-headed households.

12.   Multigenerational family living continues in some parts of the world, even as the rise in single-person households supports the prospect that it will surpass the proportion of nuclear family households in others. One determining factor is urbanization. By 2015, half the world's population is projected to be living in cities. Many newly urbanized people maintain contact with their villages of origin, but a rural-urban move is often the first and irreversible step in the cessation of multigenerational residence: urban living quarters are limited and older generations rarely accompany working generations. In turn, the fewer urban-born children of the next generation – urban fertility is almost invariably lower than rural fertility – move away as they pursue their own opportunities.

13.   New lifestyles have brought about their own form of household growth, however, and we now see an interesting shift in the pattern of expansion of families. Whereas multigenerational or vertical co-residence is declining, in some societies *horizontal* multigenerational co-residence is growing because of the creation of blended families that bring together the children of two marriages, and sometimes more, on either a permanent or regular part-time basis. In countries with an increased incidence of divorce and remarriage, these changes are producing another unusual effect in the inverted family pyramid, in which the single child possesses possibly three or more natural and step-parents and more than four grandparents.

14.   The inverted pyramid is also occurring in China, where traditional family structure has been altered by the one-child policy, at least in urban areas, where it has been most implemented.   It is anticipated that grandparents will play an increasingly important role in the next generation, when aunts, uncles and cousins would no longer exist: in effect the vertical family in China may eventually replace the horizontal family to a large degree. In societies where divorce rates have increased and single parenthood has accordingly also increased, grandparents similarly play a more important role, even at a distance, and families tend to be more vertical than horizontal. At the other extreme, the practice of polygamy in sub-Saharan Africa is eroding little, and although co-residence of spouses is still the rule rather than the exception in polygamous societies, the family structure in this situation tends to grow

horizontally rather than vertically, thereby involving directly fewer rather than more generations. In sum, family forms display a variety of generational configurations worldwide.

Possible trends associated with post-industrial development

15.   It is possible that post-industrial development, with the growing trend – and potential for – home-based links to the workplace, as well as renewed family values, may lead to new forms of multigenerational residence. In a sense, these trends are a culmination of individual valuation that comes to justify commitment to the chosen priorities of the individual, including the personal relationships that the individual chooses. Such social change can, paradoxically, bring the individual to value family relationships based on choice rather than on traditional ties of responsibility, allowing a renewed commitment to the family on a different value basis.

16.   Distance study and work made possible by computer technologies are beginning to draw some urban dwellers back to the more age-integrated rural villages, in less developed as well as more developed societies. Although this phenomenon is still barely visible against the major trends, it has the potential to increase because it introduces new options, and can therefore play a role in altering current trends in mobility patterns.

17.   In a sense, it is reasonable to speculate that the culmination of individual valuation, along with the opportunities provided by globalization of the economy, could contribute to the altered valuation of work that is already under way. The notion of working to live rather than living to work and a new emphasis on leisure values, altered work schedules and distance work through electronic means all point to the possibility of a new recentring of life in the home and in a chosen geographical place, rather than at the place of work. This can reopen opportunities for family living patterns that are multigenerational, and for reduced mobility away from one's place of origin in search of work.

18.   Globalization has allowed also the movement of capital to the location of labour, which can result in less disruption of multigenerational living patterns, in particular in less developed countries. It is likely that this has had more effect on female labour than on male labour.

The middle generations

19.   Beyond their relations within the family, generations relate in particular patterns in the broader arenas of community, country and world. For the most part, it is the generations in the middle who manage these spheres, as well as the extraordinary transformations occurring within and between them, at the same time that they are managing societies at large, and consequently, the dependent old and young within their societies. The young and old generations often have a common dependency on the middle generations, because the working generation is the economic driving force, and occupies the associated positions of power in industry, politics and government.

20.   Societies do not have a uniform view of the dependent young and old generations, and their world view of youth and old age can alter the mandate with which the middle working generations manage society. In gerontocratic societies, the elderly maintain power, either implicitly through the reverence they command, or by shadow or even direct management of the society, and thereby by commanding the working-age generations. In these societies, youth *per se* tends not to be especially valued, although children can be highly valued, and all aspire to the advantages that ageing proffers. In non-gerontocratic societies, the elderly tend to be pushed aside. In extreme cases, the elderly will be abandoned and neglected; even explicit withdrawal of resources from the elderly can be sanctioned in extreme cases. Youth is not necessarily revered in such societies, but more usually the middle working generations centralize power, wealth and governance. Where youth is revered, however, old age generally is not.

21.   The fundamental nature of society in this regard has the potential to influence the view of the young and the old as vulnerable and dependent, or even as disadvantaged and "at risk"[3]. Seeing older or younger generations as vulnerable and dependent can elicit compensatory remedial measures while still maintaining existing systems and infrastructures.

22.   The generation most at risk and that most easily and uncontroversially elicits the perception of dependency and vulnerability is that of children. Children's needs are met almost entirely by other generations. Their innate physical and psychosocial potential is activated and cultivated in significant ways for life by early contact with others. The first 3 to 6 years of life, in particular, are agreed to require a favourable intergenerational context of family and community, backed by national policies. Where the social fabric is seriously weakened, childhood and even survival can be gravely jeopardized, in extreme cases through physical neglect, physical and sexual abuse, abandonment to the street, abuse in bonded slave labour, regimentation in impersonal institutions or manipulation as child soldiers.

23.   The perception of the situation of youth is less clear cut. To some, youth are currently more at risk than in earlier periods due to a number of external characteristics of society. To others, youth is a changing stage of life that has always required special attention, and this stage of life currently requires more attention because it has grown to occupy a larger portion of the lifespan and has come to raise more expectations with regard to a successful outcome and a successful passage into adult working life.

24.   Today's young population is the largest ever, made up at children of the parents born during the high fertility that characterized all developing countries until 1970 and children born in the less developed and the least developed countries, where fertility is still high, although declining. The vast majority of young aged 15 to 29 years live in the less developed economies and are moving into adulthood, forming a "workforce bulge" which, *if* well informed and skilled, will constitute a "demographic opportunity" for these countries.

25.   In many traditions, youth has been defined merely as the period of transition from childhood to adult life[4], being neither childhood nor adulthood. In the increasingly complex world today, the personal development paths for young women and men have become increasingly difficult to identify. Accordingly, the prolonged youth phase that has resulted is regarded by some as a recent "invention" that continues to evolve, and by some others, notably behavioural and social science researchers, as an independent stage of life, with several distinct characteristics and based on a lengthening and increasingly complex preparation for entry into social and economic life outside the home. As circumstances have changed since their parents were socialized into adulthood, the path for the young appears less mapped and young people are faced with more choices, often needing to negotiate their way rather than follow a direct path into meaningful adulthood.[5]

26.   In the economies in transition, for example, the formerly clearly defined route to the adult world is now eroded and major life transitions have been disconnected from each other.[6] Completing education, entering the world of work, starting a family, having children and setting up ones own home no longer come in order but appear to arise for structural reasons as much as they are based on the preferences of the young. Similarly, the young in less developed societies appear to be systematically faced with the choice of whether to stay in rural areas[7] or in their home country to search for significantly better opportunities in cities or overseas.

27.   The prolonged phase of youth has been cited to justify calls for fuller participation of young people in all aspects of society, thereby raising their profile. The middle working generations are increasingly aware that the behavioural patterns established during youth will influence their entire lifespan and thereby have implications for the old age of the middle generations, when the youth have acquired power after them.

28.   In ways similar to children, youth can be easily vulnerable to marginalization and at risk when socio-economic and political systems change or collapse. Even when the structure of society is intact, unemployment can raise their vulnerability. Unemployment prevents young persons from acquiring a sense of belonging in the world of work and influences their attaining responsible adult life and a place in the mainstream of society. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), an estimated 60 million young are unemployed around the world,[8] and the situation is worst for young women, the young with disabilities and young members of ethnic, racial and religious minorities.

29.   Even in the more developed countries, youth unemployment is systematically greater than for the middle generation. In the 15 European Union countries, unemployment of 15 to 24 year olds was over 21 per cent in 1998, twice the level for adults. In the transition economies, youth unemployment is more severe: in the 18 countries of central and eastern Europe and of the Commonwealth of Independent States, unemployment was virtually 30 per cent in 1998. Existing data for less developed countries indicate that youth unemployment is also much higher than for the middle generation: in the Asia and Pacific region, youth unemployment is estimated to be four times average unemployment.[9]

30.   Some argue that youth unemployment is a temporary phenomenon and comprises a part of growing up and the overall transition from school to work. Unemployment becomes a social problem, however, when the search for the first job extends to months or years. The consequences can influence the entire lifespan. Societies lose valuable output and production – not to mention an important tax base – and the young can become seriously disillusioned. Preparation for the productive middle years is delayed and can even go totally astray. Unemployed or underemployed youth who work in professions where their skills are not utilized or who had perceived the promise of a different lifestyle[10], or again who were not prepared for the realities of the labour market, are vulnerable to risks and to establishing alternative patterns to their lives that thwart or permanently preclude entry into working adult life.

31.   Other consequences of a bad start are enduring marginal or short-term and irregular employment, vulnerability to persistently exploitative work situations, permanent relegation to the informal sector and failure

to acquire experience in labour organization, including access to the culture of collective bargaining. Societies eventually suffer from this situation, as the young grow to be alienated from or fail to enter traditional structures and institutions, and thereby lose faith in them.

32.   The young who are unintegrated into society may remain marginalized when exposed to risky alternative lifestyles, or may seek to express their political concerns outside established frameworks and through other means than voting and civil participation in society. Disillusionment can make the young question the capacity for real change in their societies through established means. An underclass of young has the potential to create conditions for alternative satisfactions, such as self-selected, age-graded youth gangs that can offer, through delinquent as much as other means, parallel rewards of easy money, power, position, prestige and a sense of belonging. The integration and participation of the young in decision-making in the range of society's established structures and institutions may, however, be critical for societies to sustain a deep and formal democratic process.

33.   In sum, there has been a tendency in recent decades to address youth issues as "a youth problem" rather than to focus on the potential and promise of the young and the asset that they represent for society. Such perceptions have not, however, had uniformly negative consequences. Characterization of the needs and difficulties of the young have created some notable benefits.

34.   The promise of a period of adolescence has been a particular boon for girls who, for most of history, have moved swiftly from childhood to childbearing, and certainly more so than boys[11]. Today, a rapid transition may still be triggered by unwanted pregnancy, which can have physically and/or socially dire consequences for the girl. In some parts of the world, a rapid transition is still hastened through the institution of early marriage in traditional societies. Although the custom has come about in part to protect the girl as well as to protect society, it has the effect of narrowing life options early in favour of reproduction. As many as 15 million girls aged 15 to 19 currently give birth every year and they account for 10 per cent of all babies born worldwide.[12]

35.   In extreme case, signs of distress due to lack of integration and alienation among youth are manifest in drug and alcohol abuse, in polarized attitudes of xenophobia and racism and in a range of aggressive and violent behaviours including rape, homicide and suicide. Aside from their possible origin in poverty and social disintegration, delinquent behaviours, at least in boys, may be in part due to models of masculinity that emphasize qualities no longer so useful in a psychologically complex world, such as physical strength and "power *over*", rather than mental acuity and relational skills.[13]   Whereas work and technical skills may be imparted with economies of scale through school systems, life skills that include "emotional intelligence" require, by contrast, more copious investments of time in quality relationships by both the older and the young generations.

A world striving for intergenerational solidarity cohesion and equity

36.   The experience of any age group is common to all human beings who survive to live it. This assurance of a shared experience probably serves both to polarize and draw together the generations, but the knowledge of a shared destiny is very compelling to the social agenda of most societies. One can observe an implicit striving worldwide for intergenerational solidarity, whereby societies would replicate the family solidarity of parents to their children and to their own parents. The cultural message of most societies is that the young can learn from and need the experience of the older generations. Today, when parents in the middle generation work away from the home more than ever before and can provide less time and guidance to their children, the cultural message of intergenerational solidarity can take on new meanings.

37.   In recent years, the United Nations has promoted the ideal of a *society for all* as a society in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play[14].   The organization has also recognized that a *society for all* is one that adjusts its structures and functioning, as well as its policies and plans, to the needs and capabilities of all, thereby releasing the potential of all, for the benefit of all.[15] Accordingly, a generational dimension was added to the concept in the theme used in 1999 for the *International Year: Towards a society for all ages,* and during the Year, this theme stimulated enquiry into the multigenerational nature of societies.

38.   Older and young generations have mingled daily throughout history, sharing affection, services and goods within multigenerational communities. Such communities continue to thrive among indigenous peoples and within villages, where structures allowed for an easy daily encounter between the generations, one that facilitated a psychologically enriching *life-preview* by the young (learning how older generations negotiated the life changes that still face them) and a *life-review* by the old as they re-experienced their own past life in observing the young.

39.   Today's young tend to employ new communications technologies to amplify their presence.

At the same time, older groups are capitalizing on capabilities developed through an earlier generation of technologies – mainly organizational methods – that have helped to give rise to thousands of associations or interest groups worldwide. Employing organizational skills, today's generation aged 60 and more is forging and strengthening many national and global institutions. Older persons' organizations have grown to resemble, in their new national and global context, the counseling and advisory roles of councils of elders in multigenerational villages. Though many older persons' organizations in the developing countries are small, many are connected to major global networks.[16]

40. The institution of retirement, first introduced over 100 years ago in Germany and now established worldwide to varying degrees, has allowed the creative energy of a pool of skilled and experienced older persons to arise. An important segment of retired persons have income and time to spare, even in developing countries, for example among government employees. At the same time as the pool of retirees has been expanding worldwide, life expectancy has increased (see chap. I) and the proportion of elderly is currently growing to the point where the proportion of young to old is expected to decline from 4:1 to 1:1 by the middle of the twenty-first century. Longevity on this scale is having two major impacts on contemporary societies: it is stimulating the invention of major new biotechnologies and it is stimulating the emergence of caring institutions and, perhaps, of new intergenerational values.

41. Old-age dependency raises issues about family solidarity, care for caregivers, gender equality, work arrangements, urban and building design, day and institutional care facilities and preclusion of abuse, among others. The rapidly changing dependency ratio has also sparked an intense debate, especially in the more developed regions, about the sustainability of financing retirement and income support for older groups. In contrast with the United States, other industrialized countries have not experienced as heated an intergenerational debate despite more pressing conditions. Germany, for example, has reasons for such a debate: a very low birth rate and relatively high life expectancy, a generous social security system, a pattern of earlier retirement, which increases the ratio of retirees to the working population, and a low female labour force participation, resulting in a lower tax base.

42. In other countries, such as Japan, a contentious intergenerational debate has been avoided but may be replaced by a debate that focuses on other values and the role of women. Typically, married women have stayed at home raising children with little help, later devoting their middle age years to caring for their husband's parents as well. The custom is rooted deeply in Japanese history, and today about 60 per cent of older persons still live with middle-aged children or other relatives. With women's increasing participation in the formal workforce and expanding choices on many other fronts, a new mix of caring arrangements is likely to emerge.

43. A positive view of ageing could be considered a prerequisite for ensuring multigenerational cohesion in society. Intergenerational ties and obligations are at the heart of every society, at whatever stage of development. These ties may be seen in different manifestations, from the intergenerational pact between workers and retirees, which forms the basis of many public pension systems, to the family, where most if not all of the care for older persons is still provided the world over.

44. Certain trends, however, unmistakably work against intergenerational cohesion. Over the years, images of ageing, primarily in developed countries, have tended to portray older persons as a growing population group with escalating needs, including increased medical care. While health care understandably looms large in the lives of older persons, a persistent focus on this issue in the wider discourse can maintain the perception that older persons are always vulnerable and frail. Furthermore, it has fostered an image of a population with whom no one, including older persons themselves, wants to identify. Public images of older persons as individuals having significant capabilities and contributions to make are not rooted in the public way of thinking. Signs of change are evident, however, as older persons themselves have become more active and visible in both discourse and society.

45. How ageing is portrayed in the wider cultural landscape can affect an entire generation of youth. Those who observe elders as living respected and productive lives may be more inclined to make choices that favour postponing immediate gratification for fulfilment downstream. When ageing is perceived in negative terms, the young may feel that there are no rewards that come with age and behave in ways to negatively influence their future, as well as the future of their families and communities. Rapid social and technological change is affecting roles as well as trends in the relations between generations. The tradition of passing on values, knowledge and responsibility to the next generation, for example, is not as evident as it once was, as younger generations tend to acquire many values from their peers.

46. Also, changing economic realities and migration, particularly from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, have to some degree dislocated and strained bedrock intergenerational relationships. Rules that balance interdependence between the generations ensure the place of older persons in their communities. Economic deficits and resource allocation issues in developed countries have sometimes pitted generations against each other in arguments for an "equitable" distribution of resources. In addition, the increased amount of time spent in the workplace by both men and women has challenged the traditional capacity of the family to provide the totality of care for all its members in the home.

47. At the same time, the most intimate intergenerational contact is recognized globally to be responsibility for children, and societies globally strive to maintain the privileged position of this intergenerational charge. Many children born into materially poor conditions in less developed countries experience rich emotional bonding within their families

and kin networks, where these have remained intact. Conversely, children in more developed countries may be judged to experience insufficient emotional support, where parents are under time pressure and societies are severely segmented into age-graded institutions.

48. The challenge to policy-makers is to preserve existing intergenerational patterns of social exchange so that older persons can maintain their role in the family, the community and society at large. In this context, as in many others, it is the middle generation that holds the reins of decision-making for families and for communities at large, bearing responsibility for the destiny of the generations of young and older dependants. International instruments, including those pertaining to children, youth and ageing, charge these decision makers with ensuring an equitable division of resources within and between the generations. In this exercise, the middle generation needs to set aside its most personal needs and strive for intergenerational equity, as if blind to which generation it currently – and only currently – occupies, and generation-neutral with respect to the decisions it makes[17]. Policy makers will need to avoid transmitting misperceptions about the implications of population ageing, which lead to a negative image of intergenerational relationships, as well as to "problem" images of the young. A better understanding of the potential contribution of the young, which is often neglected, and the contributions that older persons make to society will also serve to strengthen multigenerational ties. Governments will need to strive to attain age neutrality in their policies

and to attain a just degree of equality, privilege and flexibility in the distribution of national and global resources.

NOTES

[1] Cohort refers to a group of persons with a common statistical characteristic e.g., age cohort, racial cohort, gender cohort.

[2] In particular, Erik Eriksson discusses a stage of life when the older person begins to find satisfaction in investing in and giving guidance to younger members of the family and society, as a means to invest in his or her continuing personal growth, which he terms "Generativity" (see Eriksson, 1971).

[3] See chapter XIII/XIV on Reducing vulnerability and Enhancing social protection for a further discussion on these differences.

[4] UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Review of the Youth Situation, Policies and Programmes in Asia and the Pacific, UN 1997, p.7.

[5] Council of Europe; *European Youth Trends 1998, p. 3,* article available at http//wwwcoe.fr/youth.

[6] With the sudden structural change in formerly centrally planned economies, an extensive network of youth associations was lost. These associations thrived during the socialist era and included the 'pioneers', numerous musical and artistic associations, and a variety of sports clubs, libraries, youth theatres and summer camps. Their role in the socialization of children and teenagers, in ameliorating their physical conditions and health status, and in containing youth crime and deviance was appreciable, even thought they were often based on an goal of ideological guidance and indoctrination. Budgetary problems and political changes have led to the dismantling or weakening of these youth organizations and to the exposure of youth to alternative lifestyles - including alcohol and drug abuse, and crime – associated with the motivation for material gain, and deriving from income disparities, deteriorating employment and distressed income situations. See also Kovatcheva, Siyka; Life Strategies of Young People in Post-Communist Transition.

[7] Rural life does not always indicate isolation. In India, for example, there are 660 million T.V. viewers in rural areas alone, and they make up 51 per cent of all viewers in the country.

[8] *ILO; Youth and Employment, World* Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth WCMRY/1998/9, *p. 2, 1998.*

[9] *ESCAP, Review of the Youth Situation, Policies and Programmes in Asia and the Pacific, p. 3 2,* Bangkok, *1997.*

[10] The reality of life in less developed regions may be in stark contrast with life as it is "advertised' worldwide through the media, including films, television, the internet and radio, that are once windows into other worlds to which the deprived have increasing access, but that can accentuate their sense of exclusion and dispossession, and vehicles for an emerging global youth culture. A global youth culture appears to be emerging in within the broader impacts of globalization, at the same time as a resurgence in traditional national cultures. Young people worldwide are able, if they chose, to enjoy the same music, watch the same TV-shows, admire the same athletes and wear the same kind of clothes. At the same time, the global media content is increasingly multi-cultural – African art and film, Latin American music and literature as well as Asia meditation practices, martial arts and foods. The move towards the modern and the universal has been paralleled by a trend towards recognition and

celebration of local identity, roots and community values, particularly among youth, as well as fusions that include the local and global, as well as the traditional and modern. Contradictions include spreading ideals of democratic pluralism with a rise in racist, nationalistic and religious extremism. The portrayal of violence as a rewarding way of acting, with positive results for the perpetrator, is of special concern (even if it cannot be precisely measured).. According to a US National Television Violence Study quoted in a UNESCO report, there are around 10 acts of violence per hour of average programming. An international study carried out by UNESCO in cooperation with the World Organization of the Scout Movement in 23 countries around the world revealed that 12-year-olds with access to television spend an average of 3 hours per day in front of the screen. This is far more time than spent on homework, helping the family, playing outside, being with friends or reading.

[11] Boys traditionally have been allotted longer transitions from childhood to adulthood. Among the Samburu people of Kenya, for example, adolescent males following the traditional path spend a period of time living in the bush apart from society where they are allowed "to be unruly in behavior and to use violence to settle disputes. In contrast, elders are associated with settlements and social order. They are expected to instruct their juniors in proper behavior and to resolve conflicts and disputes through discussion and moral power of blessing and curse. Thus, the Samburu age-set system establishes an opposition between moran (warriors) and elders.   Moran have physical ascendancy, elders moral ascendancy." (Albert , Steven M. and Maria G. Cattell: Old Age in a Global Perspective. New York: G.K.Hall and Co.).

[12] State of the World's children 2001, UNICEF.

[13] For a discussion on masculinities, see Tough Guise in Guides section of www.mediaed.org).

[14] Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, World Summit for Social Development, March 1995.

[15] Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Conceptual framework of a programme for the preparation and observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999"; document A/50/114 of 22 March 1995.

[16] .One federation of 44 national associations commonly known by its French acronym FIAPA has 140 million individual members. Another, known by its English acronym AARP has over 34 million members. Help Age International, the International Federation on Ageing, and the Creative Connections of the 'NGO Committee on Ageing' based at United Nations headquarters have all been reaching out to communities worldwide and interacting with organizations of youth, women, peace, environmental protection and human rights. The convening of a World Conference of Kings, Queens, Traditional Chiefs and Religious Leaders on Conflict Prevention (in Cotonou, Benin in pensioners' parties throughout Europe provides another example of the re-emergence of old age power; these parties have been established in August 1999) is just one illustration of the re-emergence of old age power in a new global settings. At a national level, the rise of Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Portugal, and a national pensioners' convention in the UK, with pensioner representatives elected to the Dutch and Italian parliaments.   Efforts towards continuing self-development with an inter-generational dimension are provided by the Elder Hostels in North America and the Universities of the Third Age in Europe (which have, in places, begun to transmute into Universities of the Three Ages). Both the Hostels and the U3A sponsor an increasingly wide range of studies and events for older persons incorporating outreach to children and youth.

[17] The "veil of ignorance" proposed by Rawls for ethical debate is appropriate here (see John Rawls, "A Theory of Justice", Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).