

CONTENTS:

Preface.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1. Summary of Part I	5
1.2. Participating Researchers and their Backgrounds	6
1.3. Research Aims	8
1.4. Methodological and Structural Characteristics	10
1.5. Characteristics of Research Methods and Data from Each of the Countries Involved	12
1.5.1. Estonian Data	12
1.5.2. Finnish Data	14
1.5.3. German Data	15
1.5.4. Italian Data	17
1.5.5. Swedish Data	19
1.6. Concluding Remarks	19
2. DESIGN OF THE SECOND PART OF THE STUDY	21
2.1. Comparative Research	21
2.2. Data Sets Used	22
2.3. Methodological Problems	23
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	25
3.1. Group Identity	25
3.1.1. Ethnic Identity	25
3.1.2. Identity and Identity Work	26
3.1.3. Stereotypes and Prejudices	27
3.1.4. Ethnocentrism and Group Solidarity	29
3.2. Collective Memory	30
3.2.1. Family Memory	30
3.2.2. Gratitude as Sociological Concept and its Affinities with Collective Memory	37
4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS	40
4.1. Attitudes and Expectations	40
4.1.1. Personal Life After 40 Years	40
4.1.2. Interest in Politics – Meaning of Religion	41
4.1.3. Life in Own Country / Life in Europe After 40 Years	41
4.2. Interest in Key Personal or Social Concerns	42
4.2.1. Various Personal Interests	42
4.2.2. Interest in Controversial Issues	44
4.2.3. Interest in Geographical Background	45
4.2.4. Interest in Changing (Eastern) Europe	45
4.2.5. Interest in European Integration	46
4.3. Relevant Findings	47

4.4. Attitudes and Cultural Identity	48
4.4.1. Introduction	48
4.4.2. Contentment in Life	48
4.4.3. The Meaning of and Expectations Concerning the European Union	49
4.4.4. Priorities in Life, Attitudes towards Elderly People, and Hopes for Children	50
4.4.5. Religious Affiliation	52
4.4.6. Intolerance Towards Different Types of People and Attitudes Towards Foreigners ..	52
4.4.7. Leisure-time Activities	54
4.5. General Conclusions	54
5. CASE STUDIES	55
5.1. Finnish Majority-Swedish Minority Young People	55
5.1.1. Fighting in the Boys' Culture	55
5.1.2. No Conflicts in a (More Segregated) Rural Area	55
5.1.3. Fights in Urban Areas	56
5.1.4. Language – An Important Basis for Categorization	60
5.2. Calabrian Rural Young People	61
5.2.1. Between Tradition and Modernity	61
5.2.2. The Importance of Family	62
5.3. Ethnic Dimensions of Estonian Rural Young People	66
5.3.1. Ethnic Background	66
5.3.2. Ethnic Identity of Native and Non-native young People	71
5.3.3. Professional and Educational Status	73
5.3.4. Material Conditions	74
5.3.5. Identity within Estonian- and Russian-speaking Schools	76
5.3.6. Changes in the Patterns of Communicating and Socializing	80
5.3.7. Individual Aspirations within Estonian and Russian Schools	81
5.3.8. Attitudes Towards the New Social and Political Order	83
5.3.9. Some Conclusions	89
5.4. Urban – Rural Differences in Estonia	92
5.4.1. Societal Development	92
5.4.2. Motivational Bases for Migrating or Remaining Rural	96
5.4.3. Rural- Urban Infrastructure	101
5.4.4. Centre – Periphery Differentiation	110
5.4.5. Ethnic and Regional Differentiation	112
5.4.6. Urban - Rural Differences	113
5.4.7. Some Conclusions	114
6. CONCLUSIONS	116

7. SUMMARY	123
References	12
9	

Preface

The ultimate object of this research project is to investigate the situation of young Europeans in rural areas, and to provide new perspectives concerning their living conditions. Our research findings will be applied in the youth policy and practical youth work of the participating rural areas. The results of this study are also intended to provide information for local, national and European Union youth policy regarding the various concerns of our continent's rural young people, and to encourage initiatives for the betterment of their futures.

This second volume of the Comparative Study of Living Conditions and Participation of Rural Young People in Changing Europe (RYPE Report, Part II) has been carried out by our network partners in Vasa (Finland), Umeå (Sweden), Brandenburg (Germany), Calabria (Italy) and Tartu (Estonia). The results of the first part of this study were reported in RYPE Report, Part I (on internet at <http://www.alli.fi/nuorisotutkimus/rype/>).

During the process of doing research work together over the past two years, the network partners have gathered for seminars five times. Our initial seminar on methodology was held in Helsinki on August 13 - 15, 1997, where we discussed the theoretical and practical implications of the multi-disciplinary framework we intended to use. The next seminar was arranged in Calabria on the topic, "Young Europeans in Rural Areas," where we discussed the results of secondary analysis. At this point a comparative research design was approved for the second part of the project. Our next seminar was in Munich on September 11 - 13, 1998, with discussions centring on the theoretical frameworks and methods of qualitative analysis which had been used in ethnographic studies which had previously been carried out

in each of the respective countries. Further seminars in Helsinki on December 5 - 7, 1998 and February 26 - 28, 1999 were used to discuss the findings of the qualitative portion of our project. RYPE Reports I and II are based on drafts of the research papers which the partners presented and discussed together at these seminars.

Part II here not only provides information on the living conditions and participation of rural young people in five European countries, but also considers the importance of ethnic group-identity for rural young people. These young Europeans, from Southern Italy to Northern Finland and Sweden, and those from post-socialist Estonia and Eastern Germany, are living with a process of political and economic shift, which can be seen in their attitudes and values.

In our joint-research we have encountered not only methodological problems of comparative research but also theoretical and conceptual difficulties which had to be solved. I am most grateful for the understanding and intensive combined efforts of our research partners, which have served as the basis for this report. As co-ordinator and editor of this endeavour I wish to thank all of my research partners very warmly. I also wish to thank Directorate-General XXII of the European Commission for supporting us through our being included in Action E.II, Youth research. We hope that our contributions to the Youth for Europe programme will prove to have been a good investment, and we hope that our experience as a research team will be of further use to you in the future. Further thanks are due to David Huisjen for his linguistic help and to Marko Laitinen for “secretarial” help in finalising this volume.

Helsinki: March 20, 1999

Helena Helve

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Summary of Part I

The first part of our comparative study explored the nature of rural communities, the problems facing young people, and the range of approaches used in working with these young people in five European countries. The report included the statistical and survey data on the living conditions and participation of rural young citizens of Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy and Sweden, both from pre-existing studies in this field and from on-going research projects. This data referred to the living standards, housing, basic education, vocational training fields and programmes, job access, health, political and cultural participation, migration and demographic factors concerning young people from approximately 16 to 25 years old.

The first chapter of the Report for Part I introduced the aims, background and methodology of the project. In the next five chapters, an overview was presented of the situation of rural young people in each country.

The second chapter presented an overview of rural young people in Estonia, where social changes have been dramatic following the restoration of independence (1991). The main emphasis of this research was on ethnic differences and the new differentiation in the social and financial situations of Estonian young people.

The third chapter reviewed the living conditions, values and future expectations of Finnish rural young people living in the former county of Vasa on the west coast. Though active entrepreneurship is especially characteristic of this area, the region still suffers from high unemployment. The educational opportunities, employment situation, values and future expectations were examined in particular.

The fourth chapter introduced the Brandenburg area of former East Germany. Here the rapid transition from a socialist planning economy to a western market economy had led to massive unemployment and

many other social problems. Thus the focus here was on the educational and employment situation of young people, as well as measures to combat the unemployment.

The fifth chapter led us to Calabria, southern Italy. Calabria is one of the poorest areas in its country, with especially strong social contradictions. Family ties are strong, and social control of young people is very strict, particularly in rural villages. Besides these issues, one thing which is especially characteristic for this area is that nearly all relations between young people and social institutions involved a dimension of clientelism – the necessity of personal fiduciary relations.

The sixth chapter told about young people in Norrbotten and Västerbotten in the north of Sweden. Here the research was focused on the questions of youth unemployment and mobility patterns, as well as adolescents' attitudes towards their present living milieus.

The seventh chapter included an overview of rural young people's living conditions in these five countries. Some country-specific characters which had come out in this study were presented in the eighth chapter. The last chapter raised some further questions and perspectives concerning the urban–rural differences, social change and exclusion and employment.

The content of the first part of the report was the fruit of the joint labours of researchers from these five countries. This study report was intended to serve as a valuable information resource for those working in youth policy on the local, national and European levels.

1.2. Participating Researchers and their Backgrounds

The research themes of the partners in the RYPE project have focused on different aspects of the lives of young people. Dr. Walter Bien (Deutsches Jugendinstitut) has specialised in the study of issues relating to youth and the family. Professor Lothar Lappe (Deutsches Jugendinstitut) has focused on employment and labour markets for young people. Docent Dr. Fjalar Finnäs and researcher Sonja Norrgård (Åbo Akademi University) has their research emphasis on the living conditions of Swedish-speaking

young people in Finland. Researcher Pia Nyman-Kurkiala (Åbo Akademi University) has focused on the cultural identity of Finland's Swedish-speaking young people. Dr. Peter Waara (University of Umeå), conversely, has researched the cultural identity of Finnish-speaking young people in rural Sweden. Docent Dr. Helve (University of Helsinki) has made research on the attitudes, values and changing world views of Finnish young people as her speciality. Professor Dr. Carmen Leccardi and researcher Walter Greco (University of Milan) have recently studied the living conditions of Italian young people and especially youth cultures and cultural politics. Dr. Jüri Saarniit and professor Dr. Paul Kenkmann (University of Tartu) have studied changes in the value orientations of Estonian young people.

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1.3. Research Aims

The basic aim of the project has been defined as analysing the living conditions and participation of young people in various European countries based on existing data. The results of RYPE, Part I show

that there is both valid empirical data to be analysed and a set of problems common to the rural youth of different European countries worth analysing on the basis of the data currently available.

The work we have done so far has enabled us to proceed to the next step of the comparative project, which we see as building up generalisations about the overall situation of rural young people, based on:

- 1) a common definition of the dimensions of the situation of rural young people which we want to analyse;
- 2) a co-ordinated approach to the empirical data we are using in analysing of the situation of young people in each country;
- 3) a common methodology for building up the generalisations that we want to make as the result of the analysis.

We believe that during our previous discussions and the work on Part I of this Report we have found common language concerning items 1) and 2). The materials presented in the report show that the overall methodological approach we have applied while working on the project has proved to be adequate for analysing the situation of the European rural youth. We have considered an approach to the building of an international comparative survey, but the variety of ways in which “rural youth” was defined at the seminars we have held during the process of the study has shown us that giving an overall formal definition would not be appropriate.

It is also clear now that the problems on which we concentrated in our research are really relevant to the social policy of the European countries represented in our project.

At our seminars in Helsinki (August 13–15, 1997) in Calabria (February 13–15, 1998) in München (September 11-13, 1998) and again in Helsinki (December 5-7, 1998 and February 26-28, 1999), and while writing the Report, we have familiarised ourselves with the empirical data which each of us has at our disposal. We see that in each country the traditions of empirical research in the area of rural youth are somewhat different, and the data sets of every research team are structured somewhat differently. We are still, however, able to cover the important dimensions of the situation of the rural young people in the participating countries / regions.

1.4. Methodological and Structural Characteristics

The basic structure of the project is as follows:

1. We have a specific group of countries / regions. As was shown in Part 1 of the Report, we have a set of areas that depict the full spectrum of the varying socio-cultural conditions in rural Europe, from the North of Sweden to the South of Italy, including very different economic conditions – both established market economies and former socialist countries. At the same time it needs to be clarified to what extent these regions represent the social and political structure of their respective countries. There are, for example, different parameters for development and its connections with the urban-rural dimension in West and East Germany.
2. In our study we have set an age limit of 16 to 25. It is obvious that the operational definition for the category of “young people” is different for different countries, and therefore it is inevitable that the age definition we are using is not fully identical with those used in the existing data sets from the participating countries. Therefore, we need to clarify and differentiate the identity of those in the category of “rural youth” as used in the various data sets available to the participants in this project.
3. In Part I of our report, we described the situation of rural young people in each country in terms of the following common dimensions:
 - *living standards*
 - *housing*
 - *schooling*
 - *training possibilities and systems*
 - *work access*
 - *health*
 - *political participation*
 - *cultural participation*
 - *migration*

- *demographic issues (family formation, childbearing, etc.)*
- *attitudes and future orientations*
- *marginalisation and social exclusion.*

4. There were also country-specific issues, not relevant to the project group as a whole, brought out in the report because of their essential role in the socio-cultural specifics (e.g., the ethnic dimension) or the recent socio-political history (e.g., the post-communist transition to a market economy) of these countries.

5. Beyond all this, we need to make it clear precisely what sort of empirical data sets are usable in each country / region to describe the situation of its young people. It inevitably comes out here that there are some dimensions of young people's situations in some countries that cannot be covered because of the lack of representative data (e.g., we currently have no data about the cultural participation of Estonian rural young people and family formation in the Estonian countryside). We put together a reference-table to clarify these issues at our first seminar in Helsinki (see RYPE Interim Report 1). In our consideration of the basic grounds for empirical analysis, a limitedness or total absence of data regarding some of the parameters listed above was naturally one determining factor for the dimensions of the field.

6. Having set these basic dimensions, we have tried to establish empirical references for as many of the above dimensions as we could in each country. We are interested in the *dynamics* of the situation of rural young people: changes that are going on as a reflection of the overall processes of social development. We have utilised two methodologies and levels of comparative study:
 - The RYPE Report, Part I represents *quantitative comparison* at the national or regional level. This is a typical variant of comparative research (as was mentioned in the methodology section of Part I). This was the most adequate way of building up a comparison of conditions based on what we had to work with.

- Here, in RYPE Report, Part II, we are at the other end of the methodological spectrum: a comparison on the level of *qualitative data*. We try to use both methods in the comparison of empirical generalisations.

1.5. Characteristics of Research Methods and Data from each of the Countries Involved

1.5.1. Estonian Data

In Estonia we have data from three research projects:

1. The Study of Adult Education in Estonia conducted in 1997 by the Institute of International and Social Studies of the Tallinn Pedagogical University and the Department of Sociology of the University of Tartu, commissioned by the Estonian Statistical Office. The national random sample included about 500 persons between 20 and 25 years old.
2. The study of the living conditions of the Estonian population which was conducted in 1994 as part of the NORBALT Living Conditions Project. This study was carried out in Estonia by the Statistical Office, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Norwegian Centre of Social Research (FAFO) with the Department of Sociology of the University of Tartu also participating. Empirical data was collected from a representative sample of the Estonian population. One of the basic categories of analysis in the framework of this project was young people from 18 to 24 years old (N=550). Data about the living conditions was collected for households, and all other data on the individual level.
3. Studies of living conditions, participation and attitudes of seniors in Estonian primary and secondary schools carried out in co-operation between the Estonian Ministry of Education, youth departments of Estonian counties and the Department of Sociology of the University of Tartu according to analogous programs in 1992 and in 1996-98. The predominant age of respondents was from 14 to 15 (primary school seniors) and from 17 to 18 years old (secondary school seniors). The representative sample of the first study embraced about 1,600 pupils and the second study embraced 8,100 pupils. This data was used to a large extent in the Estonian section of Part I of our Report. The studies fo-

cused on adult education and living conditions have many common or comparable indicators; the samples are also based on comparable approaches. A joint list of empirical indicators shows which empirical indicators described the basic dimensions of the situation of the Estonian rural young people (see RYPE Interim Report 2).

The data concerning Estonian rural youth enables us to analyse – in addition to the problems that are common for the whole project – some parameters of the situation of the rural young people which are specific to Estonian society and its recent developments.

- The situation of the rural young people belonging to the Russian-speaking community. The data enables us to analyse whether there are significant differences in the situations, opinions, and future expectations between native rural young people and those of the Russian-speaking minority.
- Shifts in the situation and mentality of rural young people that have occurred during the years of Estonian independence. The main sources of data for this analysis are the surveys of primary and secondary school students mentioned above. These surveys included indicators of the living conditions of the students' families and the schooling conditions, participation, attitudes, opinions, and future plans of the students themselves. This is of interest, among other reasons, because it enables us to follow trends of change in the objective characteristics of the young people. The research approach applied in our youth studies enables us to analyse changes in the value consciousness of young people rather deeply.

Beyond these more general dimensions that are evidently relevant to the current situation, the empirical surveys included indicators that enable us to analyse the following additional dimensions of the situation of the Estonian rural youth:

Social networks

- if they are living with their parents
- how often they meet with their parents
- how often they meet with their siblings

- how often they socialise with their neighbours
- how often they socialise with their work-mates outside the place of employment
- how often they have had conflicts with friends, relatives and colleagues
- whether they have needed help in household work
- from whom they have received help in household work
- whether they have helped somebody in household work
- whom they have helped in household work
- whether they have anybody who would lend them a larger sum of money
- who would lend this sum of money to them
- whether they currently need coping assistance
- how many days per week include at least 2 hours of spare time

Feeling of security

- whether they have fallen victim to violence over the past 12 months
- whether they have informed the police about this
- whether they are afraid of falling victim to violence

Household

- household's size
- the composition of the household
- the sources of income of household members

(See also RYPE Report, Part I.)

1.5.2. Finnish Data

The Finnish data is based on two different empirical studies; one qualitative and the other quantitative.

The qualitative material consists of essays collected in three different studies, conducted according to the same theoretical framework (by Pia Nyman-Kurkiala; Ung och finlandssvensk, - Institutet för finlandssvensk samhällsforskning. Forskningsrapporter nr 32, Vasa: Institutet för finlandssvensk samhällsforskning). The first study was carried out in the late eighties, the others in 1996 and 1997. Together they analyse five different regional cases from the province of Vasa: three rural (Nykarleby, Kronoby and Kaustby) and two urban (Vasa and Jakobstad).¹ (The number of inhabitants is approximately as follows: Nykarleby 8,000; Kronoby 7,000; Kaustby 4,300; Vasa 57,000; Jakobstad 20,000.) Essays were collected from one grade in each of the six schools (two schools in Jakobstad). The pupils were from 15 to 17 years old (in the last grade of comprehensive school or the first of upper secondary school). The number of respondents was 169. The theoretical framework is based on theories of cultural identity.

The quantitative analysis is based on a school survey which was carried out in the province of Vasa in April 1997. More than 13,000 adolescents aged 14 – 17 in comprehensive schools, upper secondary schools and vocational schools answered the questionnaires.

1.5.3. German Data

The German Youth Institute developed a data base system with different information relevant to the topic of our project. The information data base included survey data from different sources and official data from state and regional statistical offices. This provides us with data about the situation of rural young people in respect to:

- living standards
- housing
- schooling

¹ *Translation note:* In bilingual regions of Finland, most cities and towns have separate names in Finnish and Swedish. Since our text here primarily refers to the perspectives of the Swedish-speaking minority, the place names given are the Swedish ones. The Finnish names for the municipalities here mentioned are as follows: Nykarleby=Uusikaupunki, Kronoby=Kruunupyy, Kaustby=Kaustinen, Vasa=Vaasa and Jakobstad=Pietarsaari. In the case study in chapter 5 the following places are also referred to by their Swedish names (Finnish names given here in parentheses): Helsingfors (Helsinki), Tammerfors (Tampere) and Ekenäs (Tammisaari).

- training possibilities and systems
- work access
- health
- political participation
- cultural participation
- demographic issues (family formation, childbearing, etc.)
- attitudes and future orientations
- marginalisation and social exclusion.

Also, like the Estonian data, this base provides us with information about:

Social networks

- if they are living with their parents
- how often they meet with their parents
- how often they meet with their siblings
- how often they socialise with their neighbours
- how often they socialise with their work-mates outside the place of employment
- how often they have had conflicts with friends, relatives and colleagues

Household

- household's size
- the composition of the household
- the sources of income of household members

There is also data from different sources about the cultural, regional and European identity of young rural people, as in Sweden, Italy and Finland (See also RYPE Report, Part I).

1.5.4. Italian Data

Research concerning Italian rural young people was carried out in Acri during the winter of 1994-1995. The research team co-ordinators were Carmen Leccardi and Osvaldo Pieroni of the University of Calabria, Department of Sociology.

Acri is located in Cosenza province, 40 km from the city of Cosenza. It is the agricultural centre of Calabria. Population: 22,220 (most living in isolated areas, the so-called “contrade”), with 4,360 farms and 4,419 resident young people (born in 1968 – 1978).

A. We now have the following data available:

1. The results of a survey of 426 young people, both male and female, aged 16 - 26, relating to family life, school experience, work and unemployment, friendship and personal relations, leisure, values, sexuality and ideas of the future. This quantitative research was carried out by Osvaldo Pieroni and associates (results published in “Tra paura e speranze” [Between Fear and Hopes], University of Calabria, internal report, July 1995).
2. 40 in-depth interviews with young men (20) and young women (20) aged 17 – 25. Carmen Leccardi was responsible for this part of the research (with Walter Greco as one of the interviewers). Due to the fact that Leccardi moved to Milan University a few months after collecting the interviews (1995), most of them have not previously been used for research purposes.

B. Details of the in-depth interviews collected:

20 young women:

- 4 university students
- 4 high school students
- 5 workers (most with precarious jobs)
- 6 unemployed

- 1 young woman does not study or work

20 young men:

- 4 university students
- 5 high school students
- 8 workers (most with precarious jobs)
- 2 unemployed
- 1 young man does not study or work

C. Analytical areas of the interviews:

1. What is it like to be a girl/boy living in a rural area such as Acri?
 - gender differences
 - relations with the family
 - relations with peer groups and boy- /girlfriends
 - school/university/working life
 - leisure and lifestyles
 - plans/hopes for the future
2. Perceptions of inter-generational differences (relation between past and present in social and cultural life)
3. how young people build up their identities (cultural and symbolic resources); how they represent themselves (what is the relation with the specific rural community in which they grow up?)
4. the relationship with urban centres (Cosenza, or other towns outside Calabria; where young people attend their university courses or have had working experiences, spent holidays, etc.)
5. evaluation of the quality of life in Acri; wish to migrate
6. discrepancies/harmony between expectations and reality (taking gender differences into special consideration).

1.5.5. Swedish Data

Data from the following studies was available for the Swedish part of this study:

1. *Growing up after 1933 in a changing community* (funded by the Swedish Research Council of the Humanities and Social Sciences).
2. The *TYP-project* (a joint project aimed at drug-prevention in the Tornedalica region) collaboration between Swedish and Finnish municipalities in the border region.
3. *Young People and Information Technology* (currently under development).

Project 1 *Growing up in a changing community* deals with the questions of:

- A) continuity and change in life transitions over of a period of 50 years: and
- B) the cultural transformation of the Swedish-Finnish border area in Sweden, from previously being defined as a Finnish area to, at present, becoming more and more integrated into the concept of “Swedish” culture. (The crucial question being: how did this change take place?). The notions of “citizenship,” “nationalism,” “cultural identity” and “belonging” are important ones to discuss and develop.

In general the research relies upon secondary analysis of existing data sets. The following data is utilised in order to reconstruct the social and cultural development of this rural region:

- I. Social Statistics (including labour market figures) 1933 – 1985.
- II. Autobiographical reports covering the period from 1933 to 1960 (approximately 3,000 pages).
- III. Interviews with women conducted 1985 covering the period from 1953 to 1975.
- IV. Media representations of rural youth in general and in Tornedalica in particular from 1933 to 1985.

1.6. Concluding Remarks

Our experience of comparative research has shown how difficult it is to agree upon the field of a comparative inquiry and the method of jointly handling empirical materials. Understanding this is important, since we have such a broad variety of research approaches and empirical data. The first methodo-

logical step was based on our quantitative data comparisons. A more detailed approach to the qualitative analysis has been elaborated in the framework of the qualitative studies which are available. We have considerable specific qualitative data in every participating country. Therefore it is very difficult to decide on the most adequate approach to the qualitative part of the comparison.

2. DESIGN OF THE SECOND PART OF THE STUDY

2.1. Comparative Research

In each of the countries involved in our project the situation of rural young people has been reflected in the political issues of the day. Therefore the relevance of the project seems unquestionable. Yet on the other hand, nobody seems to know exactly what specific issues do concern rural young people, or even if there are any specific concerns for the rural young people of Europe as a group. The discussion and comparison of relevant issues in the project group show similarities and differences. So the group began with a country by country description of specific important topics such as bilingual regions, unemployment and so on. To understand the way in which young rural people organise their lives, one has to first consider the influence of the specific regional background situations involved – the context in which the young people live – on their specific behaviour and on their opinions or values.

For country specific descriptions there was plenty of data available to us, enabling us to analyse issues relating to living situations: youth (un)employment rates, developmental opportunities for members of linguistic minorities within bilingual regions (especially in the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea), etc. We were also able to take the opinions of young people themselves into consideration somewhat: e.g., concerning the problem of regional cultural identity within one of the countries in the project.

But the development of different country-specific reports could only be the first step in the process of describing the situation of rural young people in a changing Europe. The next step in the project had to be a comparison of country specific reports on an aggregate level. Doing this is much more difficult than creating the individual country specific reports. Initial appearances concerning similarities or dissimilarities between countries could disappear in discussions of their meaning between specialists from the different countries. Using the same category labels (in English) has never been insured equivalent content. Equal looking results can be based on extremely different sets of problems being considered in relation to the specific contexts of region or country. So only very in-depth discussions of research findings and their contexts in each country in the comparison could lead to valid descriptions of the European situation being generated.

After working on this during the course of our first report, we tried to push the analysis forward by implementing a variable-by-variable comparison rather than comparisons of aggregate data in country-specific reports. Here the difficulties increase exponentially. First of all, the available data sets are very restricted, and getting new international data sets concerning specific questions was nearly impossible within the given cost and time frame for the project. Secondly, the problems involved in the comparative interpretation of the findings of country-specific reports continue to be relevant to the comparison of each variable in the given a pair or (sub-)set of countries being analysed – on closer analysis, apparent similarities or differences could turn out to be just that: apparent. Furthermore, discussing the specific situation of rural young people in a specific region of a certain country also leads to the problem of relating these findings to the differences between young people and older adults, between rural and urban young people, and between different regions within that country.

The importance of such categorical comparisons, however, continues to out-weigh the difficulties involved. The model of Europe being made up of a set of comparable regions with relatively similar contexts or circumstances, rather than a model of a Europe being made up of a hodgepodge mix of different nationalities, seems to be a good basic starting point for describing the process of Europe's growing together. The validation of such a model would also have positive political effects. Proving such a model by means of empirical data is not easy, because of the lack of data and difficulties in comparison mentioned above, but the effort goes on. In the following examples we are trying to work with the model of comparable regions, or that of better region categories (such as rural and urban) using data related to cultural identity.

2.2. Data Sets Used

The data sets we used are briefly described in the following. More specific descriptions can be found by referring to the named sources directly, or from *EUROSTAT* or the different national statistical bureaux of the countries in question.

Here in our study we have utilised a comparative European survey concerning historical consciousness and political attitudes among adolescents. The aim of the survey was mainly to investigate young peo-

ple's historical consciousness: what does history mean to young people and do they have interest in historical topics, and what is their understanding of attitudes and associations in history? The survey also included several questions concerning their expectations for the future, attitudes and values, opinions and thoughts about their own countries and the rest of Europe. The *Youth and History* survey was carried out among almost 32,000 young Europeans, age 14 and 15, from 26 different countries in 1994/95.² The students filled in a questionnaire with about 280 questions. Their history and social studies teachers participated in the project and answered in a similar questionnaire. 6,200 young people from the five countries included in our RYPE-project participated in the study.

The *ISSP*³ is a continuing annual programme of cross-national collaboration on surveys covering topics important to social science research. It brings together pre-existing social science projects and coordinates research goals, thereby adding a cross-national, cross-cultural perspective to the individual national studies. Twenty-nine countries are members of the ISSP. Among the RYPE - project nations these are Germany, Italy and Sweden. Data concerning questions of national identity was collected in the year 1995. Because this survey was not specifically related to young people (its age range from 18 to 65+) and because there were only three countries from the RYPE project involved, the data here is only used for validation of the main results.

Youth for Europe, a community action programme in the field of youth work, began in 1995. The programme addresses young people between 15 and 25 years of age, residing in the 15 Member States of the European Union. At the request of the European Commission, in 1997 an opinion survey was conducted by *Eurobarometer* among young Europeans between 15 and 24. This survey involved all of the RYPE countries other than Estonia.⁴

2.3. Methodological Problems

The collection of international comparable data is extremely difficult, expensive, and time consuming. Therefore it was possible to conduct most of our research only as reanalysis of currently available data sets. Not everything that would be profitable is possible. In particular the interrelationship between

² Source: Magne Angvik, Bodo von Borries (eds.): "Youth and History" – Hamburg: Körber –Stiftung, 1997 – Vol. A. Descriptions, Vol. B. Documentation, CD-ROM Data sets.

³ Source: "The International Social Survey Programme ISSP 1985 –1995" (CD-ROM) GESIS ZA Daten Service. Special edition for the international conference on Large Scale Data Analysis at the Zentralarchiv, Cologne, May 25-28, 1999.

⁴ Source: Eurobarometer 47.2 "Junge Europäer für die Generaldirektion XXII erstellt durch INRA (EUROPE) -Bericht-29.Juli 1997" and CD-ROM with data sets.

For examples of embedding a region in its national context, e.g. concerning Germany, we have used data from Germany's own official statistics: e.g. Micro Census.

living situation (context), behaviour (managing (un)employment) and attitudes (or opinions) is not reflected in the data available to us. Also the identification of the regional context is different in the different data sets, and sometimes within the same data sets it is different for different countries. Therefore we restricted ourselves to rural vs. urban regions (with an in-between category sometimes being used) as the distinction allowing for the greatest level of comparability. Here too though we have to realise that the same population density, e.g. in Germany and Estonia, doesn't mean the same living conditions. It is therefore still important to look at comparisons between regions within a given country (rural vs. urban), between different countries, and between those countries included in RYPE and others, to get a feel for what really is part of the life of rural young people and to understand the differences between the rural young people in the different RYPE countries. Also to understand what is really happening in a specific region one must take expert knowledge of the specific country, the region, the locality and sometimes the municipality into account. We did our best to take this background into account in making our comparative analysis. To make the report readable and understandable we have given just a few examples, showing only a part of the whole analysis. Our findings, however, are based on a much broader field of work and discussions than what is described here.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Group Identity

3.1.1. Ethnic Identity

The transition from personal to social identity is the psychological process which lies behind the transition from interpersonal to intergroup behaviour.⁵ Social identity refers to the categories the individual identifies with,⁶ such as language group, territorial affiliation and age category. Personal identity refers to the personal qualities which make one individual different from other individuals in the same category.⁷

Relations are not determined for instance by biological differences, but the decisive factor is the way in which the groups define themselves and each other. According to Fredrik Barth ethnic groups arise if and when people use ethnic identity for the categorisation of themselves and others in order to regulate the interaction between people.⁸ Ethnic groups are thus socially defined on the basis of categorisation and self-categorisation.

An ethnic group can, according to Karmela Liebkind,⁹ be seen as a cultural group historically of the same biological and/or linguistic origin, even if this does not appear in everyday life. The members of an ethnic group usually identify themselves with the group, they are of the same stock and they share some distinct cultural patterns of behaviour.

As regards language groups, it is above all language itself that is the distinctive feature.¹⁰ Language is often a very conspicuous characteristic of cultural differences between groups and easily becomes the most important symbol of ethnic identity.¹¹ Signs that mediate information about the ethnic identity of

⁵ Hewstone & Brown 1986, 14

⁶ Lange & Westin 1981, 232

⁷ Liebkind 1989, 66

⁸ Barth 1969, 16-17

⁹ Liebkind 1984b, 24

¹⁰ Allardt & Starck 1981, 44

¹¹ Liebkind 1992, 151

the individual are termed ethnic identity markers.¹² In youth gangs language frequently plays a very important symbolical role with respect to group unity and group identity.¹³

Belief in a common line of descent is a specific trait of ethnic groups and does not exist in connection with other processes of group formation. This could be a motive behind the individual's own theories about ethnic identity.¹⁴ In many socio-psychological texts, however, ethnic identity is treated as if it were on a par with other social identities.¹⁵

Ethnic identity is predestined in the sense that a human being cannot choose the group into which he/she is born, but it is acquired in the sense that he/she can choose to what extent it will be important to his/her total identity.¹⁶ Since the old ways of becoming affiliated with ethnic groups do not work automatically by tradition in today's society as was the case in the preindustrial community, the affiliation of the modern individual presupposes a high degree of self-identification.¹⁷ Therefore language and ethnic bonds become important aspects of identity work especially among the young people who belong to ethnic minorities.

3.1.2. Identity and Identity Work

The process by which the individual creates his/her own identity is termed identity work. Identity work is strenuous and full of crises.¹⁸ In modern society identity formation is taking place throughout life,¹⁹ but youth is the period when identity work is especially active and to the fore. The demanding task for the young person is to develop a socially competent identity and grow into an adult individual capable of acting within society.²⁰

During adolescence the individual will have to sort out childhood identifications in terms of a new kind of identification. This is, according to Erik Homburger Erikson, achieved in terms of intense social

¹² Lange & Westin 1981, 223

¹³ Concerning the role of different rural dialects in identity, see Kotsinas 1994, 21.

¹⁴ Lange & Westin 1992, 69

¹⁵ Liebkind 1989, 29

¹⁶ Liebkind 1988, 67

¹⁷ Allardt & Starck 1981, 47–56

¹⁸ Ziehe 1994, 158

¹⁹ Erikson 1988

²⁰ Mørch 1985, 295–297

intercourse with young people of their own age.²¹ In their group of friends, individuals receive support when emancipating themselves from parents and seeking their own identity.²²

The young create fellowships in which different dimensions of identity work can be implemented. They seek both intimacy within the private sphere and more impersonal interaction in public youth environments. Young people tend to create their own local youth forums, that is, geographically bound youth communities, where they can independently make sense of and exchange experiences together in the company of other young people.²³

In local youth communities young people practise, among other things, identifying and categorising the strangers they meet in order to learn how to behave in relation to them.²⁴ Ethnic identities become meaningful in situations where two or more ethnic groups interact. Ethnic identity is developed as a result of interaction with members of their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups.²⁵

A group of young people can occupy a certain public location, part of a marketplace for instance, and make it their favourite haunt. According to Aleksandra Ålund, young people are seeking for “a place of their own” – something specific within the common and universal.²⁶ Their desire to decide their own cultural matters can lead to different forms of self-assertion. Competition for social and cultural space control between different youth groups often leads to ethnic conflicts and violent forms of behaviour.

3.1.3. Stereotypes and Prejudices

Depersonification is typical of intergroup behaviour. The individuals interact on the basis of what is thought to be the general characteristic of the other group instead of reacting to each other as differentiated individual persons.²⁷ The simplified mental image individuals have of some category of people is referred to as a stereotype. It is usually but not necessarily accompanied by prejudice, that is, positive or negative attitudes to members of the category in question.²⁸

²¹ Erikson 1988, 134

²² Wennhall 1989, 18

²³ Lieberg 1993, 202-203

²⁴ *ibid.*, 219-220

²⁵ Liebkind 1994, 159

²⁶ Ålund 1991, 28

²⁷ Hewstone & Brown 1986, 14–15

²⁸ Lange & Westin 1981, 175

When the stereotypes include negative prejudice the differences between the groups are sharpened and antagonistic feelings accompany the clear-cut differentiation.²⁹ The prejudices are not directed against particular individuals but against other groups. They originate in the stereotypes that individuals have concerning the group in question.³⁰

As the ethnic group identity of a child develops, critical concepts of other groups come automatically.³¹ The development of stereotypes can thus be seen as a part of the identity work of children and young people.

Exceptionally strong moulding and emphasis of in-group/out-group aspects and stereotypes can be seen as a natural process during certain periods of the identity development. According to Erikson, young people can become strikingly intolerant and cruel in their rejection of those who are “different.”³² Erikson assumes that such intolerance can, for a period of time, be a necessary defensive measure to guard oneself against loss of identity, which can occur because of all the adjustments that adolescence entails. Young people help each other to cope with these troubles by forming coteries and creating stereotypes of themselves and their enemies. At the same time they also test each other’s ability to remain loyal in conflicts involving values.

According to the so-called contact hypothesis, the interaction between individuals belonging to different groups reduces ethnic prejudice against the other group. Present-day researchers consider the contact hypothesis generally valid, though not in all circumstances.³³

Individuals continuously have to reconsider and defend their prejudices, but there is a strong tendency of individuals to stick to the stereotypes they have created for themselves.³⁴ Individuals endeavour to retain their conventional definitions through selective perception for instance.³⁵ Individuals also have a tendency to explain phenomena which do not fit into their stereotypes as something that deviates from the norm.³⁶ One’s own personal system of values which lies behind the distinction one makes between groups is in fact threatened by information which conflicts with one’s emotionally charged stereotyped conceptions.³⁷

²⁹ Tajfel 1969, 86

³⁰ Lange & Westin 1981, 28

³¹ Masangkay et al. 1972, 269

³² Erikson 1988, 113–114

³³ Hewstone & Browne 1986, 1–42

³⁴ Tajfel 1969, 82

³⁵ Barth 1969, 30

³⁶ Liebkind 1988

³⁷ Lange & Westin 1981, 172

These stereotypes can as such be regarded as part of a language – a small set of unique terms, ethnofaulisms, including depreciatory group names for instance.³⁸ For example in Finland the nickname “hurri” for Swedish-speakers among the Finnish-speaking and “Ural” for Finnish-speakers among the Swedish-speaking are such ethnofaulisms.

3.1.4. Ethnocentrism and Group Solidarity

With regard to relations between groups, the outlook of the in-group often serves as a point of reference in terms of which the out-group is assessed. This phenomenon is termed ethnocentrism.³⁹ Ethnocentrism develops solidarity within the in-group and hostility against the out-group.⁴⁰ A real threat from outside creates in-group solidarity and increased awareness of in-group identity.⁴¹ The boundaries of the group emerge clearly as a result of a conflict with the surrounding world, so that a group can be defined through fighting with other groups. Antagonism similarly prevents the boundaries between the groups from being gradually wiped out.⁴² In a case study of a Swedish youth gang, Kenneth Petersson, states that anonymous violence was rare; that is, trouble usually arose between young people who were prepared for it.⁴³ Trouble and fighting were part of a strategy of both defending and defining one’s own group.

There seems to be a universal tendency to judge one’s own group as morally superior and more splendid than other groups, and also to select for comparison the aspects that favour one’s own group.⁴⁴ One reason for this could be that individuals wish to create and preserve a positive social identity in order to create a positive image of themselves by this means. Ethnocentric attitudes are concepts in which the in-group in morally significant respects is valued highly and the out-group is correspondingly underestimated and disparaged.⁴⁵

It is not, however, unusual for individuals who belong to a minority to have a negative view of themselves.⁴⁶ A negative view of oneself is characteristic of members of social groups that have incorpo-

³⁸ *ibid.*, 166

³⁹ Deaux & Wrightsman 1984, 415

⁴⁰ Lange & Westin 1981, 70

⁴¹ *ibid.*, 61

⁴² Coser 1971, 85

⁴³ Petersson 1990, 38–39

⁴⁴ Deaux & Wrightsman 1984, 415

⁴⁵ Lange & Westin 1981, 70–71

⁴⁶ Liebkind 1989, 33

rated depreciative out-group definitions of themselves or their group and therefore consistently consent to a denial of their own value. However, other people's evaluations are also selectively internalised. A minority may thus either internalise or reject a depreciative attitude manifested by the out-group.⁴⁷

According to Liebkind, a secure minority will emphasise that the group's special features are valuable, and special characteristics are consciously emphasised.⁴⁸ The minority also demands that they be recognised by the majority. The members of the group are solidly identified with their own group and reject prejudices from outside thanks to their strong self-confidence.

An insecure minority on the other hand endeavours in every way to compare themselves with the majority and always believe themselves to be inferior as a result of the comparison. The majority represents a desirable ideal for this minority. The minority members evade and are ashamed of their own group as prejudice from outside has been internalised and regarded as valid.⁴⁹

3.2. Collective Memory

3.2.1. Family Memory

“We are never alone... our most individual memories are closely dependent on the group in which we live.” Thus French psychologist Paul Fraisse wrote in the fifties, referring to the mechanisms of individual memory.⁵⁰ His theoretical reference, explicitly mentioned in the text, is Maurice Halbwachs. The influence wielded by Halbwachs' work on the theme of the social dimension of memory⁵¹ – developed in the period between the twenties and forties⁵² – on the social sciences has in fact been, and remains, very profound (even if it is not homogeneously divided among the different areas involved).⁵³

⁴⁷ Liebkind 1989, 35

⁴⁸ Liebkind 1988, 103

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 102

⁵⁰ Fraisse 1957, 168

⁵¹ A significant contribution to the in-depth research of this dimension has also been made in terms of another area of research, the so-called social-historical tradition of Soviet psychology (Vygotsky, Leontiev, Lurija, etc.). Focusing on the importance of the socially constructed nature of all psychological phenomena, this school of thought has strongly emphasised the social constitution of *all* forms of memory. According to this thesis one cannot speak of memory (at least in adults) without referring to such concepts as community, society, culture. See, on this theme, Bakhurst (1990).

⁵² See *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1976, orig. ed. 1925) and *La topographie légendaire des Évangiles en Terre Sainte. Etude de mémoire collective* (Italian tr. *Memorie di Terrasanta*, with introduction by Franco Cardini, Edizioni dell'Arsenale, Venice, 1988; orig. ed. 1941). The other important work by Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (orig. ed. 1951) was published posthumously.

⁵³ The works of Halbwachs are still not very widely known by historians for instance.

Halbwachs, a fervent follower of Durkheim's line of thought, has the great merit of having delivered the theme of memory from an analytical approach limited to an individual key – of which Bergson could at that time be considered the most authoritative spokesman – making it a specific subject of sociological reflection. According to Halbwachs there is, to put it in a nutshell, a collective organisation of memories, or collective memory,⁵⁴ which the individual memory not only draws from amply, but which represents it in the strict sense of the word. In his opinion the latter is to some extent a kind of derivation of the former.⁵⁵ In fact, he writes that the act of remembering would not be conceivable, “except on the condition that one adopts the point of view of one or more currents of collective thought.”⁵⁶

A characteristic trait of collective memory consists of the fact that it is a “living history”: its time limits, as opposed to written history, coincide with those of the existence of the group possessing it. This leads to one of its fundamental characteristics, that of continuity. To quote Halbwachs (1987, p. 89) collective memory is “a continuous current of thought, of a continuity that is by no means artificial, because it conserves nothing from the past except the parts which still live, or are capable of living in the conscience of the group.” It can therefore not exist and express itself without the living support of a group. In fact, it is the members of the group who, through their interaction, mould that particular image of the past which is transmitted in the present.

According to this approach the past is anything but a static dimension. Rather, it changes according to the creative play of the collective memory (or the collective memories⁵⁷) and thus, in accordance with the requirements of the present. “Society,” Halbwachs points out, “represents the past for itself according to the circumstances and according to the times: it changes its own conventions.”⁵⁸ It therefore becomes essential, on the basis of this premise, to “renounce the idea that the past is conserved just as it is in individual memories...”⁵⁹ From this point of view the past is merely a construction, a collective image elaborated in the present and for the present – as Halbwachs writes in *La mémoire collective*,

⁵⁴ See, with regard to the relationship between social memory and collective memory, understood respectively as social organisation of memories and organisation of memories on the part of a group, Namer (1987).

⁵⁵ For a criticism of Halbwachs' approach to the relationship between collective and individual memory, see Jedlowski (1989, 68-73).

⁵⁶ Halbwachs 1987, 47

⁵⁷ The theme of the plurality of collective memories is developed by Halbwachs in *La mémoire collective*. In *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* his attention is on the contrary focused on three “great” collective memories: the family, the religious and the class memory. Implicitly, these three memories seem to exhaust the field of the social memory. On the two different approaches of Halbwachs' thought on the subject of collective memory see Namer (1987) and Jedlowski (1989, 54-78).

⁵⁸ Halbwachs 1976, 279

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

“what one has agreed to call the past.”⁶⁰ Once recreated, however, its effects become very real: it moulds the group’s vision of the world, it becomes the driving force of its actions.

The pictures in the collective memory – the “instruments” of the collective memory⁶¹ – serve as filters, selecting the aspects of the past which the group *must* remember to keep its own identity alive in the present. The collective memory thus becomes essential to guarantee the integrity and survival of the group in time. A community may use the past to guarantee its stability by means of it, and at the same time, to obtain a fundamental anchor of sense for the present.⁶²

As mentioned above, it is on the pictures in the collective memory that, according to Halbwachs, the function of the collective memory is based. The nature of these pictures appears complex: they are at the same time notions, representations and norms.⁶³ The elements comprising them, as Halbwachs underscores, “may be considered, at the same time, as notions, more or less logic and linked in a more or less logical fashion, which provide motives for reflection, and as imaginary or concrete representations of events or personalities, located in time and space.”⁶⁴ Collective memory is thus characterised by the twofold appearance of *notion* – an element of a specific knowledge, of a knowing, of an idea or a constellation of ideas – and *representation* – in the sense of image, fantastic configuration, changing creation. While different, within the picture of the collective memory notion and representation appear superimposed to the point of being hard to distinguish. But this is not, as we will see, the only conceptual alchemy featured in the collective memory.

Its pictures are moreover characterised by a strong normative dimension, which makes them, at the same time, “models, examples and lessons.”⁶⁵ “As a past fact serves as a lesson, as encouragement or as warning,” Halbwachs writes at another point, “what we call the picture of memory is also a chain of ideas and judgements.”⁶⁶ Because of this they provide the group with indications concerning the present and the future. For instance they prescribe the paths to follow today and in the future, and which paths to avoid; they convey a package of knowledge that may also serve at a later point in time. The dimension of the plan becomes visible behind the curtain of memory: the past, reconstructed collec-

⁶⁰ Halbwachs 1968, 131

⁶¹ Halbwachs 1976, XVIII

⁶² We are in this case dealing with what Bellah *et al.* (1985, 153) refer to as a “community of memory.” In any event, one has to take into account that the action of the collective memory, not unlike that of the individual memory, has always and in every case been a matter of rationalising *ex post* (Rampazi 1989, 240). The resulting construction must not only guarantee continuity, but also coherence with respect to a past which does not necessarily possess it.

⁶³ see Namer 1987, 58-62

⁶⁴ Halbwachs 1976, 28

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 151

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 282

tively, in its turn builds the future. The close bond between past and future is further ratified by the normative element of memory.⁶⁷

But the pictures of collective memory have another important characteristic: they are, by definition, never anonymous. They are vivified by names, faces and histories which we are intimately bound to, which elicit unmistakable sentiments and emotions in us. They transmit a past, testifying to an *experience*. And experience, as we know from Benjamin, as the sediment of “accumulated, often unconscious, data which flow into memory,” is not, in the final analysis, distinguishable from tradition.⁶⁸ Experience, memory and tradition are arranged along the same axis – that of continuity in time. “Experience is knowledge which has been distilled in time, in which the personal past of a person is combined with the sediments of a collective knowledge conveyed by tradition,” writes Jedlowski (1991, p. 131). Through memory, the individual and the collective are united in the concreteness of experience. Together, collective memory and experience govern tradition: as long as they resist, tradition may not die.

As Shils points out in his study on the notion of tradition, if experiences had by others who are important to us, whether they are alive or dead, reach us through memory, not only does the image of the past which they transmit to us live again in our present, but those experiences become an intrinsic part of our identity.⁶⁹ Our identity thus also includes numerous characters borrowed from members of the group (family, political, religious, etc.) we belong to, and who have preceded us in time.⁷⁰ This memory mechanism contributes, according to Shils, to keeping the force of tradition alive.

As past experiences, the collective memory is moreover characterised by a strong affective element.⁷¹ This element, which is the result of the close interaction and consequent sharing of experiences among the members of the group – Schutz would in this regard speak of the sharing of a “vivid present” – influences and increases its “accent of reality.” Through the affective dimension, on the other hand, the

⁶⁷ In the experience of time the bond between these two dimensions is, as we know, crucial: what we are able to imagine is inseparable from what we are able to remember. As Bachelard felicitously perceived already in the thirties (1980, p. 46), one of the essential components of the pictures in social memory is the “desire for social future.” Modernity, with its tendency to dissolve continuity – including that between past, present and future – nevertheless introduces quite a few complications in this scheme. See, in this regard, the reflections of Koselleck (1986) concerning the gap between experiences (of the past) and expectations (for the future) in the modern age.

⁶⁸ Benjamin 1976, 88

⁶⁹ Shils 1981, 50

⁷⁰ Analogously, I. Bertaux-Wiame (1988), working on the materials of family memory, identifies the way a part of its members remembers the so-called “long memory” as an essential dimension. It is a matter of a memory which is formed, as well as by personal memories, by memories transmitted by the previous generations, which have become integral part of the itineraries of thought of those who assimilate them.

⁷¹ Namer 1988

normative character of memory is reinforced. In particular in those places where the wedge of modernity has not yet completely shattered the rule of tradition, and where the quantity of past contributing to the building of individual behaviour remains substantial, it is difficult to escape this normative force. In this kind of scenario the collective memory, due to the affective armature supporting it as well, will tend to enclose the group members in a totalitarian dimension.⁷²

By providing an essentially chaotic past experience with a language, and at the same time a structure and a unitary direction, characterised by a high internal coherence, the collective memory on the other hand diminishes the differences between those participating in the group life and their individual memories, guaranteeing collective force, cohesion and identity over the course of time.⁷³

Of the three collective memories analysed by Halbwachs – those of family, religious groups and social classes – our attention will now focus briefly on the first. In fact it is the memory of the family group that plays the most important role, for example, in the development of the approach of young people in Calabria to work, which has inspired these reflections (see chapter 5.2.).

Halbwachs dedicates the fifth chapter of *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* to the collective memory of the family. The scarlet thread of his reflections is as follows: underlying the family group there is a “mutual fund” of memory, through which the “general attitude of the group” is expressed and from which the family members “obtain their distinctive traits.”⁷⁴ It is as if the thoughts of every member carry the mark of this “mutual fund,” a cipher which they secretly share with the other members of the group (it is also worth noting that Halbwachs speaks, in this regard, of different “ramifications” of the same lineage of thought). It is thanks to this memory that the family group can survive united in time and, despite the changes it faces, retain the feeling of its own uniqueness. This ability to remember provides the family with, to use the author’s spot-on expression, its own “traditional armature.”

The story of every family, seen through the eyes of those belonging to it, is unrepeatable: every family, writes Halbwachs, “has its own spirit, its own memories which it alone commemorates, and secrets which are not revealed except to its members.”⁷⁵ These memories, as we have already had occasion to observe, not only indicate the nature, quality, strong and weak points of the group; they also represent a

⁷² On the other hand, with the pluralisation involving collective memories in the modern age, the sense which each of them transmits also becomes relative. This phenomenon is associated, as Namer observes (1988), with a weakening of their affective component.

⁷³ Jedlowski 1989, 63

⁷⁴ Halbwachs 1976, 151-52

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 151

set of rules to follow, an example and model to emulate. The path followed by the family memory cannot be ignored, on penalty of leaving the sphere of the group.

On the other hand the family memory is the proper home of tradition. If one participates in the life of a family, one finds oneself belonging, Halbwachs observes, “to a group in which it is not our personal feelings, but rules and customs beyond our control, and which existed before us, that establish our place.”⁷⁶ These rules and customs are nourished in the first place by the dominance, in our everyday life, of the times and places of the family. This is one of the reasons why, according to Halbwachs, “most of our thoughts are mixed with family thoughts.”⁷⁷ This impossibility of separating our thoughts from its, our memory from its, is indicative of the profound bond which, according to Halbwachs, ties the individual members to the family group. “When a group has permeated us with its influence for a long time,” he underscores, “we are so saturated that if we find ourselves alone, we act and think as if we were still under its pressure.”⁷⁸ The pervasiveness of the models proposed by the family memory, the lessons provided by it and all of its messages in general, are in the first place to be retraced to the power of habit and the daily contact between its members – in a word, “familiarity.”

This character is, for that matter, reinforced by the unchanging character of the family relations within the context of which pictures in family memory are formed. “Until one leaves the family as opposed to other groups of which members may change and sometime change place with respect to one another, one remains in the same position as a relative,” Halbwachs reminds us.⁷⁹ New family relations can be added to those preserved in the group memory – in our turn we may be not only children but also parents – but the ancient relationships cannot be cancelled; their mark is indelible. From this point of view the family memory seems to be perfectly uninfluenced by changes: nothing appears to be relative or mutable within it. The trait of certainty dominates everything.

Another striking aspect of the pictures in memory is the perfect complementarity of its two aspects: collective and individual. Thus, if every member of the group is considered in his uniqueness, here more than elsewhere – if his figure becomes part of the family memory by virtue of his singularity, his traits, his exclusively personal vicissitudes – there is nevertheless no figure or event of which the family conserves a memory, which he does not see from the viewpoint of the group. These personalities, which we are bound to by a very close relationship, become the points of reference around which the

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 147

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 154

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 167

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 163

family memory centres, in which all of the historical phases of the group life are condensed. The single person, as well as the events concerning him, become, in the strict sense, symbols of the group.

The affective character of the family memory is another trait contributing to its cohesive ability. Gérard Namer, analysing the affective characteristics of family memory, casts light on three different aspects. The first is caused by the family's isolation from the rest of the world, and the sentiment of uniqueness uniting its members. This feeling stimulates the development of a sense of complicity – together they possess a common heritage of secrets, which they are the only ones in the world to share – which in turn reinforces the affective bonds. The second is associated with the normative dimension of the family memory; its being “a lesson to repeat,” and at the same time the vehicle of images, atmospheres and places of the family life which have to be renewed, which want to continue to live in the present because they speak to our hearts. The third and final concern is that particular aspect of affection, which Namer refers to as “compromise” or “reconciliation”⁸⁰ and which alludes to the co-existence, in the family time, of different “generational consciences” (to borrow a term from Attias-Donfut [1988, p. 49]); that is to say, of different consciences of the role and position which the generation of each member has in relation to those of the others. If it is true that the collective memory embodies the continuity between generations, it is also conversely true that each will tend to principally recognise itself in a different dimension of time (and universe of significance) within the family group: the older generation, first and foremost in the past; the working adult set, mainly in the present and the youngest oriented towards the future. In this framework the “affection of conciliation” of the family memory protects the unity of the group, preventing the memory from indicating differences before everything else, thus creating conflict among the members.

The affection which keeps the members of the family group united, inside and outside of the sphere of the memory, is even more important if we consider that the collective memory, as mentioned above, is also loaded with plans – which the older generations more or less tacitly entrust to the younger for realisation.⁸¹ The feeling of affection which keeps memory and plans together can then become the basis of a moral obligation: for children for instance, to honour the family memory by continuing along the paths which the fathers have traced.

In essence, when what is remembered by the group is linked to spontaneous daily interaction between its members, as is the case in the family, the significance of the “images” and the “notions” conveyed

⁸⁰ Namer 1988, 10

⁸¹ In this regard Claudine Attias-Donfut writes, “Memories, recollections or testimonials attributed to a generation are not comprehensible unless they are related to the others, as they are sequences of a collective memory which incorporate them in a continuity in time endowed with significance and full of plans” (1988, p. 48).

by the memory, as the basis of the intimate relationship uniting them, certainly increases. The particularly intense light it emanates is, in other words, the fruit of the sharing of both a symbolic universe and everyday times, spaces and rhythms. The “practicality” of knowledge of the social world conveyed by the family memory – inseparable from the everyday dimension in which its pictures are immersed – reinforces this luminosity.

One last element has to be understood with regard to the family memory: Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame observes, reflecting on materials associated with family histories, that an important role is played within them by the valuation of the social path travelled by the family group as a whole.⁸² The hopes, anxieties and desires of the present time, which give the reconstruction of the past the particular image and flavour which only the group members are familiar with, also has to be understood on the basis of this valuation. If the path which has already been covered is valued collectively in positive terms, social pride penetrates the pictures of the family memory. The presence of this feeling on the one side reinforces the sense of collective identity, and on the other it makes other possible paths of memory fade. The totalitarian dimension of the family memory is strengthened.

3.2.2. Gratitude as Sociological Concept and its Affinities with Collective Memory

In a nutshell, the collective memory – and within it especially the family memory, due to the strong area of affection surrounding it – supposedly exercises, from a social standpoint, a dual function: while it guarantees integration, it provides the group with a valid instrument for its continued survival in time. As Simmel has elaborated it, even if in this case it is more a matter of a relationship (*Zweierverbindung*) than a group, the same characters are part of the sociological structure of gratitude.⁸³

Gratitude, understood as expression of the relational continuity, interests Simmel because of its capacity to preserve the social connections and relations from the destruction and wear caused by the passing of time. This is why the feeling of gratitude, like that of faithfulness – both considered “sociological sentiments” or “sociologically oriented” – “belong to the *a priori* conditions of society.”⁸⁴ Both gratitude and faithfulness provide stability for the world of relations, which are by nature fluid and inclined to continuous transformations. If our interior life is similar to a current, if it is in a constant process evolution, in certain aspects a magma, these sentiments “solidify,” so to speak, the form of the

⁸² Bertaux-Wiame 1988, 25

⁸³ Simmel 1989, 498-509

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 500

relation, rendering it constant in time. They practically throw a bridge across the two banks (or forms) of interiority and association, helping to overcome the divide that remains between them, despite their intimate bond.

As to gratitude – significantly defined by Simmel as “the moral memory of humanity” – the author observes, in the first place, its capacity to establish the bond of interaction; “of the mutual action [...] also where it is not guaranteed by any external coercion.”⁸⁵ Simmel points out that whereas the legal order guarantees respect for the scheme of give and take in exchanges of an economical nature, numerous other relations based on the same paradigm obtain their support from the sentiment of gratitude. From a sociological viewpoint, therefore, gratitude can be considered as a supplement to the legal order.

A sentiment which develops from and in human interaction, gratitude is capable of surviving the conclusion of the relationship which gave rise to it – this is a characteristic it shares with other forms of association. “Gratitude represents [...] a persistence of this kind in the most decided sense – a continuation of the life of a relationship, even after it has long since been interrupted and after the act of giving and receiving has long since been completed,” writes Simmel.⁸⁶ According to Simmel’s analysis, the importance of gratitude is inseparable from its duality: being on the one hand a driving force of the spirit; on the other, an extraordinarily efficient means of social cohesion. Through it human actions can even be reconnected to events of a time in the very distant, of which material traces may perhaps be lost today.

The continuity of the social life, which in the final analysis is the continuity of interactive life, therefore obtains an extraordinary level of support from gratitude: regardless of how tenuous, in some cases almost intangible, the debt of gratitude is, the social relationship it creates is capable of annihilating time. “The finest and most solid relations are often associated with this sentiment,” Simmel observes in this regard.⁸⁷

Analogously with family memory, the social cohesion and continuity preserved by gratitude do not appear analytically separable from the intimately mediated affective dimension of the relationship from which they have originated. On the base of this affection, the gift which was initially given, triggering the process leading to gratitude, acquires the character of immeasurability. Regardless of what the gift received consists of, the bond cannot be broken by a counter-gift. The first gift, Simmel underscores, in

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 504

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 505

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 505

fact vaunts the unique characteristic of being the result of a voluntary act, a decision completely free from coercion. This primogeniture places the first giver in an ethically privileged position. Only if we give first “are we free, and this is why there is a beauty, a spontaneous devotion, a flowing and flowering in the direction of the other in the first favour, which is not motivated by any thankfulness.”⁸⁸ Those who receive the gift, on the contrary, are subject to a moral coercion – which is according to the author no less radical in its effects than a legal obligation.

The relation created by gratitude possesses an “interior infinity” which prevents the bond of reciprocity it is based on from being exhausted. It is this *character indelebilis* – the impossibility to completely eliminate the relational bond ratified by its presence – which, according to Simmel, gives gratitude a sociologically unique flavour.⁸⁹ In fact, it easily survives the fading of the range of sentiments which it may have accompanied in the past: for instance love, friendship, respect, trust and so forth. Gratitude “seems to lie at a point within us which must not change, towards which we are more entitled to demand constancy than we are to more passionate and even more profound sentiments.”⁹⁰ Inconvertible and unalterable, the atmosphere of obligation it gives rise to persists even after the initial gift has been matched with a counter-gift. Despite spatial and temporal gaps, its knots hold, in a “microscopic” but very solid manner, “one element of society tied to another, and in the end all the elements in an overall life characterised by a stable form.”⁹¹

A felicitous harmony of accents therefore exists between collective memory and gratitude. While in different manners and forms, both focus on what is *memorable*. Whether it is sealed by the bond of gratitude, or rather conserved and handed down in the form of memory of events that are crucial for the identity of the group, the “memorable” in any case belongs to the sphere of the extraordinary. This fact preserves it from decadence and from falling into oblivion. The past which substantiates it – a present which doesn't die – is, in the final analysis, an epic time.⁹² Even if the heroes and heroines who populate its tales are more often than not personalities facing circumstances and experiences belonging to everyday life – “ordinary” par excellence – its exceptional quality is beyond dispute. It is the salience of these personalities, of those relations, of those events for the identity of those who today remember which makes it unique. Anyone who has ever worked with materials associated with collective memory – with the “memory of gratitude,” with materials that reconstruct the geneses and developments of this sentiment in time – can document the existence of this extraordinary quality.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 505

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 508

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 509

⁹¹ *ibid.*, 509

⁹² Regarding epic time, see H. Maldiney's reflections (1975, especially pages 148 and 152).

4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1. Attitudes and Expectations

We used the “Youth and History” data to explore the emotions, attitudes and opinions of young Europeans to their region and to Europe. These results are related to the analysis of the Eurobarometer data: both sets of results show low variation between rural and urban areas and low to medium variation between countries. This result is related to the major variations in living conditions within regions described, taking for example the Brandenburg data being embedded within the regional variation of Germany and the regional variation within Brandenburg itself.

In the following chapter, a set of relevant questions with answer categories is shown with the corresponding results. While the variance pattern, especially for the interactions of region and country, is very difficult to trace, the overall trends are easy to recognise.

4.1.1. Personal Life After 40 Years

One question was concerning young people’s expectations for their own future (“What do you expect your life to be like 40 years from now?”). They were asked to rate how likely they think the following events are:

- a meaningful job (3.7)
- a high income (3.4)
- a happy and harmonious family life (3.8)
- good friends (4.1)
- personal political freedom (3.7)
- participation in politics (2.3)
- sufficient leisure time to practise interesting hobbies (3.5)

(categories: 1=very unlikely / 5=very likely).

Leading their personal future expectations, the majority of the young students expected to have good friends ($Mv^* = 4.1$), a happy family ($Mv = 3.8$) and a meaningful job ($Mv = 3.7$). By way of comparison, young Finns are most optimistic towards getting a meaningful job ($Mv = 4.0$), while the young Estonians

* Mv – “median value”

seem to be on the more pessimistic end of this scale (Mv=3.3). Getting a high income in the future is considered possible, but perhaps not very likely by most of the young people (Mv=3.4).

4.1.2. Interest in Politics – Meaning of Religion

Even though the majority of the young people seem to believe that political freedom in their countries is possible in the future (Mv=3.4), the interest of this age group (14-15 years old) in political issues and participating in political work in the future is still very low. The majority of the young people answered that they think future political work is unlikely or very unlikely (Mv=2.2). The political disinterest among young people is also shown in their answers to the question, “How strongly are you interested in politics?” (categories: 1=very little / 5=very much). Almost a half of the students (45.5 %) answered that they have little or very little interest in politics. The young Finns show the lowest interest (57.6 % little or very little interest) among the five countries.

In comparing these young students’ interest in religion to their political interest, it appears that their interest in both religion and politics is rather small, but the political interest is somewhat smaller. When considering the question, “How much does religion mean to you?”, only the young Italians showed a rather high level of interest: 43 % of the Italians answered that religion means much or very much to them, compared to only 15 % of the young Swedes.

4.1.3. Life in Own Country / Life in Europe After 40 Years

In some questions the students were asked about their expectations as to what future life in their own country and in Europe would be like (“What do you expect life will be like in your country 40 years from now?” / “What do you expect life will be like in Europe 40 years from now?”). They were asked to rate the likeliness of the following alternatives:

- peaceful (3.0)
- overpopulated (3.4)
- exploited by a foreign state (2.6)

- prosperous / wealthy (3.1)
- democratic (3.5)
- polluted (4.1)
- torn by conflicts between rich and poor (3.2)
- torn by conflicts between ethnic groups (3.1)

(categories: 1=very unlikely / 5=very likely)

Comparing the young people's expectations of what life in their own country will be like in 40 years to what they think it will be like in the whole of Europe, they tend to think that their own countries will be better off, at least in some aspects. The threat of pollution seems to be the most common fear of young people in their own countries (Mv=4.1) as well as in Europe (Mv=4.1). Exploitation, overpopulation and conflict situations seem not to be considered as such serious threats, in their own countries at least. Most of the students seem to believe in a democratic future in their countries (Mv=3.4), with the young Estonians having the lowest optimism in this regard (Mv=2.9). The Swedish and Finnish students seemed most prone to think that the future in their own countries will be somewhat more peaceful than future of Europe as a whole.

4.2. Interest in Key Personal or Social Concerns

4.2.1. Various Personal Interests

“How important are the following to you?”

- family (Mv=4.7)
- friends (Mv=4.5)
- hobbies / personal areas of interest (Mv=4.1)
- my country (Mv=3.8)
- my ethnic group/nationality (Mv=3.5)
- money and wealth for myself (Mv=3.6)

- my religious faith (Mv=3.2)
- European co-operation (Mv=3.1)
- democracy (Mv=3.5)
- freedom of opinion for all (Mv=4.3)
- peace at any cost (Mv=4.2)
- solidarity with poor people in my own country (Mv=4.0)
- solidarity with poor people in the third World (Mv=3.8)
- welfare and social security (Mv=4.0)
- environmental protection (Mv=4.4)

(categories: 1=very little importance / 5=very much importance)

Least important of these concerns was “European co-operation” (Mv=3.1). Most important was “family” (Mv=4.7) with just over a point and a half’s worth of difference between these issues.

In East Germany young people gave the highest average values to the items on this list, but they had the lowest regard for their own ethnic group and religious faith. Their regard for “democracy” and “welfare security” were in the medium range. Estonian young people gave the lowest average value to the items on the list, but concerning “family,” “my ethnic group/nationality,” “money and wealth for myself,” “my religious faith,” “European co-operation” and “environmental protection” their regard was well up into the medium range. The overall pattern seen in these different countries is very complex; sometimes understandable (e.g., young Italians having the highest regard for “my religious faith”), sometimes hard to understand (e.g., major differences between East Germany and Estonia on the question of “peace of any cost”). The differences between countries for any given variable ranged between a half and a full point on our scale, with two exceptions: on “family” and “welfare and social security” there was very strong agreement across the board (a difference of only 0.2 points).

The differences between young people’s opinions in rural and urban areas were very small. The biggest difference related to “family” (with rural young people ranking it 0.2 points higher than their urban counterparts); otherwise the differences were less than 0.1.

4.2.2. Interest in Controversial Issues

In many countries the issues below are quite controversial.

“What would you vote and what would you vote against?”

- The immediate closing of nuclear power stations in Europe (Mv=1.7)
- Limiting the speed and amount of private traffic in order to prevent air pollution and the killing of forests (Mv=1.6)
- Reduction of wages and standards of living in Western Europe in order to finance investments in Eastern Europe (Mv=2.4)
- Full equality for women in profession, house-keeping and public life (Mv=1.4)
- Use of European armies in UN-activities to suppress civil wars all over the world (Mv=1.7)
- Reduction in the number of immigrants permitted (Mv=1.8)
- Guaranteed minimum prices for goods from the third world with higher prices in Europe in consequence (Mv=2.0)
- Expanded authority for the police in order to subdue criminality and violence (Mv=1.5)
- Reducing the power of the European Union, giving more power to the national states (Mv=2.0)
- European integration, including a common currency (Mv=1.8)

(categories: 1 = would vote for, 2= undecided, 3 = would vote against, 4 = would not vote⁹³)

The differences between highest and lowest values are in the range of 0.2 to 0.5 points. Overall, young people were inclined to vote for most of these issues, other than the reduction of standards of living in Western Europe and the reduction of the power of European Union. Finnish young people were more likely than others to vote against specific issues (other than equality for women) and Italians more likely to vote in favour of them (other than price guarantees for the Third World and reducing the power of the EU).

⁹³ This scale is not in a strong ordered. It can be interpreted that the explicit decision “would not vote” is related to the issue being considered to be highly difficult.

The only significant differences in rural vs. urban samples were stronger voting against nuclear power stations in urban areas (a difference of 0.35 points) and against European integration in rural areas (a difference of 0.12 points).

4.2.3. Interest in Geographical Background

“How much interest do you have in the history of these geographical areas?”

- immediate vicinity (Mv=3.4)
- own region (Mv=3.3)
- own country (Mv=3.8)
- Europe (Mv=3.3)
- the world outside Europe (Mv=3.3)

(categories: 1=very little / 5=very much)

Overall the answer “own country” was of the highest historical interest (3.8). Students from Sweden and Finland showed the lowest level of interest in history of any sort. Italian students show the highest interest in areas ranging from “immediate vicinity” to “own country.” Estonia and East Germany scored very close to the overall European average across the board on these questions. Looking at all countries included in the “Youth and History” data, there was only one European country with a lower level of interest in its national and continental history than those within the RYPE Project. Other than that, all of the extreme values found in the survey as a whole came from the five countries of our project. The differences between the five countries (highest to lowest scores for each variable) are in the range of 0.5 – half a point.

There are regional differences in interest in history related to “own country,” “Europe” and “the world outside Europe.” Students in urban areas showed higher interest than students from small towns, which in turn showed higher interest than students in rural areas. Regional variations went about half as far as the differences between countries – in the range of 0.2 - 0.3.

4.2.4. Interest in Changing (Eastern) Europe.

“What do you associate with the changes in Eastern Europe since 1985?”

- The downfall of the USSR (Mv=3.6)

- Democratisation of Soviet Society (Mv=3.3)
- Freedom of the Warsaw Pact member states (Mv=3.3)
- Victory of the USA in the cold war (Mv=3.1)
- Treason against socialist ideas (Mv=3.0)
- National conflicts and civil wars (Mv=3.5)
- Establishing of market economy in Eastern Europe (Mv=3.5)

(categories: 1= totally disagree / 5= totally agree)

Overall “treason against socialist ideas” was voted least important and “the downfall of the USSR” was voted most significant. Sweden rated “national conflicts” higher and the “market economy” lower; Finland, “the downfall of the USSR” higher and “freedom of the Warsaw Pact states” lower. Estonia was high on “treason against socialist ideas”; Italy on the “democratisation of Soviet Society” and “US victory.” East Germany was low on the first five statements and high on “market economy.” The highest and lowest values recorded concerning all of the variables in this portion of the survey occurred within the five RYPE countries. The differences between the five countries are in the range of 0.5 – half a point.

Regional differences here were very small – ranging from 0.04 to 0.1. Rural young people placed slightly more relative emphasis on the “downfall of the USSR”; and urban young people, on the “US victory,” “national conflicts” and “market economy.”

4.2.5. Interest in European Integration

“What do Europe and European integration mean to you?”

- Europe is a geographical expression, nothing more. (Mv=2.3)
- Europe is the birthplace of democracy, enlightenment and progress. (Mv=3.3)
- Europe is a group of white, rich countries guilty of economic and ecological exploitation of the rest of the world. (Mv=2.8)
- European integration is the only way to peace between nations that previously attempted to destroy each other. (Mv=3.3)
- European integration is a danger to sovereign nations, to their identity and culture. (Mv=2.8)
- European integration will solve the economic and social crises of the countries in Europe. (Mv=3.2)

(categories: 1= totally disagree / 5= totally agree)

Overall our young people's attitudes towards Europe are more positive than negative (whereas from countries outside of Europe the feelings are understandably more negative). Italy showed the most positive regard; Finland, the most negative. The difference between countries ranged from 0.2 to 0.6. The vague idea, "Europe is a geographical expression, no more" found the most agreement in Sweden; least in Italy, with a difference of 0.7. There were no measurable differences in attitude between rural and urban areas concerning this matter.

4.3. Relevant Findings

Young peoples' lack of interest in politics is obvious, but young people still tend to have strong opinions and major concerns regarding many typical "political" questions. The majority consider solidarity with the poor, social welfare and security, freedom of opinion and peace to be rather important. The environment and environmental protection are also of great concern to young people.

One particularly interesting feature is the major variation between different countries' young people as to how much they value their country: for example 75 % of the young Finns considered their homeland to be important or very important, whereas only 50 % of the young Italians felt the same.

One of the most significant findings of our analysis of the "Youth and History" study is that on nearly all issues the extreme high and low scores for each variable are found within the group of countries involved in the RYPE project. This indicates that these countries are in a sense representative of the level of variance to be found in Europe. A second important finding, somewhat in contrast with the first, is the surprising level of homogeneity among European young people in their opinions concerning contemporary issues. The authors of the "Youth and History" study included a very broad range of relevant issues, so one would expect to find significant differences between the different countries surveyed, but the results show only minor national variations. Looking at these variances, one does not find a consistent pattern of national differences. Some of the differences seem predictable, others not. This also then is an indicator of the growing homogeneity of Europe. One reason for this may be the sharing of mass media with a more or less common information base by young people in Europe.

Most relevant for the RYPE study is the low variance between rural and urban areas. Whereas cultural identities varied very slightly from country to country, from region to region the differences were virtually non-existent. Perhaps then the process of Europe growing together in terms of smaller differences between countries is not countered by greater differences between regions.

4.4. Attitudes and Cultural Identity

4.4.1. Introduction

Based on the Eurobarometer data, we analysed the reactions of rural young people from East-Germany, West-Germany, Finland, Sweden and Italy to the following complexes of themes:

- the meaning of the European Union,
- expectations concerning the European Union,
- attitudes towards elderly people,
- wishes for one's children,
- leisure-time activities,
- affiliation with different religions,
- (in)tolerance towards different kinds of people,
- attitudes towards foreigners, and
- evaluations of socio-political themes.

We also analysed the age and gender structures among rural young people, as well as the age at which they finished their full-time education and the number of persons living together in their households. Data concerning Estonian young people unfortunately was not included in the Eurobarometer-study. Due to the massive amount of information included in this survey, we have not written out all of the questions and categories involved as we did with the "Youth and History" data. The basic analytical scheme, however, was the same for both studies.

4.4.2. Contentment in Life

A comparative study has shown that young people's contentment in life is tied to their economic situations (with the Irish as an exception, who seem contented enough regardless of their economic difficulties).⁹⁴ There is also a connection with freedom and the possibility to influence the course of one's own life. Nordic (like American) young people are quite satisfied with their personal freedom. Nordic young people also have a strong trust in people.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ see Helve 1997, 131-142; Helve 1999, 48-66.

⁹⁵ Friels, Richter & Zulehner 1993,

TABLE 1**Overall Satisfaction with Life and Subjective Feeling of Freedom**

Youths and Young Adults aged 17-30

Overall satisfaction with life	mean value	Subjective feeling of freedom	mean value
Total*	7.31	Total*	7.11
Sweden	7.90	Finland	7.98
Finland	7.73	Sweden	7.69
Italy	7.37	Italy	7.05
East Germany	6.76	Estonia	6.53
Estonia	6.31	East Germany	6.53

* combined mean value for Friesl, Richter and Zulehner's (1993) youth study, including 27 different countries from Europe and North America.

The mean values here for Finnish and Swedish young people show that their overall satisfaction with life and subjective feelings of freedom are well above those of their Italian, East German and Estonian counterparts. Mean values for young people from the post-socialist countries represented here are significantly lower than the average for the study as a whole (involving 27 different industrialised nations), both in terms of overall satisfaction with life and subjective feelings of freedom. There are some obvious explanations for this in terms of the painful transitions which were happening in these countries when the data was being collected (in the early nineties), but still the complex processes of economic and political changes which these young people have gone through need to be investigated more deeply.

4.4.3. The Meaning of and Expectations Concerning the European Union

On average 39.0 % of the young people within it believe that the European Union creates a better future for young people (min: Sweden 28.6 % / max: Italy 51.7 %). The second most important factor for these young people is the possibility to move freely within Europe – valued by an average of 37.7 % (min: Italy 24.1 % / max: West-Germany 53.1 %). 35.6 % saw the significance of the European Union

in creating jobs (min: West-Germany 26.6 % / max: Italy 41.7 %), and for 34.0 % the European Union is a means of improving the economic situation in Europe (min: Sweden 21.4 % / max: Italy 47.8 %). For 25.2 % of these young people the European Union means guaranteed peace in Europe. On the other hand, 20.1 % connect the European Union with a bureaucratic, waste of time and money (min: Italy 5.1 % / max: Sweden 36.5 %) and 13.1 % see a risk of losing cultural diversity (min: Italy 6.3 % / max: Finland 25.9 %).

Young people expect that the EU will make it easier to travel, study, work and live anywhere in Europe – this expectation shared by an average of 56.5 % (min: East-Germany 45.1 % / max: Finland 70.8 %). 33.9 % of the respondents hope that there will be more opportunities to find work (min: West-Germany 22.9 % / max: Italy 42.9 %), 30.9 % expect reduced discrimination against minorities and people from other countries, and 20.9 % expect a better quality of life for people overall (min: Sweden 8.8 % / max: Italy 36.1 %).

On the other hand, 26.4 % believe that there will be more difficulties in political decision making (min: Italy 12.0 % / max: Sweden 45.9 %). An expectation of increased social problems is expressed by 18.8 % of the respondents (min: Italy 7.9 % / max: East-Germany 34.1 %). Especially noticeable is the expectation of higher levels of unemployment by 22.4 % of East-German young people, compared with an average of only 12.4 % of young people having such fears in the survey as a whole. (In urban areas of East-Germany this anxiety is shared by as much as 25.6 %.) 10.2 % of the young people surveyed hope that the EU will bring more equality between men and women, and only 1.4 % believe that it is in danger of collapse within the next ten years.

The meaning of the European Union is seen as more positive than negative. Especially Italian young people see the European Union as a meaningful institution for improving the current situation and creating a better future. Compared to the great hopes and expectations regarding the European Union among Italian young people, those from the Nordic region express a more sceptical viewpoint. The differences between rural and urban areas were rather small; only, “the ability to go wherever I want in Europe” was seen as more important in urban regions (45.9 % on average - highest in East-Germany at 53.7 %).

4.4.4. Priorities in Life, Attitudes Towards Elderly People, and Hopes for Children

Rural young people named a stable relationship with one’s life partner as their primary concern in life in Sweden (81.4 %), Finland (73.6 %) and West-Germany (58.9 %), followed by a secure job. In the

rural areas of East-Germany and Italy the most important issue for young people is a secure job (70.3 % and 63.5 %, respectively), followed by concern for a stable relationship. The third major concern, shared by an average of 39.2 % is finding suitable housing (min: Italy 28.8 % / max: Sweden 48.1 %). In urban areas we find a rather similar structure in young people's priorities. Only 1.4 % of rural young people spontaneously stated that they do not want to have children (min: Sweden 0.3 % / max: West-Germany 5.7 %), in urban regions 1.6 % rejected the idea of parenthood.

In Europe 38.5 % of the rural young people are ready to accept personal responsibility for elderly family members (min: West-Germany 21.4 % / max: Sweden 49.1 %) and 35.5 % would not accept their parents living in a nursing home (min: Sweden 13.5 % / max: Italy 50.6 %), but still 35.0 % of the respondents agreed with the statement that elderly people do not understand how much things have changed in our society (min: East-Germany 29.3 % / max: Italy 40.0 %). The statement that elderly people should remain active as long as possible was supported by an average of 28.8 % (min: Italy 13.3 % / max: East-Germany 47.2 %), 14.8 % think that care for the elderly is the responsibility of the State (min: Sweden 7.9 % / max: East-Germany 19.1 %). Only 5.4 % thought that their generation should not have to pay for the pensions of elderly people and 4.4 % decline responsibility for the elderly members of their own families.

One complex of sets of questions in the Eurobarometer-study deals with the attitudes of young people towards some actual controversial problems such as premarital sex, punishing statutory rapists, euthanasia, etc.

86.7 % of the respondents find premarital sex acceptable (min: Italy 83.1 % / max: Sweden 92.7 %) – this being the point of clearest agreement. The attitudes concerning punishing statutory rapists were also very clear – on average 66.2 % are in favour of such (min: Italy 51.8 % / max: West-Germany 82.3 %). The last point on which there was general agreement among most of the young people surveyed was to be in favour of compulsory AIDS tests – wanted by an average 61.6 % (min: West-Germany 46.0 % / max: Italy 72.9 %). On average 44.4 % of rural young people are in favour of euthanasia (min: Italy 24.9 % / max: Finland 69.5 %) and 44.4 % are in favour of the right of homosexuals to be married (min: West-Germany 31.2 % / max: Sweden 54.9 %). Only about 23.6 % of rural young people accept such innovations in sexual morality as giving homosexuals the right to adopt children, limiting the number of children allowed to people on low incomes and having sex with someone other than one's own husband/wife/partner. Cloning, the reproduction of identical living beings, is the issue which found the least acceptance among young people, with only an average of 5.4 % being in favour.

There are some small differences here between young people's attitudes in rural and urban regions. For example we find that in urban areas there is a 13 % higher rate of acceptance for euthanasia (an average of 57.6 % vs. 44.4 % in rural areas), 9 % more in favour of homosexuals having the right to get married (53.4 % vs. 44.4 %) and nearly 7 % more in favour of homosexuals having the right to adopt children (30.4 % vs. 22.9 %). On the other hand, we find nearly 10 % fewer are in favour of compulsory AIDS tests (51.8 % vs. 61.6 %).

The acceptance of such issues varies heavily from country to country. Even attitudes towards premarital sex (showing the clearest agreement between all countries) varies with by close to 10 %. Nevertheless, the main tendencies are similar.

The negative attitudes towards having children or taking responsibility for the elderly are rare. The differences between rural and urban areas here are negligible.

4.4.5. Religious Affiliation

An average of 26.9 % of rural young people are not associated with any religion or religious group, though in East-Germany this figure was 70.7 %, Excluding the East-German young people, the average rate of religious non-participation among rural young people is down to 20.2 % (min: Italy 7.7% / max: 43.7 % Sweden). On average 38.6 % of the respondents were Roman Catholic (88.1 % in Italy / 42.2 % in West-Germany) and 30.2 % Protestants (min: Italy 0.7 % / max: Finland 82.9 %). Only a few isolated cases belonged to other religions. There are some differences regarding the affiliation with a religion between rural and urban regions. In urban areas on average 34.2 % do not belong to any religion (min: Italy 9.7 % / max: East-Germany 79.8 %). There are also differences regarding affiliations with the two predominant forms of religion in these countries: In urban areas on average 19.6 % are Roman Catholic and 42.0 % Protestant.

4.4.6. Intolerance Towards Different Types of People and Attitudes Towards Foreigners

Answers to the question, "In the presence of which sorts of people do you feel uneasy?" are consistent from country to country in that the three most common answers were "none," "alcoholics" and "drug addicts." The ordering of these categories differs, but the highest percentage answer is always one of these three. 40.6 % of young people say that they do not feel uneasy in the presence of any type of persons (min: East-Germany and Sweden 34.6 % / max: Finland 47.2 %). 32.3 % feel uneasy with drug

addicts (min: Italy 25.3 % / max: Sweden 45.0 %) and 25.2 % in the presence of alcoholics (min: Italy 13.8 % / max: East-Germany 41.1 %). These categories are followed by gays or lesbians (15.9 %), homeless people (13.9 %) and mentally handicapped people (11.2 %). Among these, intolerance towards homeless people seems to be a typical German phenomenon (East-Germany 22.0 % and West-Germany 27.1 %); without the two German areas figured in, the average rate of uneasiness here would only be at 8.9 %.

25.1 % of the rural young people surveyed say that there are some foreigners in their countries, but not too many (min: East-Germany 17.9 % / max: Sweden 40.3 %). 27.8 % answer that there are too many foreigners around them (min: Finland 4.2 % / max: East-Germany 41.1 %). In contrast to this result, we see that 27.9 % of rural young people think that the foreigners living in their country should have the same rights as the native-born citizens (min: West-Germany 15.1 % / max: Sweden 53.1 %). On average 9.7 % of rural young people feel that there are not many foreigners in their country (min: West-Germany 0.5 % / max: Finland 34.7 %). 19.0 % of the respondents say that they are glad to have foreigners living in their country (min: East-Germany 3.3 % / max: Finland 44.9 %) and 8.5 % agree with the statement, “We could do with more foreigners here” (min: East-Germany 0.4 % / max: Finland 30.6 %). 9.2 % believe that the presence of foreigners adds to the strength of their country (min: Italy 2.8 % / max: Sweden 18.6 %) and 14.7 % say that the foreigners living in their country are full members of their society (min: East-Germany 7.3 % / max: Sweden 29.6 %). At the opposite end of the spectrum, we find that an average of 8.3 % of the young people surveyed are of the opinion that all foreigners should be sent back to their country of origin (min: Sweden 0.9 % / max: East-Germany 17.9 %).

Attitudes of young people in Europe towards foreigners show a relatively clear North-South divide – xenophobia in Europe increases the further south you go. The only exception to this rule is East-Germany, which shows a higher percentage of most xenophobia indicators than Italy. The Nordic countries show the fewest indications of xenophobia and above-average agreement with statements like, “We could do with more foreigners here,” and “I’m glad that foreigners live in our country.”

In terms of tolerance in general, differences between rural and urban regions are negligible, other than the fact that in urban areas the average level of intolerance towards homeless people is higher (16.9 %) than the level of intolerance towards homosexuals (12.8 %). In urban areas an average of 14.2% (vs. 8.5 % in rural areas) agreed with the statement “We could do with more foreigners here,” (min: East-Germany 0.6 % / max: Finland 40.1 %) and 13.4 % of the young people from these areas (vs. 9.2 % from rural areas) also feel that the presence of foreigners adds to the strength of their country (min: Italy 5.3 % / max: Sweden 23.6 %).

4.4.7. Leisure-time Activities

Rural young people in all of the areas analysed agree that their favourite leisure activity is getting together with friends – an average of 76.6 % stated this as their activity of choice (min: East-Germany 70.7 % / max: Sweden 85.5 %). This was followed by listening to music (62.5 %) and watching TV (59.9 %). 49.3 % of prefer sports activities (min: East-Germany 34.6 % /max: Sweden 58.5 %). These activities are followed by going for a walk, a drive or a bike ride (37.2 %), going to the cinema, theatre or concerts (26.1 %) and shopping (26.0 %). Activities like painting (5.5 %) or helping other people (voluntary or community work - 9.1 %) are down on the bottom end of the list.

In the urban regions of the countries analysed we find a similar structure of leisure-time preferences. There are some differences in the percentages, but the order of the activities is identical.

4.5. General Conclusions

In the light of the above findings, it is highly questionable to apply such a broad, complex term as “cultural identity” to a comparative analysis between five very different countries. Nevertheless we believe that the description of the sample of topics here are central and meaningful in relation to the problems analysed in the RYPE project. As shown above, the differences between the countries are more distinct than the differences between rural and urban areas. There are big differences regarding some topics related to cultural identity between these countries, but there are really no consistent patterns of difference. On the other hand, there seems to be a common pattern in the responses to each of the different topics. Perhaps then (with some topic-specific local differentiation) it is useful and possible to talk about a latent common European cultural identity, which is not significantly differentiated between rural and urban areas.

5. CASE STUDIES

5.1. Finnish Majority-Swedish Minority Young People

5.1.1. Fighting in the Boys' Culture

It is a general rule that aggression is part of boys' culture. Girls are probably not less aggressive than boys, but their aggression usually finds expression in a more indirect manner.⁹⁶ Physical aggression is also connected with age. The physical aggressiveness of boys decreases with years and seldom comes out in the form of conflicts after puberty.⁹⁷ In the school environment physical aggression is most prevalent among 11-year-old boys. Fifteen-year-old boys also to a considerable extent express their aggressions physically. Among 18-year-old boys physical aggressions are, however, much more unusual.⁹⁸

In many young male gangs the informal system demands that the gang members who want to reach high prestige are to be brave, tough and good at fighting.⁹⁹ Paul Willis also states in his classic study of an English working class boy gang that violence was a permanent feature of masculine behaviour.¹⁰⁰ Violence regulated the informal status system within the gang. In scuffling, the gang member was thoroughly tested. He was expected to "be able to take care of himself" and fight when he was insulted. Among the leaders the ability to fight was what finally decided the pecking order and conferred status. According to Petersson, fighting tests the order of rank between different gangs as well and is also a criterion among gangs that do not have a working-class background.¹⁰¹

5.1.2. No Conflicts in a (More Segregated) Rural Area

In rural Nykarleby,¹⁰² close to the city of Vasa, there are few people who speak Finnish and, according to our respondents, conflicts between young people of different linguistic background are rare. Four

⁹⁶ Björkqvist 1995, 33–35

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 33

⁹⁸ Lagerspetz & Björkqvist 1994

⁹⁹ Kotsinas 1994, 21

¹⁰⁰ Willis 1983, 85–87

¹⁰¹ Petersson 1990, 39

¹⁰² Regarding this and other place names in this chapter, please refer to the footnote to section 1.5.2.

pupils briefly mention conflicts between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking youths, but the descriptions concern other cities than Nykarleby.

*The Finnish young people here are not too much mixed up in any language controversies. But in Jakobstad things are already much worse. (Nykarleby boy 111: Living in a bilingual country).*¹⁰³

Finns are often more aggressive than Finland-Swedes. They often pick a quarrel and want to fight (...) In Nykarleby this bilingualism and its controversies are not too noticeable among young people. There are fairly few Finnish young people of my age in our city. (Nykarleby girl 128: My contacts with Finnish-speaking young people.)

The stereotypical conception that Finnish-speaking people would be more aggressive and eager to start fights which the above girl voices, also emerges in essays from other cities, as will become clear later in this study.

5.1.3. Fights in Urban Areas

Conflicts between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking young people are related in half (13 out of 25) of the essays from urban Vasa.

Living in a bilingual country is almost like a Saturday night in the city market-place: Finnish-speaking young people on the west side, Swedish-speaking on the east side of the marketplace. Indeed, language differences are nearly the only differences between people around the world, and in Vasa it is of great importance whether one speaks Swedish or Finnish. Those who speak Finnish can't stand those who speak Swedish and the other way round (this is true of young people), and it is rather annoying if you cross the west part of the market-place and five or six Finnish-speaking people come and knock you down, and then of course you want to be revenged, and next time you see one of them and you are together with three or four, you knock him down and then there is a

¹⁰³ The quotations are as far as possible renderings of the way in which the pupils themselves expressed their observations in their essays. Every quotation is followed by an indication of the title of the essay chosen by the pupil and the number assigned to the pupil in the investigation. The number of the Nykarleby pupils start with the figure 100; that of the Ekenäs pupils with 200; that of the Vasa pupils with 300; that of the pupils in Svenska normallyceum, Helsingfors, with 400; that of the pupils in Åshöjdens grundskola, Kaustby, with 500 and the respondents from Tammerfors have been given numbers starting with 600. As the girls were always given even numbers and the boys always odd numbers, the figures referring to the pupils in a class containing for instance many girls may be higher than the total number of respondents in the class.

terrible fight and you have to fight to save the honour of the Swedish-speaking (Vasa boy 311: Living in a bilingual country.)

The Vasa respondents' descriptions of conflicts differ from those of the respondents from the other cities in that the degree of violence is more prominent. In the other cities the young people do not usually have any experiences of their own of physical fights, but the young people in Vasa do. Five pupils have themselves been involved in fights and two of them relate that they have witnessed fights several times.

Finnish-speaking teenagers often do not realise that you don't know any Finnish. If you are in the centre of the city on a Friday or Saturday night you'll often see fights between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking young people (Vasa girl 302: As a Finland-Swedish teenager in Vasa.)

Fights are above all a male matter even if girls may be subjected to threatening advances. The five respondents who relate that they have been involved in fights themselves are all boys. As was noted above, physical aggression is on the whole part of the boys' culture. As was also noted, physical aggressions are not only connected with gender but also with age. The pupils sampled in this study are 15–16 years old, which is an age category when boys tend to express their aggressions in a physical manner.

From the essays it also emerges that the fights usually take place on Friday and Saturday nights, the nights when young people most frequently gather at the general local meeting-places for young people. According to the respondents (see for instance the quotation from boy 311) there is a clear local segregation between the language groups. In the western part of the marketplace the Finnish-speaking young people are supposed to gather while those who speak Swedish gather in the eastern part. Occupying a particular public area is, as we saw in section 3.1.2. above, a normal form of youth gangs' behaviour, and the competition for cultural space control can, among other things, lead to ethnic conflicts.

In the Vasa essays the same stereotypic conceptions regarding the Finnish-speaking young people that the Nykarleby girl 128 mentioned reappear, namely that they are aggressive and start the conflicts. This becomes clear for instance from the above quotation from boy 311 and from the quotations below.

Another consequence of being Swedish-speaking is that one risks being punched on the jaw if one ventures into the marketplace on a Friday night. There are Finnish-speaking young people who set out to mark the "hurrit." (Vasa boy 309: Living in a bilingual country.)

Often they start fighting and run after you in gangs. (Vasa boy 327: My contacts with Finnish-speaking young people.)

It is possible that the Finnish-speaking young people, for instance because they form the linguistic majority in the city, are more on the offensive, but the quotations can also be interpreted as the expression of an ethnocentric attitude.

As is seen from the quotations, a repeated assertion in the descriptions by the young people in Vasa is the possibly ethnocentric attitude that the Finnish-speaking in a group attack a solitary Swedish-speaking young person. The Vasa boys thus feel (or at any rate wish to make it appear) that the Finnish-speaking boys are unsportsmanlike and cowardly and that the attacks by the Finnish-speaking young people do not constitute a measuring of strength man against man, but a demonstration of power and a desire to harass a weaker party. One reason for the blackening is probably a wish to attribute negative characteristics to the out-group. As was stated in the theoretical section, there seems to be a universal tendency to consider one's own group as morally superior and more splendid than other groups and also to choose to compare aspects that show one's own group in a favourable light. One reason for this might be that the individual wants to create and maintain a positive social identity in order to get a positive image of him/herself in this way. But it is also possible that the respondents' feeling of being persecuted is founded on fact.

In contrast to the respondents in Helsingfors and Tammerfors, the Vasa respondents do not give an account of their defensive strategies in their descriptions of how they counter hostile attacks by Finnish-speaking youths. The male respondents tend to describe their defensive strategies as offensive; if attacked they do not yield but start fighting. The Vasa boy 311's phrasing "you have to fight for the honour of the Swedish-speaking" indicates that the gang members are expected to fight when they and/or their own group members are insulted and that the fights, as Willis has observed, are to be regarded as a masculine test of the group members' valiancy.¹⁰⁴ One of the functions of the fights is also that the boundaries between the groups (between "Swedes" and "Finns") will thus be clearly marked (see the theoretical section). The conflicts thus contribute to creating and confirming the identity of the group and to maintaining the boundaries separating the group from the social environment.

The male Vasa respondents' brazen attitude is probably due to the fact that they feel that the Swedish-speaking young people in Vasa constitute such a big proportion of the local population that they have no reason to be compliant. They think they have the same right as the Finnish-speaking to be them-

¹⁰⁴ Willis 1983

selves and speak their own language. The Vasa respondents thus behave as a secure minority who feel that the special features of their own group (language) must be considered valuable, who demand that this should be recognised and who ignore prejudices because of their strong self-confidence.

Although a great many fights according to the respondents are concentrated to the marketplace, some of the respondents also relate aggressive behaviour in their home environment.

I only know Swedish and that's the cause of a lot of unpleasantness. Finnish young people start quarrelling but only if they are twice as many. Where I live there is a Ural gang [an abusive reference to Finnish speakers] who are deranged. Their mopeds sound like stone crushers and they are weird types, but only some of them, some are nice and some don't give a daMv(...) They say, come to Ristikka,¹⁰⁵ but I won't ever go there; I go to Åminne,¹⁰⁶ and the Ural monkeys don't dare show their faces there; they think you're a coward if you run when they attack you three to one. My contacts with the Finnish-speakers are very wretched. (Vasa boy 315: My contacts with Finnish-speaking young people.)

Belief in a common line of descent is, as was stated in the theoretical part, a specific feature of ethnic categories. The conviction that the Finland-Swedes and the Finnish-speaking Finns are of different origin is the core of ethnofaulisms like Ural gangs, Ural monkeys, etc.

According to the respondents, Finnish-speaking young people do not attack their friends, even if these happen to be Swedish-speaking. This comes out in the essays from all the cities. For instance a Helsingfors girl writes in this way:

But if you know a Finnish-speaking young person maybe ever so little, then they don't call us Swedish-speaking for instance "hurrit." (Åshöjden girl 513: My contacts with Finnish-speaking young people.)

On the other hand, the respondents relate cases where Finnish-speaking young people, even if they have Swedish-speaking friends whom they fully accept, nevertheless attack Swedish-speaking young people they don't know.

My friends are my age and quite ordinary Finns. They often tell me when they scuffle with Swedish-speaking youths who go to the school in their neighbourhood, but they have never

¹⁰⁵ A youth centre in Korsnäståget (Ristinummi), which is a suburb of Vasa with a strong Finnish-speaking majority.

¹⁰⁶ A summer dance pavilion in Malax (Maalahti), a mainly Swedish-speaking rural municipality outside Vasa.

scuffled with me though I am Swedish-speaking. (Vasa boy 307: My contacts with Finnish-speaking young people.)

As was said in the theoretical section, interaction between individuals belonging to different groups usually lead to a reduction of the ethnic prejudices about the opposite group. Still, people tend to stick to the stereotyped images which they have got. If an individual's experiences are not in agreement with the stereotype, it is usual for the individual to explain the phenomenon as a deviation from the normal rather than to change his/her stereotypic opinion. In the above cases, the Finnish-speaking young people probably regard their friends as exceptional and can therefore continue to consider the abstract group of Finland-Swedes in a negative way.

5.1.4. Language — An Important Basis for Categorisation

Summing up, it can be stated that conflicts between majority Finnish- and minority Swedish-speaking young people according to the respondents occurred in all places except for rural, minority dominated Nykarleby, where there are few people who speak Finnish. According to the accounts of the respondents, oral bullying was the most usual form of conflict, but also threatening physical behaviour and fights were described in the essays.

Depending on the proportion of Swedish- to Finnish-speaking people, the conflicts from the perspective of the young people whose native language is Swedish took different forms in the different localities. E.g. in the essays written in Ekenäs, where Swedish is spoken by the majority, only such cases were described where those speaking Finnish were harassed. In the localities where the Finnish-speaking young people are in majority, the respondents above all described how the Swedish-speaking young people were attacked by the Finnish-speaking. The “Swedes” form a strong minority and in Vasa it was not unusual for the Finland-Swedish boys to get into scuffles with Finnish-speaking young people of the same age. In Helsingfors, where the Swedish-speaking form a small minority, the respondents had developed different defensive strategies to avoid aggressive opposition. In Tammerfors the Swedish-speaking young people are so few and well integrated into Finnish-speaking communities that no group conflicts occurred, but individual Swedish-speaking persons could be insulted with negative comments. The young in both Tammerfors and Helsingfors often used silence as a strategy and in this way tried to avoid confrontations.

It is significant of the reality in bilingual places that the young often refer to language in their conflicts. The fact that one belongs to a particular language group is one of the most important bases for catego-

risation among the young, and this became especially conspicuous in the public places where the young meet. Since the identity work of the young to a great extent takes place in some group of friends, this group will have a very important function. If ethnic aspects are brought to bear on the categorisation of in- and out-groups and are seen as important components in the autostereotypic attitudes and the creation of a positive social identity, the ethnic identity is very strongly emphasised.

The identification of the individual with some category (for instance with Finland-Swedes) can also depend on context so that the special social identity in a certain situation (say in an intergroup relationship with Finnish-speaking young people) may become so strong that other social identities will pale in comparison. At times some specific aspect of social identity may become so dominant that it all but excludes all other identity dimensions. Seen from this perspective, the behaviour that occurs in intergroup relations may reflect only part of the total identity, but this part is brought to the fore and becomes dominant because of the topical situation.

5.2. Calabrian Rural Young People

5.2.1. Between Tradition and Modernity

According to Shils (1975) every society has central areas, or as he defines them, society centres and more peripheral areas. The symbolic orders, the values, the beliefs and traditions which interest, in different manners and forms, those who live in that particular social space are radiated from the former; desires, interests and collective aims are formed. The existence of those central areas is of great importance, according to Shils, for the legitimating of the social and cultural order. While they take on a sacred character, the society centres actually, at the same time, belong to the sphere of action, structuring social activities and roles. The symbolic and at the same time organisational aspects of the social life thus find, within themselves, full institutionalisation.

The existence of these focal points in the symbolic articulation of a society, capable of establishing the significance of behaviour, of specifying its ends and means, becomes very evident when one works on the materials of memory: the pictures of the social memory are formed on the basis of these centres, and clearly carry their mark. In particular, if one works in a reality which is still wavering between tradition and modernity, as is the case in present-day Calabria, where the process of pluralisation of collective memories, induced by modernity, is weak, their presence is more easily retraceable within

these materials.¹⁰⁷ In fact, in Calabria there are still some collective memories, the voice of which is socially stronger, and makes more sense than modernity, not only for the members of the group which expresses them, but also for society as a whole; hegemonic collective memories, we may say, which incorporate other group memories and tend to impose themselves as a tout-court social memory. The family memory is certainly one of these memories, and likewise the family may be fully entitled to be considered a “society centre.”

5.2.2. The Importance of Family

Both before and after the “great transformation” years after World War II¹⁰⁸ – before Calabria was incorporated within more vast pluralistic systems – integration and social cohesion was primarily guaranteed by the family structure. In traditional Calabria, and in particular in the area around Cosenza – as Pino Arlacchi has clearly shown¹⁰⁹ – the family cum agricultural enterprise for instance may be considered as the fundamental pivot of the economical and social life. Along with meeting essential human needs, it co-ordinates economic relationships; guarantees specific roles, values and social functions for its members; assures, integration of the economic and non-economic spheres of existence, order and social control. Within it, productive obligations and personal relations are inextricably welded. The main instrument of this welding is the relation defined by Thomas and Znaniecki as “family solidarity,” a relation which is manifested “in the control and the help exercised on each member of the family group by every other member.”¹¹⁰ By virtue of this solidarity, the life of each member develops as a declination of that of the family group as a whole. Consequently, as Arlacchi underscores in Calabria no one “can rise or decline without to some extent also taking his family group along.”¹¹¹

Due to this complex order of motives the family, here more than elsewhere, is a social aggregate capable of providing the evaluative dictates of action, to prescribe the appropriate choices, not only with regard to models of behaviour, but also to the final objectives. The basic questions of human existence, including the concepts of the world and of life, find organisational paths of reply within it. This normative character of the family institution is, on the other hand, reinforced by the individual's in-

¹⁰⁷ In a social reality subject to complex changes, as those brought about by the process of modernisation, not only do aspects of tradition and modernity merge in a heterogeneous mix but, as Gusfield observes (1967), they also tend to reinforce one another mutually, the one supporting the other. With regard to the dynamic between tradition and modernity in Calabria, see Piselli (1981) and Fantozzi (1982).

¹⁰⁸ see Polanyi 1974

¹⁰⁹ Arlacchi 1980

¹¹⁰ W.I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *Il contadino polacco in Europa e in America*; cit. in Arlacchi 1980, 36.

¹¹¹ Arlacchi 1980, 37

ability to escape its embrace: those who do not belong to a family, and thus lack social protection, as a matter of fact find themselves at the margins of social life.

The family remains the central structure, even in a social context that is substantially transformed, as in modern post-war Calabria. The recent analyses of Fortunata Piselli for instance have clearly shown that even in the social scenario of the past few decades the family has succeeded in maintaining its centrality undisturbed. Thus, in the community in the Cosenza area which she analysed, “the penetration of market mechanisms, through emigration, not only does not provoke the disappearance or weakening of traditional relations, but creates life conditions which tend to perpetrate them, in different forms, as principal factor of cohesion and social stability.”¹¹² In a region where the traditional forms of relation fade along with the subsistence economy they served to support, the protection provided by the family net nevertheless does not lose even a fraction of its efficiency. It continues to guarantee order in the community and social integration, even if linked to the new political and economical interests which have recently developed.¹¹³

“Family norms and relations,” write Arrighi and Piselli, “no longer represent a conditioning structure determining the individual behaviours [...] On the contrary, they form a flexible structure, subject to manipulation on the part of the individuals for purposes of reinforcement and consolidation of their own economical, social and political position.”¹¹⁴

In its launching of initiatives, in the field of economy as well as that of politics, in young people’s transition from school to work and in their consequent, at times very long, periods spent in search of a steady occupation, in its guaranteeing its members the possibility to advance socially, the family structure still shows unchanged vitality. To quote Piselli’s spot-on analysis (1981, p. 194), true “social reason,” in a region which is increasingly characterised by conflict and internal contrasts, is that the family remains a true *Stella Polaris* in the sky of the society of Calabria. Especially for its younger members, family relations appear as a safe harbour in the present-day *mare magnum* of instability and uncertainty. The young people are fully aware, for instance, that if they are to succeed in finding a “steady job” in public institutions or make a career in their profession after graduating it depends to a large extent on the system of family relations; the family will, when the time comes, move its clientele network. And they are equally aware, on a level that may be banal but no less important in terms of identity, that their chance to play the role of consumers in a society in which the manufacturing structure is traditionally weak, is inconceivable without the direct support of the family. Finally, we must

¹¹² Piselli 1981, 5

¹¹³ Arrighi & Piselli 1985, 462

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, 466

not forget that the everyday existence of young people in Calabria continues to take place within the family circle. The generation gap is minimal in Calabria. Young people often still live not only with their parents, but also with their grandparents: and if the latter do not share the house of the grandchildren, they usually live in the same neighbourhood, or in the same small town. Even though mass education has made a significant contribution in the sense of breaking this scheme (to make just one example, consider the strong modernising influence of the principle of residence for the students at the University of Calabria) none the less re-compositions, attempts to bridge these “cultural gaps” are clearly visible in the everyday reality.¹¹⁵

The family essentially represents, in the lives of Calabrian young people, a reference which cannot be disregarded. This reference is all the more significant if we consider the social progress which a considerable portion of the families in Calabria have made in recent years: from grandparents who know neither how to read nor write and have worked only for survival, to the parents who are generally just about literate, who have had a life ranging from hard to very hard but have nevertheless enjoyed a better life style, to the sons and daughters who, thanks in particular to levels of education which are decidedly revolutionary for Calabria, at least potentially may plan their own future.¹¹⁶ To the young people this path appears first and foremost to be the result of their parents’ long chain of renunciations – their self-denial, their spirit of sacrifice – rather than the result of a social and cultural evolution. If we want, it is the viewpoint – ratified by a cultural model that is centuries old – according to which it is always the individual who subsumes the social, and never the other way round. This also gives rise to the tacit debt of gratitude which binds the children to the parents. It is also thanks to this profound and timeless bond that, in spite of the profound changes which have affected life styles, there is no generational conflict between the former and the latter. Young people have the impression of proceeding along the path that their forefathers have traced.

In view of these co-ordinates the reasons why family memory is one of the crucial centres (if not *the* centre) of social memory in Calabria become clearer. Through it the past – characterised by the biblical work ethic, by the emigration experience, by the interminable rosary of sacrifices made to provide oneself and one's family with a dignified existence, protected from physical exertion and precariousness – becomes indelible; is turned into a perennial present. Its topicality is primarily that of painful experiences.

¹¹⁵ Thus, to stick to the subject of the students of the University of Calabria, on Saturday and Sunday (as well as other holidays) the campus is almost completely emptied; the great majority of the students return to their families, each in their own small town.

¹¹⁶ For instance, according to Formez’s research, in the early eighties more than half of the 30,000 persons in Calabria had never completed their compulsory education. The rate of illiteracy was about 6 % (Formez 1981, 88).

The family memory provides the youngest members with important resources for defining their identity. In the first place it indicates the starting point of the path of social ascent, the final stages of which they are covering. Never, perhaps, will we find such a grand confirmation of the open attitude towards the future horizon, and action-orientedness, of collective memory. A guide for the future as much as a lesson from the past, the “living history” conveyed by family memory becomes, to the young people forced to face a vague future, a protective shield both against incognitos and interior wavering, and against any accidents faced in the struggle for status. Thanks to its vitality young people can rely on a path, the sense of which is socially unchallengeable. Its affective, intimate cipher blunts the feeling of difference within the family group and increases the latter’s ability to unify different worlds. Gratitude and the force of family memory reinforce emotional involvement while underscoring the immutability of that which “matters in life.” In its turn, collective memory strengthens the gratitude, and the latter in turn increases the former. This circular development also serves, for Calabrian young people, to legitimise a model of work culture.

Preserved from the wear of time due to this twofold influence, archaic dimensions survive in the orientation of the young people – albeit with a complete change in character – associated with the working life and work culture of their grandfathers rather than that of their fathers.¹¹⁷ The memory of their physical hard work, above all associated with the hard work on the land, thus becomes, among young people, a rejection of manual labour. The memory of separation from loved ones, the poisoned fruit of the emigration experience, is transformed, in the increasingly educated present of the sons and daughters, into a refusal to sever, even temporarily, one’s ecological and affective ties to obtain work; only exceptional cases, for instance when extraordinarily generous benefits are given in terms of status, justify the breaking of this rule.¹¹⁸ Finally the memory of existential precariousness, the thousands of occasional jobs, the everyday “coping” faced by the grandfathers and fathers (for the latter, also in a relatively recent period) is changed into the primary importance assigned by young people to job stability as compared to its concrete content. The dominant model of work culture among the grandparents and parents, which may be summarised in the proposition “any work is fine, as long as it permits

¹¹⁷ The work experience of grandmothers and mothers are decidedly less significant for the formation of these orientations (except, for a considerable part of the girls, as an example to avoid imitating). In the reality of Southern Italy, in fact, female work has always been socially invisible. Even if, as Amalia Signorelli writes (1983, 71-72) in spite of “the stereotype according to which they were all housewives, Southern Italian women have always worked outside the home, except for some brackets of middle-class women [...] However, the productive capacity of women, in particular the work done outside the home, has been, as we know, culturally denied, as a sign of dishonour for the man: consequently women, in particular among farmers, have never had, I will not go as far as to say professional identity, but not even awareness of themselves as workers.”

¹¹⁸ After the hardship associated with the emigration of grandparents and parents, which have often lasted many years – and which, as far as the fathers are concerned, are often still ongoing today – the fact of living and working in the same place appears, in the eyes of young people, to be an inalienable right.

one to live and keep one's family alive,” is transformed, with the changing parameters of propriety, into their offspring's dictate, “any job is fine, as long as it’s not manual.”

The lesson provided by the family memory, the results of the research suggest, has been profoundly absorbed by the model of work culture that dominates among young people in Calabria. The indissoluble bond created by the obligation of gratitude uniting the sons and daughters to the parents – whose “sacrifices” have guaranteed the widening, through the access to the education system, of the horizon of choices – seals it, and reinforces its timelessness. Instruments of cohesion, integrity and social continuity, collective memory and gratitude contribute to making the past the centre of time and identity: even if it is to assert the new generation’s right to a better future.

5.3. Ethnic Dimensions of Estonian Rural Young People

5.3.1. Ethnic Backgrounds

One specific feature of the ethnic composition of Estonian population is the large percentage of non-native and foreign born people, as well as the concentration of these people in the most urbanised areas and in certain segments of the society. The situation where majority of the non-native population comes from the dominant nation of the former Soviet Union, Russians forming the largest contingent of permanent residents without citizenship, adds a specific socio-political dimension to the overall ethnic situation in Estonia.

The share of ethnic Estonians in Estonian population was 89.2 % in 1881; 90.6 % in 1897; 87.7 % in 1922; 88.2 % in 1934; and 89.3 % in 1941. Russians, instead of Germans, became the dominating ethnic minority at the last turn of the century, and an overwhelming majority of non-Estonians settled in towns, first of all in Tallinn, the capital.

During the Soviet period (see Table 2) the share of Estonians in the overall population fell due to the influx of labour force, mostly from the neighbouring areas of the Russian Federation. Majority of the

immigrants settled in towns, and areas with comparatively compact non-native, Russian-speaking populations were formed: especially in Tallinn and industrialised North-eastern Estonia. As a result of remarkable territorial, educational, professional, familial, and other forms of segregation, the relations between Estonians and a large portion of the non-Estonian immigrants can be characterised as mutual segregation.

TABLE 2

Ethnic Composition of the Estonian Population in the 1950-90s

	1 9 5 9		1 9 7 9		1 9 8 9		1 9 9 7	
	N*	%	N*	%	N*	%	N*	%
Estonians	892.7	74.6	947.8	64.7	963.3	61.5	950.1	65.0
Russians	240.2	20.1	408.8	27.9	474.8	30.3	412.6	28.2
Ukrainians	15.8	1.3	36.0	2.5	48.3	3.1	37.3	2.6
Belorussians	10.9	0.9	23.5	1.6	27.7	1.8	21.9	1.5
Finns	16.7	1.4	17.8	1.2	16.6	1.1	13.6	0.9
Jews	5.4	0.5	5.0	0.3	4.6	0.3	2.6	0.2
Tatars	1.5	0.1	3.2	0.2	4.1	0.3	3.3	0.2
Germans	0.7	0.1	4.0	0.3	3.5	0.2	1.3	0.1
Latvians	2.9	0.2	4.0	0.3	3.1	0.2	2.7	0.2
Poles	2.3	0.2	2.9	0.2	3.0	0.2	2.4	0.2
Lithuanians	1.6	0.1	2.4	0.2	2.6	0.2	2.2	0.2
Other	6.1	0.5	9.3	0.6	13.8	0.9	12.0	0.8
TOTAL	1196.8	100	1464.5	100	1565.7	100	1462.1	100

* in thousands

(source: censuses and the Statistical Office of Estonia)

A question may arise: is the ethnic composition of Estonia something unique, or is it more or less typical of post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe? In fact the answer to both parts of this question is yes.

Data published by the Institute of International Sociology (Gorizia, Italy) demonstrates that we have a relatively unique situation on the world scene, but rather typical for the post-socialist world.¹¹⁹ Thus the nine countries with the largest share of ethnic minorities among the population during the 1980s and the first half of the 90s were: Kazakhstan (minimum share of ethnic minorities during this period: 56.3 % / maximum: 59,5 %), Bosnia-Herzegovina (48.5 % / 55.2 %), Latvia (42.7 % / 47.5 %), Kirgizstan (42.1 % / 46.0 %), Estonia (32.1 % / 37.7 %), Moldova (32.0 % / 35.3 %), Macedonia (30.0 % / 33.7 %), Tajikistan (29.9 % / 37.4 %), and Georgia (28.0 % and 30.8 %). According to this data, the countries with the biggest shares of ethnic minorities are former Soviet or Yugoslav territories.

According to the same source, Estonia ranked second (after Luxembourg) in terms of the share of the population born outside the country. Over three-fifths of the non-natives living in Estonia have come from other territories. According to the 1989 census, 38.8 % of the non-native population were born in Estonia; 44.0 % in Russia; 7.5 % in the Ukraine, etc.

A new pattern of changes in the ethnic composition of the Estonian population began when Estonia regained its independence. Now we see – alongside an overall decline in the population – that the share of non-Estonians has begun to decrease. Causes for this include the departure of former Soviet military personnel, re-migration of the people who had been employed mostly in the Soviet military-industrial complex, and also somewhat lower fertility rates among the non-native population.

As mentioned before, the increased share of non-native (mostly Slavic, Russian-speaking) population went hand by hand with the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation as interrelated aspects of the same “imperial” economic and social development of the Soviet period. Although the changes in the ethnic composition as well as ethnic constraints have been mostly characteristic of the urban

¹¹⁹ see: Ethnic Minorities... 1996

population, the ethnic dimension of social problems of the rural population, including youth, cannot be neglected if one wants to get an adequate picture of the situation of Estonian young people.

At the same time, the situation of Estonian rural young people can be seen as an example of the pattern of ethno-political development where there is a considerable ethnic minority representing at the same time the former politically and socially dominant majority of Soviet society as a whole.

The problems of integrating ethnic minorities into a society seeking European integration are seen as crucial, and differences and similarities in the social development of young people belonging to the titular nation and to the minorities are good indicators of the ongoing changes which, on the other hand, speak about the effectiveness of the entire social policy.¹²⁰

The empirical problem that can be studied on the basis of existing data is: *are there any significant differences in the situation, opinions and future expectations of the native and Russian-speaking rural young people?*

The following presentation is based on data from the monitoring of social problems of graduates of Estonian primary and secondary schools. Data were collected in 1992 and in 1996-98 when representative surveys of graduating students of primary, general secondary and vocational (secondary) schools were administered in all counties of Estonia.

As the official statistics provide no data which could give a picture of the distribution of young people from various ethnic categories along urban-rural lines, we present here data about the school graduates which were collected while the empirical survey of 1996-98 was prepared. Table 3 gives an overview of the distribution of the school graduates between the main types of educational institutions.

¹²⁰ see: the corresponding sections of reviews of national youth policy prepared for the Council of Europe: Country Review, 1997, Ch. 4: The Netherlands... 1998, Section 3

TABLE 3

Number of Estonian School Graduates in 1996-98 by Type of Settlement, Type of School and Language of Instruction

	Primary (9-year) schools - Estonian	General secondary schools - Estonian	Vocational secondary schools - Estonian	Primary (9-year) schools - Russian	General secondary schools - Russian	Vocational secondary schools - Russian
Schools in county centres (incl. Tallinn)	5780	4383	1031	3489	1894	839
Schools in other big towns (more than 19,000 residents)	22	14	0	1350	500	497
Schools in other settlements, considered as rural	5996	2412	1124	633	246	0
TOTAL	11798	6809	2155	5472	2640	1136
% of graduates of rural schools	51	35	52	12	9	

(Data collected from different educational departments of counties at different times: one county in 1996, nine counties in 1997 and five counties in 1998.)

The data does not give an exact picture of the distribution of one concrete educational cohort. But summing up data about the distribution of two different educational cohorts we probably avoid the impact of purely incidental fluctuations. According to the table, graduates of rural schools make up about 1/8 of all graduates of primary schools where the language of instruction is Russian (embracing students from various ethnic backgrounds who have Russian as their language of instruction). In the case of Estonian primary schools the corresponding proportion is 1/2. Graduates of rural schools make up approximately 1/10 of all graduates of Russian general secondary schools, but 1/3 of the graduates

of all Estonian schools of the same type. Not one vocational school with Russian as the language of instruction has been opened in rural areas.

Therefore, the data clearly illustrates the situation described above: the Russian-speaking population of Estonia is concentrated in urban areas, and especially in certain larger towns and cities. The share of Russian-speaking young people in rural areas is quite small, but still deserving of attention.

5.3.2. Ethnic Identity of Native and Non-native Young People

The first item to look at is the ethnic identity of those young people who have identified themselves as non-Estonians by nationality or who have graduated from schools where the language of instruction is Russian. The following analysis is based on data concerning the entire category of non-native young people. As we have just seen, the number of non-native rural young people is rather small, and therefore we must refer to data concerning all of the school graduates involved in the two surveys. There are no grounds for believing that the conclusions made about the ethnic identity of these young people should give a significantly different picture of the trends of ethnic self-identity than that of rural young people.

Table 4 gives an overview of the self-reported nationality of graduates of schools with the two different languages of instruction. It is obvious that practically all graduates of Estonian schools identify themselves as Estonians. More than three-quarters of the graduates of Russian schools describe themselves as ethnic Russians. The second biggest ethnic group among the graduates of Russian schools are Estonians, and their share has grown from 6 % to 11 %. It means that now among the students of the schools where Russian is the language of instruction Estonians make up more students than representatives of any other ethnic community except Russians themselves.

More thorough analysis of the same data showed that every second person who graduated from a Russian school identifying himself or herself as an Estonian had an Estonian father or mother, and his or her second parent was a Russian; but every fifth had Estonians as both parents. A striking fact is that

about $\frac{3}{4}$ of those graduates of Russian schools who identified themselves as Estonians mentioned Russian as their only home language. The remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ of these students reported of having two home languages: Estonian and Russian.

TABLE 4

Self-reported Nationality of School Graduates, According to Language of Instruction (%)

Self-reported nationality	The cohort of 1992		The cohort of 1996-98	
	Schools with Estonian as the language of instruction	Schools with Russian as the language of instruction	Schools with Estonian as the language of instruction	Schools with Russian as the language of instruction
Estonian	98.9	6.5	98.4	11.1
Russian	0.1	78.9	0.6	76.5
Other	1.0	14.1	0.6	11.6
Not specified	0	0.5	0.5	0.8
Total N	1073	603	5561	2527

(data from representative surveys in 1992 and 1996-8)

Putting all the evidence together, we can interpret the situation as *the young Estonians' maintaining their ethnic identity even while they have descended from ethnically mixed families and/or grown up and educated in the Russian language community.*

Data from a longitudinal study of the cohort of Estonian secondary school graduates of the year 1983 enables us to analyse the ethnic identity and self-determination in three generations. The result is that practically no Estonian family can be found where parents as well as grandparents were ethnically Estonians, but the younger generation decided to choose a new nationality.¹²¹

¹²¹ Dsiss & Kenkmann 1998

There is some evidence that certain processes of assimilation are going on in the non-native community of Estonia. One can speak of the assimilation of a portion of people representing, first of all, other Slavic nations into Estonia's Russian community; since their dominant language context for socialising, etc. is Russian.

Stemming from these assumptions, we try next to establish whether there are considerable differences in the objective position as well as subjective perceptions of young people that can be interpreted in the context of urban/rural distinctions of young people from Estonian and non-Estonian communities.

5.3.3. Professional and Educational Status

We characterise the status of the families of Estonian and Russian young people based on data about the professional position and educational level of the school graduates' parents. Evidence from the graduates of Estonian and Russian primary and secondary schools belonging to the educational cohort of 1996-98 do not show very big differences in occupational positions of parents of students from the schools with different languages of instruction. A remarkable individual difference is the smaller share of people employed in agriculture among fathers and mothers of the graduates of Russian schools. Another tendency is that *among the parents of graduates from Estonian schools the share of people employed in the private sector is larger than among the parents of graduates from Russian schools.*

The distribution of the parents of graduates from Estonian and Russian schools from the same cohort by professional groups is more different. The share of skilled workers, operators, etc. among the fathers and also mothers of graduates of Russian schools is much larger than among the Estonian school graduates. Of the fathers whose professional position could be identified, every second Estonian is a skilled worker, but among the fathers of the graduates of Russian schools their share is about 2/3. On the other hand, every sixth father of an Estonian school graduate occupies managerial or higher post, while among the fathers of Russian school graduates every tenth has such position.

The structure and level of education of parents of school graduates from the two language communities is somewhat different. In general, the *educational level of the parents of the Estonian school graduates is slightly lower than that of the parents of the graduates of Russian schools*. Among the fathers and mothers of Estonian school graduates the share of persons with less than secondary education is greater, and the share of persons with a university diploma is lower.

To sum up, we can conclude that the differences in occupational positions of the parents of Estonian and Russian school graduates mirror employment traditions that were established during the Soviet period, as well as differences in the residential structure. At the same time we can conclude that *changes over time have been somewhat to the advantage of the families of graduates of Estonian schools, in terms of their adjusting to the new conditions of free market economy*.

5.3.4. Material Conditions

The overall social and economic development has created the situation where the economic instability and difficulties inherent in the time of transition (including, first of all, unemployment) are more strongly felt in country life. It is also commonly perceived that the improvement of the economic situation after the most difficult years of reorienting of the economy is not yet felt in the rural areas.

Some results of the analysis presented in the Part I of the Report demonstrated that there are differences in the living conditions of urban and rural students. It was pointed out that the housing or accommodations of rural young people were worse than those of the urban young people, and no considerable improvement could be seen during the mid- and late 1990s. Obviously, as more primitive housing conditions are concentrated in smaller rural localities and those few non-native rural young people are living in larger rural settlements, their housing conditions are comparatively better than those of the native youth living in the countryside.

Comparison of data about the financial situation of Estonian urban and rural young people has shown that *the conditions of the rural young people have been, and are, worse than those of the urban young*

people. The comparison of the data gathered from the two educational cohorts showed no considerable trend toward improvement of the material conditions.

We have some data that enables us to shed light on the material well-being of young people belonging to Estonian and Russian communities and which can also be interpreted as speaking about the ethnic differences in the situations of rural and urban young people. Here, as before, we use the language of instruction as the primary indicator of the young peoples' communal identities.

The data (see Table 5) demonstrates that there are some common trends in the possibilities for consumption of families belonging to different ethnic communities and educational cohorts. In 1992 graduates of Russian schools saw their families as less able to buy good food, but in other cases Estonian students felt that their families could afford less or the same amount of goods. By 1998 the situation has changed: *the situation of Estonian families has somewhat improved while that of the Russian families has not changed so clearly.*

TABLE 5

School Graduates' (from two educational cohorts) Assessments of Their Families' Possibilities to Spend Money on Different Items*

	Means and their confidence intervals $p = 0.05$			
	ESTONIAN 1992	RUSSIAN 1992	ESTONIAN 1996-8	RUSSIAN 1996-8
To have food of normal quality	3.49 ±.04	3.33 ±.06	3.68 ±.02	3.31 ±.02
To buy clothing, footwear ...	2.67 ±.04	2.81 ±.06	2.95 ±.02	2.81 ±.02
To spend money on culture, hobbies, sports...	2.98 ±.06	2.96 ±.06	2.91 ±.02	2.71 ±.04
To buy more expensive items (furniture, electronic equipment...)	1.83 ±.06	2.16 ±.08	2.23 ±.02	2.25 ±.04
N	1073	603	5561	2527

* The figures presented in this table were counted on the basis of a 4-point scale: 1 - our financial possibilities do not enable; 2 - enable only the indispensable; 3 - enable more or less; 4 - we can fully afford this.

5.3.5. Identity within Estonian- and Russian-speaking Schools

Identity issues are seen as crucial where any minority is concerned. Speaking about the problems of ethnic minorities in a society in transition, we will analyse two aspects of identity: political identity and self-determination, and identification in a territorial structure, or in a locality that can be and is treated as home. Here we shall see whether there are differences in the attitudes of the graduates of Estonian and Russian schools toward further settling in their home area. To put it another way, we try to establish to what extent the current residence is seen as creating perspectives for further life. We call it **residential identity** (questions of political identity will be examined later on).

The respondents were asked about their plans concerning their future place of residence. Three response categories were presented as follows:

- I plan never to leave my present home city or village.
- I will leave my home city or village temporarily (e.g. for studies) and later return.
- I intend to leave my home city or village permanently.

TABLE 6

Residential Identity of the Educational Cohort of 1996-98, by Language of Instruction

Plans concerning current place of residence	Graduates of Estonian schools (%)	Graduates of Russian schools (%)
1. Will leave permanently	27.8	18.0
2. Will leave temporarily	35.7	29.1
3. Will not leave	33.0	50.7
Not specified	3.6	2.2
Means and their confidence intervals at the level $p = 0.05$	2.05 ± 0.02	2.33 ± 0.04
N	5362	2470

Table 6 presents a picture of opinions of graduates of Estonian and Russian schools concerning their plans to remain in their current place of residence. The clear finding here is that *those whose language of instruction is Russian have a stronger wish to stay in the place where they are obtaining their current education.*

This attitude must be based on certain evaluations of the real life situation, including the potentialities of the local infrastructure. This item is important because, as has also been shown in the framework of this project, urban/rural discrepancies are based largely on the underdevelopment of the rural infrastructure.

To enable us to analyse young people's living conditions from this point of view the respondents in our survey were asked to evaluate the extent to which it would be possible for them personally to do the following within their home communities (urban or rural municipality or settlements):

- obtain their desired education
- obtain their desired profession
- find a suitable job
- find a spouse
- obtain their desired housing
- spend leisure time as desired
- consume services offered by service industries

Each of these aspects of infrastructure was evaluated on a four-point scale:

- 1 totally impossible
- 2 only very scarce possibilities
- 3 more or less possible
- 4 fully possible

Our data has shown a very high correlation between the respondents' evaluations of different components of their home areas' infrastructures. High correlations between the initial variables indicate a very stable evaluatory tendencies, enabling us to apply a generalised index instead of many

separate variables in analysing urban/rural differences in the evaluations of infrastructure potential. Thus we use here *an index of infrastructure evaluations in respondents' home areas* or, “*index of infrastructure*” for short. This index is computed as the sum of values of seven initial variables; its individual values thus ranging from 7 (if all the respondents' evaluations are at the most negative end of the scale (1) for all seven components of infrastructure) to 28 (if all the respondents' evaluations are at the most positive end of the scale (4) for all seven components).

Table 7 sums up the data concerning the evaluations of various aspects of the local infrastructure by graduates of Estonian and Russian schools. The values of the “index of infrastructure” are different for various types of settlements. As expected, the largest possibilities for satisfying various individual needs are created by the infrastructure as it is in the capital and in other larger towns which serve as county centres. The lowest values in the “index of infrastructure” are typical of the smallest towns and rural settlements. A remarkable fact is that the small contingent of *Russian school graduates whose schools are situated in rural settlements see those areas as much more promising from the viewpoint of satisfying their “infrastructural” needs, than do the Estonian school graduates from the same type of rural settlements.*

It should also be noted that not only was the composite index higher in the case of the Russian school graduates, but all seven individual indicators received higher marks from the young people who graduated from Russian schools. Therefore, the fact that a larger share of Russian-speaking young people intend to remain in their current home settlements is not an isolated factor. Behind it is the feeling among a significant portion of those completing their education in Russian that their current home region can provide them with sufficient opportunities for their lives in the future. Thus, *ethnic origin is not a basic factor to distinguish between young people who have developed strong residential identity and who have not.*

TABLE 7**Values in the “Index of Infrastructure” of the 1996-98 Educational Cohort**

Respondents' places of residence	Estonian schools			** Signi- fic- ance	Russian schools		
	Mean	Confidence interval of mean (95%)	N		Mean	Confidence interval of mean (95%)	N
Tallinn (the capital)	24.62	.22	1005	+	22.86	.24	1041
County centres with more than 50,000 inhabitants	22.38	.34	650	+	21.27	.48	366
Other towns with more than 50,000 inhabitants	*	*	*		20.32	.34	485
County centres with 10,000-50,000 inhabitants	17.98	.34	582	-	18.23	.98	79
Other towns with 10,000-50,000 inhabitants	*	*	*		17.23	.80	136
County centres with less than 10,000 inhabitants	17.21	.56	177		*	*	*
Other towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants	15.92	.36	522	-	16.53	.70	185
Rural settlements	16.21	.18	2323	+	19.43	.98	116
Average; Total	18.78		5281	+	20.98		2410

* Insufficient number of respondents (less than 14).

** Significance:

- + Significant difference between the students of Estonian and Russian schools at the confidence level $p = 0.05$.
- Insignificant difference between the students of Estonian and Russian schools at the confidence level $p = 0.05$.

5.3.6. Changes in Patterns of Communication and Socialisation

Leisure activities, contacts with other young people, etc. are a significant part of the youth culture. While work and studies are institutionally prescribed in a comparatively strict way, leisure as a more spontaneous kind of activity might expose the existing inner differences in characteristics of young people who belong to different types of communities.

TABLE 8

Self-evaluations (of Two Educational Cohorts) as to the Places Where they Usually Spend Leisure time with Friends*

Places for spending free time together with friends	Means and their confidence intervals $p = 0.05$			
	ESTONIAN 1992	RUSSIAN 1992	ESTONIAN 1996-8	RUSSIAN 1996-8
At home or at one's student dormitory	2.65±.062	2.37±.08	2.49±.02	2.32±.04
At friends' homes	2.97±.04	2.77±.08	2.92±.02	2.82±.04
At school after lessons	1.53±.06	1.37±.06	1.78±.02	1.56±.02
At a club, discotheque, etc.	2.70±.06	2.63±.08	2.78±.02	2.71±.04
At a bar, cafe, restaurant	2.06±.06	1.81±.08	2.46±.02	2.29±.04
At a young people's house (youth club)	2.92±.06	3.41±.06	1.23±.02	1.27±.02
In the open air (on the street, in a park, etc.)	1.95±.04	1.83±.06	3.14±.02	3.33±.04
N	1073	603	5561	2527

* The figures presented in the table are averages that were counted on the basis of 4-point scales: 1 - never; 2 - seldom; 3 - from time to time; 4 - in most cases.

Table 8 shows that there are certain differences in young Estonians' and Russians' patterns of spending the free time together with their friends. Youth clubs are the only places that are more frequently used

for meeting friends by Russian young people than by their Estonian counterparts, but their role has drastically decreased. Some more considerable changes have taken place during the years between the two surveys. To visit bars and restaurants has become much more popular among both Estonian and Russian youth, as well as socialising with friends on the street, in a park or some other open air location.

It is obvious that changes in the places where young Estonians and Russians meet with their friends are the results of changes in the overall social situation. *The apparently ethnic identity related patterns of communicating and socialising among young people are less significant than the results of changes in larger social environment* (growth of the importance of bars and restaurants and far more frequent situations where young people meet their friends in the open air).

5.3.7. Individual Aspirations within Estonian and Russian Schools

In contemporary Estonian ideological discourse education occupies one of the leading positions. It is treated as the most important inner resource to build up a modern European society and to meet the challenges of contemporary economic and social development. This is why educational aspirations of different youth groups deserve thorough attention.

The 1992 graduates of the two language groups differed from each other first of all in the sense that striving for tertiary education was greater among the Estonian-speaking young people, and the share of those who wanted to obtain the vocational qualifications, was greater among the Russian speakers (it must be taken into account that vocational schooling has been and is seen as much lower than general secondary education).

Table 9 gives a comprehensive picture of educational plans of the graduates of Estonian and Russian schools belonging to two educational cohorts. The data shows the percentage of students from each group which aspire to each level of education as his/her highest achievement in the field.

TABLE 9

Educational Aspirations %

	ESTONIAN 1992	RUSSIAN 1992	ESTONIAN 1996-8	RUSSIAN 1996-8
4 University education	35.5	24.4	42.7	35.6
3 Other higher (college) education	33.8	42.0	29.9	34.3
2 General secondary education	15.6	14.8	12.4	16.3
1 Vocational education	13.2	17.9	10.5	9.4
Other	1.9	1.0	4.5	4.4
Means and their confidence intervals at the level $p = 0.05$	2.94±.06	2.74±.08	3.10±.02	3.01±.04
N	1073	603	5561	2527

The respondents of the later cohort show an increased interest in obtaining a university or college education. This is a common goal for both Estonian and Russian students. It is remarkable, but fully expected in the current educational situation, that the popularity of vocational education has strongly decreased, especially among the graduates of those schools where the teaching language is Russian.

This fact is to a certain extent a result of the current situation in the network of educational institutions: as was mentioned regarding Table 3 above, there are not any Russian-speaking vocational schools situated in the countryside to be included in our research. Possibilities to get a university diploma using Russian as the language of instruction have also decreased. At the same time though, a number of private educational institutions offering education that could be classified as college-level have been founded, making this level of education far more widely available in Russian as well as Estonian.

Thus, we can conclude that the *differences in educational aspirations of young people from different language backgrounds reflect, first of all, the real changes in Estonia's network in educational institutions.*

5.3.8. Attitudes Towards the New Social and Political Order

Transition to a free market economy, political democracy and pluralism has brought about important changes in the everyday life of young people. Attitudes towards these changes were studied from two angles: innovations in social (economic, educational) settings, and political institutions of the Republic of Estonia. We have not tried to measure attitudes and opinions concerning very contemporary and purely political matters. The primary aim was to see how young people manage with the new and politically established realities of their everyday life situation.

When the creation of the new system of education in independent Estonia began, the idea of privately paid-for education was very often stressed as opposed to the former, equalising education that suppressed the individual initiative of students and lowered the quality of education. The new educational order differs from the old Soviet system first of all in terms of the increasing role of *paid education*. This is both a practical as well as deep ideological innovation. Free tuition was a cornerstone of the socialist way of life: it had the function of compensating for the existing social differences by creating equal possibilities in life for the entire up-coming generation.

Table 10 gives, first of all, a picture of differences in attitudes of those completing their primary education from each language community. The second, and in this case probably the more noteworthy feature is the trend of changes in attitudes between the two educational cohorts.

As was expected, graduates of Russian schools are more in favour of free tuition: not paying for secondary or university education. During the years that passed between the two surveys a considerable shift occurred: both Estonian and Russian young people have begun to value the principle of free

TABLE 10

Opinions Concerning Privately Paid Secondary and Tertiary Education (%)

SECONDARY EDUCATION	ESTONIAN 1992	RUSSIAN 1992	ESTONIAN 1996-8	RUSSIAN 1996-8
Tuition in secondary schools should be paid for as a service.	10.1	4.3	2.3	1.8
Privately paid as well as free public tuition should be available.	56.6	54.9	34.5	30.3
Secondary education should always be free of cost.	33.2	40.3	61.3	65.4
Not specified	0.2	0.5	1.9	2.5
Means and their confidence intervals at the level $p = 0.05$	2.23±.04	2.36±.04	2.60±.02	2.65±.02
N	1073	603	5561	2527

TERTIARY (UNIVERSITY) EDUCATION	ESTONIAN 1992	RUSSIAN 1992	ESTONIAN 1996-8	RUSSIAN 1996-8
University education should be paid for in all cases.	15.4	35.2	3.6	2.8
University education should be paid for, but only if student loans are available.	62.2	55.6	49.1	30.6
University education should always be free of charge.	22.2	8.8	45.6	64.3
Not specified	0.3	0.5	1.7	2.2
Means and their confidence intervals at the level $p = 0.05$	2.07±.04	1.73±.04	2.43±.02	2.63±.02
N	1073	603	5561	2527

education, so that the share of respondents who are strongly in favour of paid secondary or university education is only a few percent.

The underlying reason for this important change in students' attitudes is readily seen in the real life situation. The role of education in creating opportunities in life is commonly accepted, but large segments of the population, including young people, see the deepening social and material differentiation as a serious obstacle to their obtaining the education they want. *The shift in the real life situation that has caused changes in attitudes toward paid education has at the same time brought the attitudes of graduates of Estonian and Russian schools closer together.*

Attitudes towards the *material inequality* and towards people who have got rich in business should demonstrate the possible differences in perceptions of the new economic order and its "individual" emphasis.

TABLE 11

Opinions Concerning Increased Inequality and People who have Got Rich (%)
Concerning the Increase of Material Inequality in Estonia During the Last Few Years

	ESTONIAN 1992	RUSSIAN 1992	ESTONIAN 1996-8	RUSSIAN 1996-8
1. Inequality should be as small as possible.	8.6	33.0	14.7	21.9
2. Inequality should not be so great as it is now.	54.0	44.6	57.4	49.0
3. Inequality is natural and rationally justified.	36.6	20.6	26.1	24.9
Not specified	0.8	1.8	1.8	4.2
Means and their confidence intervals at the level p = 0.05	2.28±.04	1.87±.06	2.12±.02	2.03±.02
N	1073	603	5561	2527

Concerning those who have Become Rich in the Estonian Business World During the Last Few Years

	ESTONIAN 1992	RUSSIAN 1992	ESTONIAN 1996-8	RUSSIAN 1996-8
1. My attitude is negative because they have become rich at the expense of other people.	21.8	9.1	11.6	11.4
2. Can't say.	40.4	30.5	36.3	34.7
3. My attitude is positive because they boldly use their abilities and opportunities.	37.8	60.2	51.0	53.0
Not specified	0	0.2	1.0	0.9
Means and their confidence intervals at the level $p = 0.05$	2.16±.04	2.51±.06	2.40±.02	2.42±.02
N	1073	603	5561	2527

The distribution of the opinions about economic differentiation is a typical example of changes in attitudes which are underway among the young people of the two language communities. The inter-cohort shift has practically the same significance here as mentioned in the case of attitudes toward paid education. *Differences between the opinions of graduates from Estonian and Russian language schools are clearly becoming smaller.* In the case of opinions concerning material differentiation, it is remarkable that the preliminary strongly approving position of young Estonians has given way to more balanced attitudes, and the latter are now near to the typical opinions of graduates of Russian schools. We tried to analyse the *attitudes towards the political institutions of independent Estonia* through some items that did not overtly demand students to express an opinion concerning the Republic of Estonia. Here we have the data about attitudes towards compulsory military service.

Attitudes towards military service are evidently more “political” than the above-mentioned opinions concerning paid education or deepening economic differentiation. It was fully expected that in the very first years of independence the share of young people from the Russian language community who were not eager to enter the military service would be larger, and at the same time the share of young Estonians who were willing to go to the military service was comparatively small. The latter was

undoubtedly a remnant of the attitude towards the Soviet military service that previously dominated Estonian society.

TABLE 12

**Attitudes Towards Compulsory Military Service in the Defence Forces
of the Republic of Estonia (%)**

	ESTONIAN 1992	RUSSIAN 1992	ESTONIAN 1996-8	RUSSIAN 1996-8
1. I will try to avoid both military service and alternative service.	14.4	37.7	14.0	16.9
2. I am only ready to go into alternative service.	13.4	20.4	11.9	14.3
3. I am not going willingly, but I will not evade the call.	50.2	35.8	39.8	39.1
4. I am willingly ready to go.	22.0	6.0	34.3	29.7
Means and their confidence intervals at the level p = 0.05	2.80±.08	2.10±.12	2.94±.04	2.82±.06
N of valid cases	508	265	2816	1165
N of missing cases*	565	338	2745	1362

* The category of “missing cases” includes both respondents who were non-liable for military service and who had no opinion.

The change between the two educational cohorts shows the same trends that we have seen in the responses to the previous indicators. The overall attitudes toward the given important institution of an independent state have become more favourable, and the attitudes of young people from Russian-speaking schools have come to closer resemble those of the graduates of Estonian schools. When in 1992 more than one out of three Russian-speaking young people had a negative attitude towards military service or any other national service, in the cohort of 1996-98 their share was only one-sixth (not much more than the corresponding share of Estonian-speaking young people: 1/7). *We no longer find drastic discrepancies between the opinions of these two groups of young people concerning military service.*

Interest in the activities of the political institutions of the Republic of Estonia is in this context an interesting indicator from at least two angles. First, it enables us to see whether there are big differences between the interests of various categories of young people. But beyond this we consider interest in the activities of a certain institution speaks about its importance from the point of view of the respondents. The scope of interest can also be interpreted as an indicator of subjective connectedness with the given institutions, or – if non-interest is dominant – of isolation from the institutions of state power.

TABLE 13

Self-evaluations of Awareness of Estonian Political Life*

	Means and their confidence intervals at the level $p = 0.05$			
	ESTONIAN 1992	RUSSIAN 1992	ESTONIAN 1996-8	RUSSIAN 1996-8
Activities of Estonian Parliament	1.80±.04	1.59±.06	1.55±.02	1.46±.02
Activities of the Government	1.32±.04	1.30±.04	1.65±.02	1.62±.02
Activities of Political Parties	1.34±.04	1.21±.04	1.43±.02	1.34±.02
Relations with Other Countries	2.19±.04	2.17±.06	2.09±.02	2.15±.02
N	1073	603	5561	2527

* The figures presented in this table were counted on the basis of a 3-point scale: 1 - I am not interested; 2 - watch from time to time; 3 - know well.

It is interesting to see which political institutions have become more interesting from the viewpoint of the respondents and which institutions have lost their interest. Again, we can see that these changes have taken place in the case of both Estonian and Russian students, and their general direction is the same for both categories. Thus, the interest in the Parliament has lessened from the viewpoint of both Estonian and Russian school graduates. The activities of the government and of political parties are

followed more attentively now than in 1992 by young people of both language groups. Relations with other countries are not so interesting now as they were some years ago for either group.

We can summarise these developments by saying that today young people from both Estonian and Russian-speaking schools are more interested in political institutions that are more connected with executive power and probably with local political issues.

5.3.9. Some Conclusions

The aim of this analysis was not to give a full picture of the situation of Russian young people in contemporary Estonia, or to describe the whole complexity of differences between the categories of young people belonging to the two language or ethnic communities. As the RYPE project as a whole is focused on the problems of contemporary rural young people, we merely need to give an overview of the situation and perspectives of non-native young people as a segment of rural population of post-socialist Estonia.

Two obstacles make this task difficult to accomplish in a direct way. First, non-native, or Russian-speaking young people really make up an important part of the population connected with many social problems. But the young people belonging to the non-Estonian community are mostly living in urban areas, and their share among the rural young people is rather small. Second, partially stemming from the above, we are lacking statistical data and other detailed empirical information about Russian-speaking rural young people in Estonia *per se*.

Given this situation, we decided to find out which differences between young people from the two language communities can be established on the basis of available research data, and what can be said, based on this analysis, about the specific cultural environment of the non-Estonian rural young people?

Our data gives us a picture of the situation of students belonging to the Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities, and not of the categories of rural or urban young people. In any case, we have certain

grounds for believing that rural young people can be seen as representing, to certain extent, the same problems inherent to young people from urban and sub-urban areas as well. We see our task, in the framework of the project as a whole, not primarily as giving a detailed description of the situation of all the sub-categories of rural young people, but as outlining the cultural environment of rural young people and its important sub-themes. The data used in this secondary analysis is adequate for accomplishing this task.

The data from the two educational cohorts surveyed provided us with information from two points of time. The first data set, from 1992, depicts the situation at the very beginning of the transition in Estonian society (Estonia regained independence only in 1991). The second data set, from the years 1996-98, enables us to describe the situation as it has taken shape during the very first decade of the movement towards democratic statehood and a free market economy. In that time the basic features of the new society, and the controversies that it entails, have begun to take form.

Since our task was not to give a comprehensive picture of the situation of the non-native rural young people of Estonia, we will not try to draw conclusions that would repeat the concrete results outlined in the course of the analysis. We will rather point out some conclusions concerning the origins of the specific situation of rural young people belonging to the Russian language community, and about the direction of the development of differences between the Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities:

1. The differences between young people belonging to these two language communities are largely based on considerations other than specifically ethnic “roots”. They stem most basically from the concrete conditions of areas where the young people are living. This means that we have grounds for treating the traits of rural life as the most important factors forming the objective living conditions as well as opinions and attitudes of inhabitants of the rural areas irrespective of the ethnic background.
2. During the years of independence, Estonian young people from the both language communities have undergone complicated changes in behavioural tendencies as well as attitudes. As was seen above, these changes have frequently been from the same sources and moving in the same direction for both Estonian- and Russian-speaking young people. Changes in the economic situation, institutional

shifts, and developments in different types of settlements as living environments have been the most important impetus of changes from this viewpoint.

3. These changes have had an impact on the level of difference remaining between youth groups belonging to the Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities. The comparison of research data obtained from the two educational cohorts enables us to conclude that during the course of time in practically all cases the behavioural tendencies, opinions, and aspirations of youth from the two ethnic categories have become more similar. The changes that have occurred during the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union (when Estonia's Russian-speaking young people faced the major crisis in their social and political position) show a general trend towards the converging of the positions of young people from the two socio-ethnic groups. At the same time these developments have unevenly affected various types of settlements, resulting in the underdevelopment of rural areas and certain regions. This means that the living conditions and perspectives of rural youth remain less developed, causing feelings of deprivation. These even deepening regional differences, however, do not prevent the continuing segregation of people from the two ethnic communities, which is still the primary threat to mutual contact and understanding.
4. At least in the areas considered in our research, we find various larger and smaller differences between young people from the two communities; but we have no grounds to speak about antagonistic or very drastic differences between young people belonging to the Estonian and Russian language communities. The above mentioned developmental tendencies strengthen the conclusion that the basically non-antagonistic character of the differences in attitudes and behavioural trends between young people from the two language communities. It is obvious that majority of students from schools where the language of instruction is Russian are moving towards ideological positions which reflect the realities of a politically independent free-market society. At the same time a certain portion of Estonian students who favoured radical changes at the time when the societal transition have begun now find that certain radical changes have brought about unexpected and undesirable consequences, and therefore, they are now more strongly against drastic social differentiation.

These conclusions must not be taken as suggesting that there are no real and important differences between the two ethnic categories of young people. Our analysis and conclusions themselves reflect the situation where the overall development is going more or less in the direction of a general stabilisation of economic, social and political life. The relations between the two language communities and the trends of integration might look less promising if this stabilisation were to be disrupted.

The above conclusions must also not be interpreted as suggesting a loss of ethnic identity. In the conditions of rather deep segregation between the two socio-ethnic communities that began during the Soviet period and continues now, no significant process of ethnic assimilation from either side has occurred. It is even more clear that the further development of relations between young people belonging to these two ethnic communities is quite dependent on state social policy. The trends in this field of policy, however, supported by large-scale empirical social research, are strongly in favour of integration.¹²²

This includes the understanding that the optimal path of development for the Russian-speaking community – regardless of whether the people belonging to that community are inhabitants of urban or rural areas – is the creation of optimal conditions for developing both their identity in and loyalty to Estonia as their homeland. Creating favourable conditions for these developments, including respect for self-determination, should be an important aspect of policy directed towards rural young people.

5.4. Urban-Rural Differences in Estonia

5.4.1. Societal Developments

The post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe are subject to two main lines of societal development:

- transition from the socialist type of society to a post-socialist one, where the most important changes are moving from a command, centrally planned economy to a free-market economy; and from

¹²² see: Järve, 1997; Lauristin, 1998

totalitarianism to democracy and the political pluralism connected with establishing a civil society;

- modernisation of all main spheres of social life.

During the Soviet period urban/rural discrepancies were problems that were dealt with as part of official social policy. The latter aimed at diminishing the relative underdevelopment of certain spheres of social life.¹²³ Concentration of young people in urban settlements was viewed (together with such problems as the increasing generation gap) as a drawback to the progressive social development of society. The basis for identifying the rural population was the official territorial structure that was used while presenting statistical data and also while classifying respondents of empirical social surveys. Changes in the “status” of settlements took place sometimes, leading, as a rule, to increasing the urban share of the population.

Today the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe are facing a multitude of old and new social problems, one of them being increasing *urban/rural differentiation*. The major trends of societal development mentioned above intertwining with problems stemming from this differentiation have created rather complicated situations for identifying rural young people and establishing the scope and structure of the social problems of rural young people in post-socialist (including post-Soviet) societies. This section will point out some aspects of societal differentiation included in the urban/rural dimension, using Estonia as a subject for this analysis.

Among the countries participating in our project Estonia is the smallest. Its current population is less than 1.5 million, making it even smaller than some *regions* that were chosen to represent rural young people in other participating countries. According to official statistics, as of the beginning of 1998, 30.8 % of the entire Estonian population was classified as rural.

The official basis for distinguishing between urban and rural populations is the classification of settlements. Settlements are classified as urban (see Table 14) based on their number of inhabitants, their administrative status (centres of counties) and in some cases also according to their place in the Estonian economy (some mono-functional settlements dominated by larger industrial enterprises,

¹²³ For a Western approach to the classification of Soviet social problems, see Hollander 1991, 11

usually working with local raw materials – as a rule currently in pitiful condition).

TABLE 14

Estonian Urban Settlements and their Populations

(as of January 1, 1998, in descending order)

Cities and towns	Number of inhabitants	Cities and towns	Number of inhabitants
Tallinn* (the capital)	415,299	Loksa	3864
Tartu	100,977	Paldiski	3842
Narva	74,572	Kehra	3735
Kohtla-Järve	52,611	Narva-Jõesuu	3681
Pärnu	51,927	Tõrva	3573
Viljandi	21,659	Märjamaa	3418
Rakvere	19,085	Räpina	3245
Sillamäe	18,965	Vändra	3166
Maardu	16,375	Tamsalu	3091
Kuressaare	16,291	Kilingi-Nõmme	2626
Võru	16,042	Otepää	2472
Valga	15,798	Karksi-Nuia	2300
Haapsalu	13,533	Püssi	2172
Jõhvi	13,365	Mustvee	2010
Paide	10,356	Järvakandi	1875
Keila	9993	Võhma	1862
Kiviõli	8602	Lihula	1737
Tapa	8256	Abja-Paluoja	1686
Põlva	7181	Antsla	1622
Türi	6984	Pärnu-Jaagupi	1542
Jõgeva	6623	Kohtla-Nõmme	1437
Elva	6357	Suure-Jaani	1418
Rapla	6303	Tootsi	1357
Saue	4982	Mõisaküla	1286
Põltsamaa	4895	Kallaste	1226
Kunda	4490	Aegviidu	1095
Kärdla	4291	Võsu	744
Sindi	4277	Lavassaare	590
Kohila	3893		
Total number of urban settlements and urban inhabitants		57	1 006 654

* Names of county centres are printed in **bold**.

(source: Regional Statistics of Estonia 1997)

According to the official administrative division, Estonia is divided into 15 counties. Each county has its administration, the main function of which is to represent state interests at the county level. On the other hand, counties are divided into self-governing local communities, so that each city makes also up an independent community (or “*vald*” in Estonian). There are 206 such local communities.

Sometimes it is disputed whether it is optimal to maintain the given single-level structure of local government or to return to the former system where counties were also autonomous administrative units. On the other hand, the number of local communities is generally considered to be too large, and accordingly, many rural communities are considered too small to effectively autonomously fulfil all the necessary functions of local government – especially those related to social services and stimulating perspectives for local development for the inhabitants. Currently practical steps are under way to combine some neighbouring communities. In some cases this means that some rural communities will become part of neighbouring urban communities.

Thus, it can be concluded that *the formal distinction between urban and rural populations is not fully adequate for addressing the discrepancies inherent in the urban/rural structure of society*, especially from the viewpoint of the situation and perspectives of young people. This conclusion is nothing new in Estonian social science; it was also pointed out while the process of young people’s self-determination was being studied during the Soviet time. Table 14 shows that there are urban settlements with less than 1000 inhabitants. The reality of life has been and is that the conditions for and perspectives of young people are considerably different in those settlements – formally urban though they may be – compared with the situation in the capital city and in other larger towns. The situation of young people in smaller urban settlements is nearer to that in more developed rural centres than in larger urban settlements. Therefore, while analysing the living conditions and perspectives of young people, an adequate picture of urban/rural differences cannot be based only on the official borderline between urban and rural settlements.

The real conditions in the 206 local communities, part of them being rural, are undoubtedly unequal. The situation is complicated by the fact that the financial basis of local communities is not particularly

uniform nor steady, and the effective regional policy of the state is only starting to take shape. At the same time the societal transition has brought in new and sometimes controversial developments that have to be taken into account while depicting the situation of rural young people under these conditions. Some of these lines of differentiation which have come to the fore in contemporary Estonia have been analysed by social scientists and discussed by policy-makers. At the same time, there are certain rather sound social processes where young people living in the countryside are also involved, but which are rarely considering the original urban/rural dimension.

To give a picture of the differences in the characteristics of youth belonging to rural and urban communities, and to specific types of areas of residence, we present data about the opinions of primary and secondary school seniors on their intentions to leave their home settlements and about their evaluations of the possibilities opened up by local infrastructure in different types of settlements.

The data presented here was collected from students graduating from 9-year compulsory (primary), general secondary and vocational schools. Data was collected in all Estonian counties in 1996-98. The sample (N = 8133) represents students in all of the school types mentioned above, the two sets of schools being based correspondingly on Estonian and Russian as their languages of instruction as well as rural and urban students. The method of stratified random sampling was used and the necessary weighting procedures were applied to ensure accurate statistical representation.

5.4.2. Motivational Bases for Migrating or Remaining Rural

Concerning questions of residential identity referred to in the previous section,¹²⁴ our research has pointed to major urban/rural differentiation.

The responses are divided in Table 15 so that we can first of all see the most general urban/rural differences. After that we present data about the plans of the urban inhabitants excluding the opinions of young people living in Estonian capital and its surrounding district, which makes up a specific region

¹²⁴ see page 73 above.

of clear over-exuberance towards urban development in the contemporary Estonian context. One more category represented on the table is that of small town young people.

TABLE 15

**Plans of Estonian Primary and Secondary School Seniors:
Whether or Not to Leave their Home District (%)**

Respondents' places of residence at time of survey	Response categories and there codes			Mean	Confidence interval of the mean (95%)	N
	Will leave permanently 1	Will leave temporarily 2	Will not leave 3			
Tallinn (the capital)	7.3	23.5	69.2	2.62	.02	2060
County centres with more than 50,000 inhabitants	13.3	33.3	53.4	2.40	.04	1016
Other towns with more than 50,000 residents	25.0	34.9	40.0	2.15	.08	497
County centres with 10,000-50,000 inhabitants	33.3	47.2	19.5	1.86	.06	656
Other towns with 10,000-50,000 residents	41.2	33.0	25.8	1.85	.14	151
County centres with less than 10,000 residents	36.8	46.1	17.1	1.80	.10	180
Other towns with less than 10,000 residents	40.9	37.7	21.4	1.81	.06	709
Rural settlements	37.8	40.1	22.1	1.84	.04	2440
Total N	1969	2684	3056	0=		7709
%	25.5	34.8	39.6	2.14		

This data, even classified along the rather crude lines of official definitions of urban and rural, gives a good picture of the territorial differentiation of young people's aspirations and sheds some light on urban and rural identities. Two out of three young people living in the capital, every second young person in other larger cities, but only every fourth or fifth young person living in smaller urban locations identifies him- or herself his or her current home are so much that he or she has no intention to ever leave that place. The plans of young people living in smaller urban centres are closer to those of young people from rural settlements than to those of young people from the big cities

Comparison of mean values presented in Table 15 shows that the future living plans (or to put it otherwise, migration plans) are quite clearly connected with the characteristics of current places of residence. The plans of young people living in the capital city, in big county centres (more than 50,000 inhabitants) or in other big towns (in practice just one big industrial town) are quite different from each other. But still migration plans in these places are much less typical than in the other types of settlements. In practice this means that young people from settlements with a population of less than 50,000, regardless of how it is classified, are on the average only half as likely to stay there permanently.

The criteria for deciding to leave one's home area or stay there are also worth mentioning. To enable us to examine the motivational bases of plans concerning their possible place of residence, the respondents living in small settlements (less than 10,000 inhabitants, and not in county centres) were asked to put down (in an open response) the main reasons why they want to stay in their home territory or to leave it. Many respondents put down more than one reason, but in the following analysis (Table 16) we refer only to the reasons which were first stated.

This table enables us to recognise motivational tendencies among rural young in relation to their level of identification with their home district. Let us first consider those who answered that they never intend to move away from their current home district, thus showing the strongest level of residential identity. The strong rural identity of this group is first of all motivated emotionally: expressions like "I like my home, my home area, the people who live here," "My friends live here," "This is a safe place to live," etc. were predominated among this group's responses (69.5 %). Other significant motives in-

TABLE 16**Motivational Factors in Rural Young People's Decisions Concerning Migration Possibilities**

Reasons of leaving or staying	Plans on future place of residence (%)			N
	Will leave home town or village permanently 1	Will leave home town or village temporarily 2	Will not leave home town or village 3	
It is difficult or impossible to find a job here.	50.3	10.9	1.4	689
I do not like my home, its surroundings or people in the area.	23.6	2.7	0.7	298
I like my home, its surroundings and people living in the area.	2.5	20.3	69.5	624
I want to continue my studies.	7.1	45.0	4.3	568
It is reasonable from an economic point of view.	1.9	5.0	14.0	150
I want to see the world and life in other places.	5.8	5.1	1.2	125
I want to become more independent.	5.3	4.4	1.7	115
other reasons	3.6	6.5	7.4	148
Total N	1130	1029	557	2716
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	

volve economic factors: "I have a job here," "I have (or will get) a house here," "Living here is not very expensive," etc. (14.0 %). All of the other diverse motives within this group have very small shares. It

is also noticeable that some answers are not quite logical; for example, explaining their intentions to stay in their home town or village, some respondents have replied that they do not like their home or the area. But the overall share of such responses was rather insignificant (and, as stated above, this table reflects only the first of many motivational factors which some respondents reported).

The second category, those who plan to leave temporarily, also identify their future with rural life, but for various reasons they feel a need to leave for some time. As suggested, the most important type of motivation here is to further one's education (45 % of responses). Beyond this, a significant number of respondents (10.9 %) intend to leave their home area temporarily to find work. Many of them added that they would return if it would be possible to find a job in their home town or village.

Another rather interesting motive, characteristic of young people, though not very widespread (5.1%), is the desire to "see the world" and to observe life in other places.

One must also notice that a certain part of the respondents belonging to this group did not first write their reasons for temporarily leaving but put first the reasons why they want to come back to their home town or village. Like in the first group of respondents (those not intending to leave the home area at all) emotional motives of return were predominant (20.3 %).

The third group of rural young people intends to leave their home settlement and never come back. Hopelessness in finding a job in their home area is the predominant motivation here (50.3 %). Negative emotional experiences connected with the home region are also strongly felt; 23.6 % wrote that they do not like their home or region or people living there, using rather strong expressions at times: "dull place," "stupid people around," etc. From these answers one can see that most of the young people in this group intend to move to bigger towns or cities. Yet there is a small portion of these young people which are keeping their rural identity and want to move to some other rural area.

All in all, two basic groups of motives are found in the analysis of the reasons why rural young people have decided to leave or not to leave their home regions: first there is the emotional background of the rural life; second there is the local infrastructure. It seems, furthermore, that much of the emotional

climate is connected with the material situations, that can also be described in terms of development of the local infrastructure.

5.4.3. Rural-Urban Infrastructure

In speaking of rural identification and the living conditions of rural young people, we must consider the objective characteristics of local infrastructure as well as the meaning of various elements of the infrastructure and their correspondence to the needs and aspirations of young people themselves. The latter may be an independent aspect of the identification and self-determination of young people, especially in the countryside.

For this we again refer to the “index of infrastructure.”¹²⁵ The index data according to respondents’ places of residence is presented in Table 17. Here, as in the previous case, settlements are classified according to two criteria: their number of inhabitants and their administrative status.

One can see a major rural/urban differentiation in the evaluation of living conditions among Estonian young people, seemingly depending more on the population of the settlements than on their administrative status. The best conditions for young people’s self-realisation are found in the capital city of Tallinn (the mean value in the “index of infrastructure” at 23.72) and in the other larger cities (Tartu, Pärnu and Kohtla-Järve) with more than 50,000 residents. Rather close to these largest Estonian cities in young people’s evaluations of infrastructure is another bigger town, Narva, where the number of inhabitants is also more than 50,000 but which is not an administrative centre.

In all other settlements (with populations of less than 50,000) young people consider their living conditions to be decidedly worse, and the evaluations become far more uniform in this regard than in the first three categories. Nevertheless, one can observe slight differences between the young people’s evaluations of life in settlements where the population is between 10,000 and 50,000 on the one hand, and in settlements where the population is less than 10,000 on the other. One should notice that there

¹²⁵ see pages 74-76 above.

are no significant differences in the “index of infrastructure” between county centres and other towns.

TABLE 17

Values of the “Index of Infrastructure” by Respondents’ Place of Residence

Respondents’ places of residence	Percentage distributions for value categories in the “index of infrastructure”			Means	Confidence intervals of means (95%)	N
	7...13	14...20	21...28			
Tallinn (the capital)	1.2	17.6	81.2	23.72	.16	2046
County centres with more than 50,000 inhabitants	4.3	30.0	65.7	21.98	.28	1015
Other towns with more than 50,000 inhabitants	4.0	46.5	49.4	20.30	.34	494
County centres with 10,000-50,000 inhabitants	11.8	62.1	26.1	18.01	.32	661
Other towns with 10,000-50,000 inhabitants	21.5	56.0	22.6	17.23	.76	149
County centres with less than 10,000 inhabitants	18.2	63.3	18.5	17.26	.56	180
Other towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants	27.7	57.6	14.7	16.08	.32	707
Rural settlements	28.6	51.9	19.5	16.36	.18	2439
Total N	1124	3175	3392	19.47		7691
%	14.6	41.3	44.1			

The analysis of the same data county by county reveals considerable rural/urban differences within most counties as well. This means that within almost every county there is a local metropolis – the county centre – where the overall condition of infrastructure for young people is remarkably better than in rural locations. There are only a couple of counties forming exceptions to this rule, where one cannot find differences in young people’s evaluations of living conditions between the county centres and outlying rural areas, and these are the ones with the smallest county centres (less than 10,000 inhabitants). These counties are in fact the most “rural” areas in all of Estonia.

Thus, regarding the living conditions of Estonian young people, based on the opinions of the young people themselves, one can functionally define “rural young people” as those living in settlements with a population of less than 10,000. Another realistic possibility here is to also include the young people living in settlements where the number of inhabitants is between 10,000 and 50,000, which are not county centres. Actually, this group includes only three towns, each with a population of 13,000-18,000, and their young people are nearly as critical of their infrastructure as are those from the smaller settlements.

Therefore, we can conclude that the evaluations and self-identification of young people are determined somewhat differently than the formal the urban/rural distinction.

Having this as a starting point, we might suggest some lines of differentiation in Estonian society that are (perhaps) connected with distinction between rural and urban young people.

The Capital City vs. the Rest of Estonia

The over-exuberance of Tallinn – the capital city and most important centre of economic, social and cultural life – was proclaimed a serious problem of regional development already during the last decades of the Soviet rule, when the rapid growth of Tallinn began. The development of Tallinn at the expense of the rest of Estonia has become even more acute during the years of independence. The underlying reasons for this have to do with the logic of economic development (including the expansion

of foreign capital and economic interests) that are outside the realm of this report. This metropolitisation has brought about a deep differentiation of living conditions and perspectives between people settled in Tallinn and its surrounding area, and those in other areas of Estonia. It concerns the whole population, but the problem is most noticeable where young people are concerned.

The most significant consequences of Tallinn's over-exuberance from the viewpoint of young people are, first of all, a concentration of opportunities for work and education in Tallinn, and the corresponding decline of such in other areas – both urban and rural. The unpublished results of a survey concerning the situation for an educational cohort of Estonian university graduates show that the incomes of the young intellectuals settled in various areas of Estonia were differentiated most strongly depending on if their place of employment was in Tallinn or anywhere else. The difference was even greater when we analysed the share of young intellectuals who had found employment corresponding with their university education.

The same can be said of the opportunities young people have for spending their leisure time, socialising, etc. That discrepancy is especially strongly felt by young people because so many of these opportunities and challenges of contemporary modern life have become accessible for young people in post-socialist countries only recently.

The data presented here shows that although the discrepancy between Tallinn and the rest of Estonia is most considerable from the viewpoint of young people, other large towns are also “tearing apart” young people living in smaller settlements. Bearing in mind the number of people, young people in particular, living in these larger towns, one could say that we have a situation where young people's living conditions in smaller communities are falling behind the rapid and accelerating development of the larger urban settlements.

We can identify this as *relative deprivation*. Naturally, it concerns not only young people but the entire population, but the social position of young people causes them to feel the condition of being deprived or excluded especially painfully. They most often see the solution in attempting to move to Tallinn or in staying there after graduating from some educational institution. This is not a problem limited to rural

areas; young people from other cities and towns also very often see the capital as the only real place for normal living and building a career. To a certain extent, it also concerns attitudes and plans relating to the country's other cities and large towns.

Regional Inequalities

TABLE 18

Characteristics of the Population of Estonia's Counties (as of January 1, 1998)

County	Total population	% of rural population	Population density (persons per sq km)
Harju*	538149	14.7	124.2
Hiiu	11862	63.8	11.6
Ida-Viru	197530	11.2	58.7
Jõgeva	41622	67.5	16.0
Järva	43368	60.0	16.5
Lääne	31949	52.2	13.4
Lääne-Viru	76144	53.2	22.0
Põlva	35956	71.0	16.6
Pärnu	100457	34.8	20.9
Rapla	40153	61.4	13.5
Saare	40202	59.5	13.8
Tartu	151301	28.2	50.6
Valga	38985	44.0	19.1
Viljandi	62782	51.9	18.3
Võru	43384	59.3	18.8

* Populations of cities, among them Tallinn, the capital, are included in the number of residents in the counties to which they belong according to administrative-territorial divisions.

(source: Statistical Yearbook of Estonia 1998)

Estonia is territorially a rather small country (about the same size as Denmark), and yet even in the framework of this comparatively small territorial entity current trends of social development emphasise the significance of regional differences. The difference between Tallinn and the rest of Estonia is the foremost example of this type of discrepancy and developmental inequality. As can be seen from the statistical data presented in Table 18, the differences between counties in terms of population density and the urban/rural composition of the population are remarkable.

The data here shows the objective situation, on the basis of which we can assume that serious differences exist between regions in terms of the conditions for and perspectives of young people, especially rural young people. Research conducted by Estonian social scientists working on strategies for social welfare and fighting poverty has clearly shown that there are considerable differences between regions of Estonia in income, consumption, (un)employment, etc.¹²⁶ These researchers have concluded that a “corridor of poverty” has taken shape in Estonia along its Eastern and Southern borders. For people inhabiting these regions welfare indicators show much lower level of well-being and, correspondingly, much greater risks of slipping below the poverty line.

Again, this is not specifically a problem of rural youth. It concerns not only rural young people, but also those living in urban settlements in these regions. But for young people living in these areas of Estonia it rather clearly means the diminishing of actual opportunities, including chances to build a career.

The data at our disposal from the study of the Estonian primary and secondary school seniors enables us to analyse the self-evaluations of young people inhabiting the rural and urban segments of these counties. If we take the counties as units of analysis for regional differences, we can see that differences between counties in the “index of infrastructure” are almost as big as the urban/rural differences. Thus the highest overall value (evaluations by the whole young population of the counties are not presented here) in the index can be found in the regional evaluations of young people from the Harju County (Mv=21.9) where the capital city of Tallinn is located, and the lowest comes from the young people of the basically agricultural Järva County (Mv=15.7). This gives us a difference of approximately 6 points

¹²⁶ Kutsar & Trumm 1998

between the lowest and highest mean values. Of course these differences are mainly connected with the differentiation of living conditions in towns themselves, and not so much with regional differences within the purely rural segments of the counties.

To show the regional differences in the infrastructural conditions of rural young people more clearly we distinguish between respondents living in settlements where the number of inhabitants is less than 10,000 and which are not county centres, treated as rural young people, and other respondents, seen as urban young people (see Tables 19 and 20).

One can see that the average value of the index for urban young people (on Table 20) is 21.7 varying considerably from county to county. It is highest in Harju (Mv=23.6) and lowest in Hiiu (Mv=15.6); i.e., a difference of 8 points between the extremes.

Quite a different picture can be seen on Table 19, which presents the corresponding data concerning the opinions of rural young people. The average value on the index is much more lower (16.3) than that of the urban young people. This speaks of rural young people's considerably lower level of satisfaction with their infrastructural conditions. The second important observation is that regional differences in the infrastructural conditions of rural young people in different counties are rather similar. The difference between the highest (Mv=17.4 in Ida-Viru) and lowest (Mv=14.9 in Lääne) mean values in the "index of infrastructure" here is only 2.5 points. Statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$) differences can be seen only between the counties where the infrastructural conditions were rated as the very highest and lowest.

An overall conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that the regional differentiation of living conditions of young people is first of all dependent on the level of urbanisation of the region: the more urbanisation, the better young people feel about their home regions.

The second conclusion is that in comparison with those of urban young people, the living conditions of rural young people are significantly worse and they do not differ so much from county to county. This means that regional differentiation in Estonia *per se* is a less important factor characterising the

situation of rural young people than discrepancies in the concentrations of various types of urban settlements in different regions.

TABLE 19

Regional Differences in the “Index of Infrastructure” Among Estonian *Rural* Young People

Counties	Percentage distributions for value categories in the “index of infrastructure”			Means	Confidence intervals of means (95%)	N
	7...13	14...20	21...28			
Ida-Viru	23.1	50.7	26.3	17.40	.66	227
Pärnu	21.6	53.1	25.2	17.14	.54	280
Lääne-Viru	22.3	55.8	21.9	17.09	.52	301
Tartu	28.3	47.4	24.4	16.80	.64	270
Saare	27.3	55.3	17.4	16.78	.74	138
Viljandi	23.4	60.7	15.8	16.59	.56	215
Võru	30.8	50.6	18.6	16.16	.78	126
Jõgeva	28.7	51.6	19.7	16.06	.66	199
Hiiu	25.0	62.4	12.6	16.05	1.38	34
Harju	34.0	50.8	15.3	15.74	.38	602
Põlva	31.4	54.1	14.5	15.73	.72	141
Valga	30.7	56.8	12.6	15.47	.64	150
Rapla	29.9	59.4	10.7	15.45	.62	157
Järva	32.8	53.1	14.0	15.43	.60	198
Lääne	42.1	48.4	9.5	14.94	.88	87
Total N	892	1661	571	0 = 16.28		3124

%	28.6	53.2	18.3			
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TABLE 20

Regional Differences in the “Index of Infrastructure” Among Estonian *Urban* Young People

Counties	Percentage distributions for value categories in the “index of infrastructure”			Means	Confidence intervals of means (95%)	N
	7...13	14...20	21...28			
Harju	1.4	18.2	80.4	23.64	.16	2081
Tartu	2.4	20.8	76.9	23.17	.34	537
Pärnu	1.6	38.9	59.5	21.43	.56	184
Ida-Viru	8.3	46.0	45.7	19.82	.30	904
Lääne-Viru	4.7	56.8	38.5	19.57	.86	93
Saare	13.6	49.1	37.3	18.88	.88	95
Lääne	8.0	63.5	28.5	18.52	.86	75
Põlva	13.4	62.6	24.0	18.05	.98	62
Viljandi	7.7	70.0	22.3	17.85	.62	136
Rapla	16.6	55.9	27.5	17.70	1.24	36
Võru	18.3	59.4	22.3	17.25	.86	101
Jõgeva	19.6	66.8	13.6	17.00	1.04	50
Valga	13.8	70.9	15.3	16.86	.82	89
Järva	20.0	65.2	14.8	16.59	.90	68
Hiiu	28.1	65.9	6.0	15.64	1.20	31
Total N	230	1502	2812	21.66		4544

%	5.1	33.0	61.9			
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Two wide-spread patterns of conduct have appeared among young people living in less developed areas. One of them is large-scale *migration*. This has various forms. Many young people try to find ways to make their living in areas that are currently more promising and which seem to have better prospects for building one's future. Migration is also widely connected with the pendulum swing of work and/or at the first stages of one's studies, but young people clearly tend to end up settling permanently in the areas and regions where life offers the most possibilities for today and tomorrow. Education is the most important channel for this type of migration. Young people from less developed areas do not tend to return home after graduating from the educational institutions in the cities.¹²⁷

The second item worth mentioning here is a direct result of Young people's migration. It is the *decreasing quality of social life available* in these less prosperous regions. The migration of young people, especially when connected with education, means a large-scale sorting out and removal of young people who are more active, educated, innovative, etc. The result is not only that the number of young people living in these areas is diminishing, but that the young people who stay there are less capable of innovations and changes in life, and also less willing to change their personal lives in response to challenges that may be open in their home region. It is highly symptomatic that – in conditions of rather high unemployment, including youth unemployment – the representatives of Estonian business and industry have begun to point more and more to their difficulties in finding a work force that would correspond with the needs of the contemporary economic situation.

5.4.4. Centre-Periphery Differentiation

The lines of social differentiation discussed so far are discrepancies at the national level: certain areas and especially certain types of settlements are less developed compared with some others. This situation is not a new feature of post-socialist countries; it was discussed already during the Soviet time, although today the regional discrepancies have become more troublesome, especially from the

¹²⁷ The movement to institutions of post-secondary education in connection with young peoples' attempts to overcome social and territorial disparities has also been widely studied by sociologists of the former Soviet Union. see: Saar 1997, 139 -158.

viewpoint of young people.

Today we are facing a comparatively new line of social differentiation: discrepancies that occur in the framework of particular regions. To put it figuratively, the regions tend to develop their inner structure in a way that every region has its own “Tallinn,” where the economic and cultural possibilities are developing most quickly, and in the framework of the same regions underdevelopment is concentrated in other areas.

Regions having this kind of *centre/periphery discrepancies* in social development can in principle be identified with the counties as basic units of administrative division. The impact on young people of a given way of developing the inequality of opportunities is practically analogous with the discrepancies we have discussed so far. It means that possibilities for current life as well as perspectives for the future are concentrated in the local centres, and the periphery tends to have considerably fewer opportunities and possibilities.

As we discussed earlier, this kind of concentration of inequalities results in considerable migration: young people leaving rural areas and settling in local centres, that in turn means the degradation of the social and cultural quality of inhabitants of rural areas.

A significant result of this type of inequality came out in the data from the representative survey of plans and educational orientations of Estonian primary and secondary school seniors conducted in 1996-98. We saw a clear correlation between the educational “ambitions” of 9-year primary school seniors and the location of their school. As was expected, plans to continue schooling after completing one’s compulsory education differed considerably from region to region. The share of young people who were obtaining their primary schooling and who had decided to continue on to general secondary school (the typical educational path in Estonia, which usually leads to a post-secondary educational institution) varied considerably: from 58 % in the centre of a well-developed rural region to 38 % in the centre of a rural region in the “corridor of poverty” described above. An unexpected finding was that differences in the share of young people with this type of educational ambition between graduates of schools situated in county centres and smaller local centres of the same counties were as large as the

corresponding overall differences between counties.

In Estonia's cultural conditions educational ambition is a rather substantial indicator of young people's mentality, showing what portion of young people in every region is content with the acquired level of compulsory schooling and how many intend to look for something more promising. The data shows that certain discrepancies between the aspirations of young people living and studying in local centres and in the local periphery have become at least equal to the differences between young people inhabiting the different regions of Estonia.

5.4.5. Ethnic and Regional Differentiation

The former territories of the Soviet Union have often become countries with complicated socio-ethnic structures. The long-term historical developments and social policy of the Soviet time¹²⁸ resulted in a situation where the majority of the people living in Estonia belonged to ethnic minorities (commonly called the "Russian-speaking community") living in non-rural areas: in the capital and other large cities, and in the urbanised and industrialised regions of North-eastern Estonia. Therefore, the differences in the situation of native and non-Estonian young people are not of the same character as the urban/rural differences we have analysed so far.

Several empirical studies that have been conducted during the years of Estonian independence demonstrate that, as expected, real differences exist between the young people belonging to the native and Russian-speaking communities. These differences include objective living conditions, types of participation and activism as well as mentalities. Probably the most important trend is the decreasing of many differences between Estonian and non-native young people. The comparison of the opinions of students from schools where the language of instruction is Estonian with those from schools where it is Russian demonstrates that the attitudes toward Estonian independence and certain new features of the social life (e.g., paid education) have become considerably more similar from 1992 to 1996-98.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ see: Dostal 1993, 89-114

Thus, the inherent differences in the behavior and opinions of young people from the non-Estonian community – which can be specified as differences on the integration/separation axis – become in certain aspects more important than the overall specifics of young people belonging to that community. The decreasing of differences between young people belonging to the two socio-ethnic communities shows that the overall conditions of free-market development taking shape in contemporary Estonia are becoming the leading factor in moulding the behavior and attitudes of the country's contemporary young people. This would also imply that urban/rural differences are having a significant role in shaping the participation and attitudes of young people from both socio-ethnic communities.

5.4.6. Urban-Rural Differences

A more precise analysis of the generational dimension of the process of social transition in post-socialist Estonia has only just begun; it will be, like other projects of this sort, based on the results of large longitudinal studies. These and other research materials will enable us to draw conclusions that are in accordance with other results presented in this section: urban/rural distinction is not an independent dimension of the generational or cohort differences that have occurred in the ongoing processes of social change.

The differences in position and status between people belonging to different generations are rather large.¹³⁰ They stem from the point in time at which one obtained education and entered into active working life. These factors gave certain important advantages to the generation that entered the social life at the beginning of the 1990s. This was called “the generation of winners” in terms of their advantageous position in the new economy. Naturally, their basic attitudes are also more adapted to the new social situation.

People belonging to this generation are currently 25-35 years old. They have participated in processes resulting in the deepening of the urban/rural discrepancies described above. It is obvious that they are more concentrated in Tallinn and other larger cities, and a certain part of them have left their homes in

¹²⁹ see esp. section 5.3.8. above

the countryside both to get their desired education and to settle in areas where they would have better possibilities for the future, above all in economic terms.

5.4.7. Some Conclusions

The aims of the suggestions presented in this paragraph are twofold: point out some features of the situation of rural young people in Estonia as a post-socialist country, and to discuss the expediency of analysing the problems of urban youth based on the one-dimensional administrative-territorial divisions.

The following conclusions can be drawn concerning the latter point of discussion:

1. It is inadequate to build up the analysis of the situation of the rural youth of a post-socialist country based solely on the administrative-territorial distinction between urban and rural populations. The real situation of young people is more diversified, more “flowing,” than can be presented on the basis of that administrative distinction.
2. The differences between various groups of rural and urban young people in terms of living conditions, real behavior and opinions and attitudes are usually not differences *per se*. They stem from the different positions occupied by these youth groups in the emerging structures of social life that are based, first of all, on the relations of the free-market economy.
3. Rural/urban differences can be traced and studied in every sphere of young people’s lives, but it is especially important and also fruitful to analyse the urban/rural differences in the realm of actual possibilities in life, and the ways in which young people’s perceptions of them affect their career (incl. educational) aspirations.
4. Trying to establish the essential borderline between urban and rural youth on a more diversified

¹³⁰ see also: Estonian Human Development Report 1998, Ch. 1.2.

scale of urban/rural distinctions, we came to conclusion that in most cases rural young people can be identified as those living in settlements with a population of less than 10,000. This means that the real division between two basic types of living conditions and their subjective perception by young people does not match the formal urban/rural division currently in place.

5. The research data on which this section is based enables us to conclude that the greatest social differences on the urban/rural scale are the distinctions between basic types of larger cities (the capital / big cities serving as county centres / big cities that are not county centres / other urban and rural settlements). This means that differences between those types of bigger cities are much deeper than between various types of smaller towns and rural settlements. Thus in Estonian society the basic trends of development are concentrated in big urban centres, and compared to the differences between these, differences between various types of smaller communities remains much smaller.

Estonia as an example of post-socialist development is undergoing deep and rapid processes of transition. These processes have had a diversified impact the rural development. The intertwining of processes of social integration and differentiation are a leading trend in societal development. It is highly symptomatic of the developmental situation and its analysis by the scientific community that the latest Human Development Report compiled in Estonia was fully dedicated to the problems of social integration (Estonian Human Development Report 1998) while the previous one tackled the coherence-exclusion dimension (Estonian Human Development Report 1997).

The suggestions and examples presented in this section were more largely connected with the processes of disintegration and social exclusion, than with the opposing trends. It is rather characteristic of sociological research in this area: socially dysfunctional developmental trends are more interesting from the viewpoint of social policy, and they shed more light on the real social differentiations that are the basic aim of the analysis. The possibilities for personal development and career advancement for young people are concentrated in urban areas, and the post-socialist development has not eliminated this discrepancy. At the same time one cannot evade the fact that urban development creates favourable conditions for development and self-expression for a considerable portion of young people. Further research based on adequate evaluations of social differences must show to what extent it is possible to

harmonise the contradictory trends of urban and rural development in the environments of young people.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In conducting a cross-national comparative study, one has to determine *which type of cross-national comparison* should be built up. In our case this methodological task is especially relevant because we have to deal with rather complicated social and territorial “space“. The majority of the participating countries – Finland, Germany, Italy, Sweden – are represented by rural regions of different scope. One participating country, the smallest – Estonia – is covered in its entirety by representative empirical studies and statistical data; here rural areas and rural youth are specified as a sub-category in the framework of the entire territory and the corresponding population. The specifics of social development that have to be taken into account while building up an analysis in these various countries (which above all belong to different geographic and historic regions of Europe) are also significant.

Melvin Kohn (1989) has distinguished between four types of comparative research which differ on the basis of the role played by countries or nations in each particular study:

- A. *Nations as objects of study.* In this case nations/countries or certain institutions in the participating countries are compared and the aim is to obtain new knowledge about those particular countries.
- B. *Nations as contexts of analysis.* This means that the functioning of certain institutions or the impact of certain structures on people is the problem to be considered, and the results enable one to say how broader theoretical positions or hypotheses “behave“ in the conditions of different countries included in the study.
- C. *Nations as units of analysis.* Nations/countries are classified according to certain social indicator and it is possible to establish how the variability of the indicator is connected with specific traits of the countries.
- D. *Nations as components of larger international systems.* This is the variant of cross-national studies where particular nations are seen as parts of the world economic system or in the framework of any other trans-national structure.

Of these four variants of cross-national comparative study, the second one – *nations* or countries (in our case also regions as specific parts of the participating countries) *as contexts of analysis* – is in fullest accordance with the tasks and conditions of our project. We have rural youth as the focal point; our aim is to clarify how social situation in different countries shape the living conditions and participation of rural young people. We also have certain concepts – first of all, modernisation, urbanisation, social integration, rural/urban discrepancies, educational and labour attainment, youth unemployment, and also social, ethnic, regional, etc. cohesion and exclusion – that have common characteristics as well as differing contents in different countries. We certainly want to establish the presence of the features described by these concepts in regions involved in the comparative study.

A question may arise: which – if any – larger territorial, cultural, historical, political, etc. totality is embraced by the participating countries (cf., Kohn's fourth category for comparative research above)? To answer this, we should examine the situation of the participating countries against the overall European background.

Obviously the five participating countries represent various types of cultural-political development in the context of post-war Europe¹³¹ including stable Western democracies and post-socialist countries of Eastern Europe. There are well-known and important differences between highly industrialised countries of Northern and Central Europe, and also Southern Italy representing a fast modernising area of Southern Europe.

One can summarise by saying that the countries and regions involved in this comparative study provide evidence about *different typical conditions of rural youth in the European context*. But this conclusion cannot tell us whether we are tracing the real variety of living conditions and aspirations of European rural youth.

This task cannot be solved entirely on the basis of statistical data which depict individual aspects of young people's lives. It is obvious that the meaning of certain indicators is different depending on the

¹³¹ Therborn 1995

whole context of living conditions. It concerns even such widely used indicators of young people's life situation as educational attainment and employment/unemployment rates. It is trivial to point out that because the overall economic, social, and educational situation in the participating countries is rather different, one cannot draw conclusions about differences between countries and regions basing only on primary statistical data. We cannot state that the employment conditions of youth in one country are better or worse than in another country knowing only the percent of unemployed persons among the people belonging to certain age group and not taking into account the overall employment situation.

In this sense it is necessary to analyse the situation of rural youth against the larger background of the conditions in the participating countries. In the analysis conducted in the framework of this project we have tried to see rural youth not only "in itself" but as much as possible in its overall social and developmental contexts.

Beyond this, attempts have been made to establish how extensively and fully the participating countries represent the variety of situations of young people in the European scene. We cannot draw such a conclusion based only on data about objective living conditions in participating countries that are, as was just noted, strongly bound to the historically and culturally determined individual developments in every country. It is important to also reveal the subjective reflections of the situation and the future expectations of young people themselves. The latter is possible by analysing results of international comparative surveys.

Some results of this analysis have been presented in this volume. The conclusion is that the young people of the participating countries represent, as a rule, not one narrow segment, but a far larger scope of perspectives, expectations and opinions characteristic of the contemporary generation of European young people.

Therefore, we can conclude that the results of this comparative project speak not only about the situation of youth in the individual participating countries, but can be seen as giving a larger picture of the problems of rural youth in contemporary Europe.

The entire analysis must have as its starting-point the *definition of youth*. Stemming from the considerable variety of trends of regional development, levels of urbanisation and industrialisation, etc. in the participating countries, it is obvious that we cannot apply one definition of youth that both is universal and covers the most important “local“ specifics of the given category.

The starting point for defining youth or rural youth is based on statistical estimates. For instance, we classify certain territorial entities as urban or rural areas on the basis of the number of inhabitants in the corresponding settlements. Obviously such scales differ from country to country.

This is why no uniform definition of youth or rural youth has been worked out in the framework of this project. In every participating country or region rural youth was specified according to the approaches and definitions that are common for that region. Therefore, our work is not based on *demographically identical* categories of youth. But we can juxtapose the situations and opinions of rural young people from different countries on the basis of the *social status* of corresponding categories being similar if not analogous.

Speaking about young people’s living conditions and participation, we face the task of *defining the social problems of contemporary rural youth*. The way we define our subject-matter determines both the list of possible topics for empirical investigations and the character of empirical material we need for an adequate analysis of these topics.

Defining of social problems has become a special item in the framework of sociological methodology. We find two different approaches to that problem.

From one viewpoint social problems are seen through certain *sets of conditions*. As Amitai Etzioni puts it, “a given power structure in society, a society’s particular mode of planning (or lack of planning), a change in the values members subscribe to, a rise in knowledge, an improvement in administration and other such factors are viewed, first, as forces that can serve to explain the sources of specific social

problems...¹³² These conditions can be measured and the results of studies of these conditions lead to the understanding of the emergence of the given social problems.

Another, comparatively newer approach sees social problems as *a set of activities* of individuals and groups aimed at posing certain claims or assertions with respect to the given social conditions.¹³³

Until now the first, *objectivist approach* to defining and studying social problems has been dominant. In the framework of this tradition social change, transformation and social problems are interconnected, so that the emergence of social problems is seen as something undesirable, though inevitable. Social problems are here typically seen as the “social cost,” or by-products, of radical social changes. For example, the Russian sociologist T. Zaslavskaya has preceded her analysis of structural employment and income differentiation as features of the transition society in Russia by saying that “Perestroika may have some negative side effects which should be foreseen to avoid future social tensions and public discontent.”¹³⁴

According to the second, *subjectivist or constructivist viewpoint*, society is primarily seen as a changing socio-cultural field. In the framework of this viewpoint social problems both are the definite results of social transformation and they have a direct impact on the transformation process. Therefore, alongside of objective conditions, the subjective perception of participants or actors is a significant component of a social problem.

In reality the research process has to be based on certain premises stemming from both viewpoints. It is especially important when we deal with social problems relating to the conditions of deep societal transition: here social problems should be seen as results as well as influential factors of social transformation.

The two approaches to defining social problems seem worth considering, among other reasons because there might be differences between participating researchers’ definitions of the social problems of youth

¹³² Etzioni 1976, IX

¹³³ Blumer 1971; Schneider 1985; Spector & Kitsuse 1987

¹³⁴ Zaslavskaya 1989, 223

and the perception of social problems by the young people themselves. In our study we shall probably confront situations where the evidence obtained using the indicators that we have chosen according to our understanding of the given problem give one picture, while the information about the perception of the same problem by young people tells us something different.

Beyond this, we must speak about rural youth as a specific category not only on the basis of certain objective characteristics, but also taking into account the subjective experiences of the rural young people that distinguish them from other youth groups. This aspect is connected with compiling a list of the *social problems of rural youth*. There are items which should be treated as social problems of the rural youth because previous research conducted in various countries has proven that they have this quality. Some items may be included in this list because they occupy certain important place in the social policy of various countries.

In any case, this approach is probably insufficient. Tackling such a dynamic aspect of life as social problems in the context of so controversial a set of processes as contemporary rural development, we must take into account that rural youth is itself a specific subject and actor in social life. Young people living in the countryside have their own experiences and aspirations where various items may have very different meaning. Erwin K. Scheuch has emphasised this aspect of the methodology of comparative surveys saying that we cannot compare individual percentages without taking into account the meaning of the topic represented by these percentages for the subjects themselves in different countries.¹³⁵

On the other hand, rural young people create or aggravate social problems while making socially sound decisions in their own life situations. For instance, in some areas young people living and studying in peripheral rural settlements may have future expectations, plans, etc. that differ considerably from those of young people inhabiting the rural centres. Therefore, this brings out a centre-periphery distinction in life plans as an important social problem which may not be revealed on the basis of the objective situation of young people.

¹³⁵ Scheuch 1996, 61

Stemming from these assumptions, we should enlarge the approach to social problems of contemporary rural youth by adding certain dimensions of the life situation that are made “problematic“ by the perceptions and behaviour of the young people themselves. The possibility of including the “problem-constructing“ behaviour of young people into the methodology of our research lies in the application of various qualitative data. At the same time this aspect brings our methodology nearer to the dynamism and multiplicity of our subject-matter.

This last methodological remark concerns the character of empirical data applied in this project. As was noted before, the project is mostly based on *secondary analysis of existing data*, which is both *quantitative* and *qualitative*.

The choice of the type of data was based on two conditions. First, the existence of data to be collected in the framework of various research projects conducted in each participating country. It must be pointed out that results of some international comparative surveys were extremely important for fulfilling the tasks of the whole project; these surveys being, naturally, quantitative.

In some cases, for fulfilling certain research tasks qualitative data were most adequate. Socio-cultural and ethnic identity issues appeared to be rather important in terms of characterising the rural youth.¹³⁶ Qualitative analysis is first of all used concerning these themes.

In the conditions of deep and rapid social change and while studying rural youth as a specific social category, the definition of youth and youth problems appears to be subjectivist and also more inductively descriptive than logically distinct. Qualitative data serves as a more adequate basis to build up corresponding theoretical assumptions.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Silverman 1989, Part Two

¹³⁷ Strauss & Corbin 1990, 17 ff.

7. SUMMARY

Young people live under different conditions in different parts of Europe. This study shows how the maturing process for young people has different national characteristics in each country, which need to be made clear to the different economic and political operatives of our continent. In addition to national differences, the possibilities for young people living in the same country vary according to whether they live in an urban or rural environment. Young people's ethnic and/or linguistic backgrounds are also significant factors.

This comparative research shows that without information about the unique conditions and challenges that young people face in various parts of this continent, it is impossible to properly conduct European youth politics or youth work. Regional "peripheral conditions" and young people's own starting points must be taken into consideration in European youth politics. For example, Finland's politics of youth, education and labour are not applicable in an Estonian context, but that country must rather develop its own models from its own starting points.

At the turn of the last century four out of five Estonians lived in the countryside. From the start of the country's first period of independence (1918), however, urbanisation progressed rapidly, and at the end of the thirties close to a third of the population lived in cities. During the Soviet period the urbanisation process was sped up further by central planning and the influx of industrial workers from the other Soviet republics. Especially Tallinn and the smaller cities of North-Eastern Estonia became Russian speaking population centres. Since the re-establishment of independence in 1991 this trend has been somewhat reversed though – urban populations have declined slightly, and non-Estonian minorities have shrunk.

Estonia's Russian-speaking students have noticeably more Soviet residue in their social and political ideologies than their Estonian-speaking counterparts, which can be seen for example in their lower levels of participation in the labour market; (ethnically and linguistically) Estonian students represent "the new mentality" more. On the other hand, Russian-speaking students were more active in latching onto new "money making ventures" when the transition to a market economy began. During the time of

independence, however, these differences have been shrinking: non-Estonians have adjusted more to market realities, and there is a growing level of support for a more socialised form of market economy among the Estonians themselves.

The living conditions in Estonia's countryside differ considerably from those in the cities. Average living space increased somewhat between 1992 and 1997, but a portion of the rural population has had to move into more primitive quarters due to the break-down of the collective farm system and the economic stress that this has caused.

The economic conditions of young people are clearly weaker in rural homes, nor have they improved appreciably during the course of the nineties. Unemployment rates are considerably higher than in the cities, and the level of public services available fluctuates wildly from region to region. Since the privatisation of agriculture, the collective farms have lost their significance as major employers, and many areas of production which had been built up on a monostructural basis have waned.

Nearly a third of Estonians under 30 are at risk of marginalisation. The viewpoint of rural young people is clearly more pessimistic than that of the urban crowd. The task of national and regional youth politics should thus be to insure that young people from different social and territorial backgrounds will be able to find satisfying and similar opportunities for choice in education and employment.

Former Vasa county has undergone significant structural changes. The migration movement out of the countryside and into the cities has been quite strong, especially among the well educated. Only about a tenth of the region's young people remain directly connected with agriculture. In terms of population structure though, the area remains decisively rural. Bilinguality gives this region its own special character; the representatives of each language group are very similar to each other these days, though some social and cultural differences remain. For example Swedish-speaking girls are far more interested in moving across the gulf to live and work in Sweden than the Finnish-speaking counterparts.

In the Vasa area there are Finnish- and Swedish-speaking young people who share cultural patterns of behaviour. Above all language itself was the distinctive feature between them. It was also the most

important symbol of their ethnic identity. In local youth communities Swedish-speaking young people were in interaction with other young people mostly within their own language group. They were in competition for social and cultural space with Finnish-speaking young people. The ethnocentric attitudes of different language groups lead to some attacks and violence among boys in particular. In the rural area close to the city of Vasa there were few young people who spoke Finnish, and the conflicts between young people of different linguistic backgrounds were rarer than in the urban areas where the majority of young people were Finnish-speaking.

As we found in the RYPE Report Part 1. the problems confronting rural youth in former Vasa county are in many ways the same as those found elsewhere in Europe. Youth unemployment continues to be high and the use of intoxicants has increased. Many feel themselves forced to move to the cities. There is also a shortage of moderately priced housing, which limits young people's possibilities to establish homes of their own in their native district.

Some of the young people who participated in this research felt that they had little possibility of influencing their immediate environment, and they doubted that local decision makers had much interest in their opinions. Many in the Vasa area, however, said that they would like to more actively participate in the development of their municipalities.

The living conditions for young people in this region are favourably comparable with those in most other rural areas of Finland and Europe. Positive trends can be seen. Young people are highly motivated to get a good education. Both genders have practically the same opportunities in education and future employment. The labour market situation is improving, partially as the result of youth workshops and improvements in the apprenticeship system. There is also a strong tradition of entrepreneurship in this part of Ostro-Botnia, though young people still need more training and guidance to make it work for them.

In the nineties high-tech electronics and information technology have increasingly surrounded young people's lives. Internationalisation has strengthened especially since Finland became a member of the

EU. How these and many other factors will affect the lives of rural young people in the future remains to be seen.

Brandenburg is Germany's second most sparsely populated state. The percentage of young people is slightly higher here than in the country as a whole. For its size this area has experienced dramatic changes since German reunification. A major portion of Brandenburg's industrial jobs – more than half in some fields – have vanished. Compared to Western Germany, its unemployment is very high, the purchasing power of the average resident is much lower and housing are poorer. On the other hand the population is more highly educated than in the west.

These living conditions are reflected in the values of Brandenburg's young people: for 95 % of those 14-18 years old, the most important thing in life is a good job; and only 23 % are interested in active participation in politics.

The emphasis of official action for overcoming youth unemployment is on encouraging young people to have a positive attitude in hunting for work. Various forms of mobility assistance are offered to motivate young people to look for work in other parts of the country. Encouraging entrepreneurship plays a lesser role, since the vast majority of young people do not have sufficient investment capital available. The projects lead by the unemployed themselves have a greater significance, "tailored" to the needs of specific groups. These projects include, e.g., worker substitutes, job rotation, international trainee exchange programmes as well as subsidised enterprises by young people catering to young people. Youth workshops have also been started.

Calabria, situated on the southern tip of the Italian peninsula, is one of the most under-developed areas of Italy. The region has traditionally been predominantly agricultural, but agriculture currently employs only about one sixth of the population. Emigration from Calabria has been a continuous trend throughout the entire post-war period. With the help of considerable state investment support the standard of living has risen to near the national average. The public sector is the most significant

employer; the private sector has remained small. Hope has been placed in tourism, but so far its significance as a source of employment has been lower than in other parts of Italy.

Regardless of the growth in consumer spending in the region and improved connections with the outside world, Calabria's old social structures have remained more or less unchanged. The most important social institution is the family, which maintains the order and social integration of the community. Prior to marriage, a young person's, especially a young woman's, economic and personal independence is considerably more limited than in Northern Italy. Young people are very rarely openly opposed to their parents.

One inevitable and distinctive feature of the life of virtually every young Calabrian is clientelism. In earlier days a person's success depended on relationships with the region's land owner nobility. These days, as the public sector is the region's primary employer and guarantor of well being, the important issue is relationships with local officials and political officers. The depth and security of these relationships determine, for example, whether a young person will receive a position in public services or a small business development grant for starting his own company. Practically the only alternative to the system of clientelistic relationships is to move away from the region.

The level of education in Calabria has risen considerably in recent decades. Since 1951 illiteracy has been cut in half, from nearly 40 % to around 20 %; and the number of those who have completed at least elementary education has grown to over ten times what it was a generation ago. Education is, for many young people, the road to greater independence. These days parents value their children's education, in that it makes it possible for the whole family to rise to a higher social class.

As described above, across Europe from North to South we find similarities in the living conditions of rural young people. In the welfare states of the North, Finland and Sweden, young people share a sense of mobility. Especially the well educated tend to leave their home districts in search of better work opportunities. Unemployment runs high both in the Vasa area and in the Norrbotten and Västerbotten areas. In both countries young women are more anxious to leave their rural villages than young men,

and thus we can speak of the “back woods boys“ left in the countryside, where their possibilities of starting a family and building lives of their own are rather poor if they stay in their home towns. If we want to preserve young people’s faith in their possibilities for a productive life in the sparsely populated areas of the North, we must find ways to rebuild the employment structure of these districts. Developing tourism, for example, could be one possibility. Technical possibilities for remote working from home offices in the countryside are also available.

The young people of Estonia and Brandenburg share a sense of change brought on by the collapse of the Soviet Union. They share these experiences with young people from all former communist countries. Estonian young people are adjusting better than the East Germans to the rapid changes in the employment structure in the transition to a market economy. The position of Estonia’s Russian-speaking young people, however, weakened when the country became independent. The straightening out of their living conditions and solving the national language question will still require special measures. In Estonia immediately after independence well educated young people took over the leading positions in politics and commerce because they were seen as ideologically untarnished. The risk remains though that those now in power will not be retiring and making room for “new blood“ for another 30-40 years, creating potential problems in finding places for the next generation of Estonian young people.

In Southern Italy the young person still turns to the family for help in finding work. There rural young people must move within the clientele system which has proven difficult to dismantle. This takes care of employment, social security, etc. Conflicts between poor Southern Italy and rich Northern Italy thus seem rather inevitable. One element to understand regarding young Calabrians is family memory. Even today they reflect on the materials associated with family histories, which play an important role in their identities in terms of valuation of the social path travelled by the family group as a whole.

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