



TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF YOUTH'S CULTURES & VALUES

"You, dear young people, are not the future, but the now of God"

*(Pope Francis speech at the Closing Mass for World
Youth Day, Panama City, 27th January 2019)*

WORKING PAPER

Under the direction of

Dr. François Mabilbe, Secretary General of IFCU

Dr. Montserrat Alom, Director of CIRAD-IFCU





Fédération Internationale des Universités Catholiques
International Federation of Catholic Universities
Federación Internacional de Universidades Católicas

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
FIRST PART. OVERVIEW OF WORLDWIDE TRENDS CONCERNING YOUNGSTERS	
1. From Students to “Digital Natives”: Youth in the Era of Digital Revolution	9
1.1. Generation Z: a generation of makers?	10
2. Youth and Globalization	13
3. International Mobility and its Impact on Youth	15
4. Youth Cultures and Religious Radicalization	17
5. Youths in Relation to National and International Institutions	19
SECOND PART. CRITICAL PRESENTATION OF THE SECOND CIRAD-IFCU GLOBAL SURVEY RESULTS	
1. Use of Data from the Study	25
2. Suggestions for Working with Data from the Study	27
2.1. What type of students attend Catholic universities?	27
2.2. What has led students to choose our universities and with what prospects for the future have they done so?	33
2.3. What type of student life do the students lead?	37
2.4. What image do students have of themselves?	41
2.5. Students’ close relationships	43
2.6. Young people and their perception of the world	46
2.7. The values of our student body	49
2.8. The twofold aim of Catholic universities: Increasing knowledge and providing spaces for faith	50
REFERENCES	53

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, several surveys have been conducted by different institutions on youth cultures. Studies on university youth multiplied in the context of political and educational interests. In the higher education sphere, research was mainly conducted in order to uncover the inner world and the deep functioning of young students who attend university in different regions of the world. Although their methodologies and research techniques may sometimes differ, most surveys point out the need to study the cultures of young people and to find out about their concerns, their needs, their understanding of the world and, most importantly, their understanding of higher education.

As an organization dedicated to the promotion of quality education and scientific cooperation, the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU), began in 2012 a process of strategic inquiry on the cultures of young people attending Catholic universities in order to gain a better understanding about them while providing a more convenient answer to their needs in a rapidly changing world. As it will be exposed in the second part of this Working Document, IFCU, through the International Center for Research and Decision Support (CIRAD), launched a second global survey in 2016-2017 in order to update our knowledge of the trends and the evolution of the cultures and values of students attending Catholic universities. Likewise, CIRAD-IFCU also participated in the 2017 Survey on the French and the European Values (EVS), which is part of a joint worldwide research effort undertaken in all the continents. This longitudinal survey, conducted every nine years through a questionnaire almost identical for all countries, tackled in its ninth edition the topic of values in relation to social solidarity, international migrations, environmental challenges and social cohesion, with great emphasis on young people.

Before presenting more in depth a summary of the results of the second CIRAD-IFCU survey and providing clues to make good use of the same, it seems useful to first put into perspective some relevant studies carried out by different researchers, organizations and higher education institutions on youth cultures worldwide.

FIRST PART

OVERVIEW OF WORLDWIDE TRENDS
CONCERNING YOUNGSTERS

1

From Students to “Digital Natives”: Youth in the Era of Digital Revolution



At first glance, and unsurprisingly, the impact of the digital revolution on youth culture(s) emerges as a major theme in several research studies conducted so far. Indeed, the digital revolution has altered the uses and modes of knowledge acquisition and cultural consumption, especially among younger generations, born in a world where access to knowledge and culture is predominately digital. Called «digital natives»¹, these young generations are different from their elders in their relationship to knowledge and culture. In her study dedicated to cultural practices among the young and transmitting institutions, Sylvie Octobre highlights the ways in which new technologies have altered the status given to knowledge and cultural practices². Like many knowledge and culture transmission institutions, the university also faces several challenges affecting the very foundations of its action, including the link between knowledge and its mediators. Consequently, institutions of higher education, writes Octobre, are called upon to revisit their model of mediation to adapt it to the younger generations, in order to foster the emergence of a culture of the future and to allow a new way of transmitting knowledge, which is itself in the process of redefinition.

Moreover, the traditional authority of the university is called into question partly because its modes of intervention seem less and less in line with the skills and expectations of younger generations. This

¹ M. Prensky. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the horizon*, vol. 9, no. 5, 1-6.

² S. Octobre. (2009). Pratiques culturelles chez les jeunes et institutions de transmission : un choc de cultures ? Cultural practices amongst the young and transmitting institutions: a clash of cultures?. *Culture prospective*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1-8.

encourages a real reflection of the modes of transmission, which is not limited to the insertion of technologies but includes a broader review of learning practices. Understanding the changes that the digital revolution brings to young people allows, according to Octobre, for apprehending the digital learning modes, but also the changes in the relationships to pre-existing practices. This should make it possible to question the role and missions of institutions in the transmission of knowledge and cultural practices. Institutions of higher education are, consequently, “called upon to revisit their model of mediation to adapt it to the younger generations, in order to foster the emergence of a culture of tomorrow and to allow the transmission of knowledge, itself in the process of redefinition”³.

1.1 Generation Z: A Generation of Makers?

If researchers have long focused their study on the behaviors of Millennials, also called “Generation Y”, their focus has rapidly shifted to the study of “Generation Z”. This term refers to young people born during the 1990s and who are today between 15 and 21 years old. The behavior of this generation of “digital natives” has given way to numerous studies and surveys. According to many researchers, this generation of young people is expected to change dramatically the labor market upon their arrival. For instance, in her work on this category of young people, Elodie Gentina⁴ explains that Generation Z is a “generation of makers”. They are no longer mere learners but efficient makers. This is already visible in companies where they are often sources of creation and innovation.

Most researchers agree that recognizing the digital skills of the Zers must encourage companies to directly involve the Zers in their

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ <https://www.hbrfrance.fr/chroniques-experts/2018/06/20542-generation-z-son-ambition-lintrapreneuriat/>

processes of creation of products, services and values, through ideas, suggestions and communication. This generation of young people is willing to act and influence the environment in which they evolve. It is because Zers are creative, says Elodie Gentina, that higher education institutions need to alter their methods of transmitting knowledge. Traditional lectures and teaching methods are no longer able to respond to this highly digitized generation. Meanwhile, The Chronicle of Higher Education, in its issue of September 2018, entitled “The New Generation of Students: How Colleges Can Recruit, Teach, and Serve Gen Z”, points out that Gen Zers are “arriving on campuses with much different needs, values, and priorities” and that “Planning for this transition means rethinking strategies and priorities to create an effective educational experience for Gen Z”⁵ . Similarly, Generation Z also calls into question the management of the companies and their employees. In other words, companies must then prepare for the arrival of these digital natives in search of perpetual renewal of their skills and their missions.

⁵ J. J. Selingo. (2018). *The New Generation of Students: How colleges can recruit, teach and serve Gen Z*. Washington D.C.: Chronicle of Higher Education.

2

Youth and Globalization



Another major topic that has recently received extensive attention among researchers is that of the effects of globalization on youth worldwide, be it in developed or developing countries. Indeed, studies show that one of the effects of globalization on young people is a strong need for adaptation and for developing new skills that are sometimes inadequate with what their educational institutions can deliver. Although globalization has brought about many prospects for young people in several regions of the world, many are those who seem to be left on its margins. The relevance of this issue has recently (2018) led Brill publishing house to launch a new academic journal entitled “Youth and Globalization”. Based on theoretical and empirical research, this journal seeks to identify “how young people relate to globality and its outcomes. Its aim is to provide an innovative understanding of youth studies in a global context based on multiscale (both local and global), multilevel (economic, political, social), transnational, and multidisciplinary approaches”⁶.

In *Globalization, Uncertainty and Youth in Society: The Losers in a Globalizing World*⁷, a number of authors examine how youth in 14 different industrialized societies (including the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, France, Hungary, etc.) make the transition into adulthood in an era of globalization and increasing uncertainty. This study highlights that such elements as the internationalization of markets

⁶ <https://brill.com/newsitem/79/new-journal-youth-and-globalization-published-by-brill>

⁷ H. P. Blossfeld *et al.* (ed.). (2005). *Globalization, Uncertainty and Youth in Society*. London: Routledge.

and decline in national borders, as well as the intensification of competition and the spread of new global networks linked by new technologies contribute to creating an atmosphere of uncertainty among young people. This is especially the case in the phase of transition to adulthood. In other words, welfare, employment and education systems that operate during the transition to adulthood cause uncertainty to specific social groups of youth. Consequently, this uncertainty impacts on the ability of young people to make decisions during their transition to adulthood. For instance, their career orientation choices as well as decisions related to forming partnerships and building a family seem to be directly affected by this uncertainty.

In a study focused on youth in the Middle-East, researchers have stressed on another alteration brought about by globalization: its influence on the socio-cultural identity of the local youth. According to this study, “globalization has great impact on the interaction patterns, cultural practices, and life style [of young people]. The domination of a universally approved perception and prevalence of globalization has its in-depth and evident impacts over youth local culture because it has caused a decline of traditional cultural norms and values, which have been replaced by the Western values”⁸. In other words, through the media, cable channels, and other communication means, Western cultural values are taking more and more space in the formation of the local cultural identity.

⁸ Z. Azhar *et al.* (2014). Impact of Globalization on Youth Cultural Identity. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol 5, no. 23, 2198-2210.

3

International Mobility and its Impact on Youth



The internationalization of higher education is yet another element that modifies immensely the culture of young students. It has been argued that the experience of international student mobility during study programs has long-term impacts on the ways students perceive the world around them. In his recent article⁹, Ulrich Teichler explains that short-term mobility, notably within Europe, leads to a differentiation between mobile and non-mobile students and between countries. Teichler points out that international student mobility does not necessarily guarantee access to better academic and general skills, but to impressive international skills. Besides, according to Teichler, former mobile students' degree of satisfaction is high regarding the impact on international understanding and general personality development. The study concludes that, for the future, internationalization without mobility will play an increasing role and that it will be more strongly affected by international political conflicts.

Although it is important to note that international student mobility is still a privilege to which only limited groups have access to, technology and geopolitics combined seem to have changed the context and practices of this mobility. Indeed, through Massive Online Open Courses - MOOCs - , the internationalization of higher education is brought to a new level. Quality teaching, delivered by qualified institutions, is thus likely to reach the most remote regions of the world. In other words, these online courses constitute new

⁹ U. Teichler. (2017). Internationalization Trends in Higher Education and the Changing Role of International Student Mobility. *Journal of International Mobility*, vol. 5, no. 1, 177-216.

tools for international knowledge transfer. They can also help to prevent brain drain by providing local access to knowledge. However, as notes, Jean-Baptiste Meyer¹⁰, it remains important to examine how these new forms interact with traditional student mobility, either compensating for it or being combined with it. According to him, there is a need to develop a strategic approach and reflect on the possibilities offered by these new technical and organizational options for a renewed and open intellectual cooperation.

¹⁰ J.-B. Meyer. (2017). MOOCs et mobilités étudiantes : vers une nouvelle circulation des connaissances ? Observations au regard de l'Afrique francophone. *Journal of International Mobility*, vol. 5, no. 1, 75-92.

4

Youth Cultures and Religious Radicalization



Religion plays a significant role in culture, and the levels of adherence to a given religion differ from a society to another. Although several surveys have highlighted the significance of religion to young people in their cultures around the world¹¹, the events that have marked Europe since the Paris attacks of 2015 have shifted the attention of researchers to the study of youths in relation to violent radicalization¹². The aim of these studies, researchers say, is to do away with what is usually portrayed by the media and to effectively “examine what exists, or what is to invent, in the educational action and that could contribute in preventing radicalization. With a clear objective: to help young people in search of meaning”¹³ by supporting and accompanying them with an adapted framework and a better understanding of their personal and social problematics. In other words, universities are called upon to empower young students with the necessary knowledge and support to prevent them from becoming preys to all sorts of violent radicalizations, including religious radicalization.

Within the framework of the territorial variation of prevention policies in the academic field several projects have recently been launched. On the European level, for instance, the European Commission has set up The Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN). Because “fighting terrorism and violent extremism involves more than surveillance and security”¹⁴, RAN brings together practitioners

¹¹ For instance, A. Harris. (2017). *Creativity, Religion and Youth Cultures*. New York : Routledge.

¹² M. Fize. (2016). *Radicalisation de la jeunesse : la montée des extrêmes*. Paris : Eyrolles.

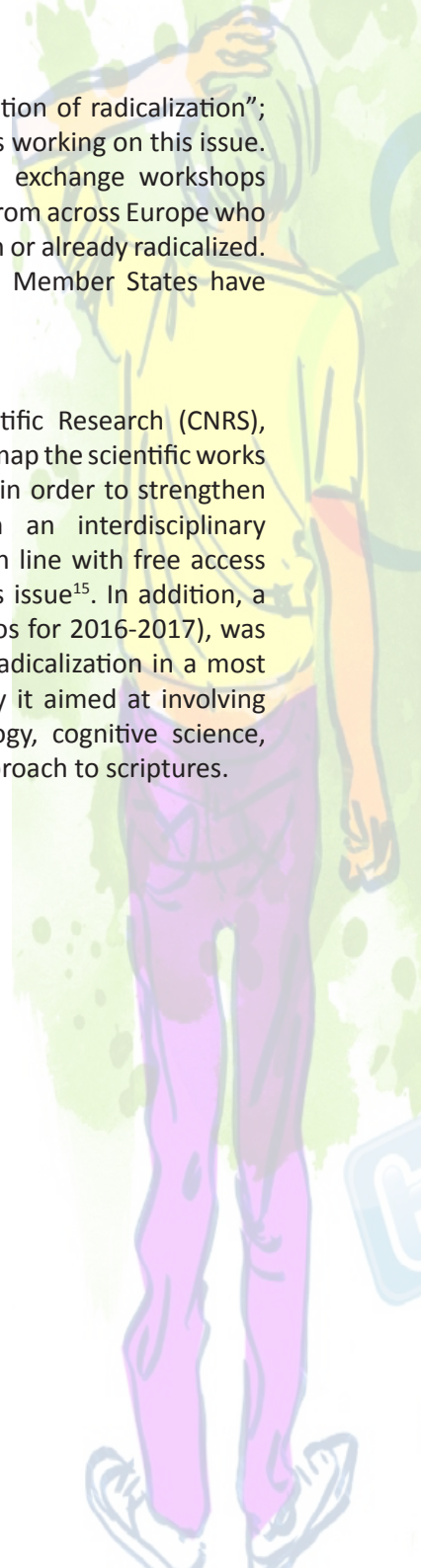
¹³ N. Beyly *et al.* (2017). Radicalisations : des jeunes sous influence ? Présentation. *Les Cahiers Dynamiques*, vol. 2, no. 72, 18-19.

¹⁴https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network_en

from around Europe working on the prevention of radicalization”; these include university teachers and experts working on this issue. Their role is to participate in the practice exchange workshops organized by RAN and to assist practitioners from across Europe who work daily with people at risk of radicalization or already radicalized. More than 2,000 professionals from all EU Member States have joined RAN since its creation.

A report of the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), delivered in March 2016, made it possible to map the scientific works and the various existing sources of funding in order to strengthen counter-radicalization research actions in an interdisciplinary perspective. This bibliography is available on line with free access to researchers and anyone interested in this issue¹⁵. In addition, a call for projects to universities (650,000 euros for 2016-2017), was set up to understand the phenomenon of radicalization in a most comprehensive way. That is the reason why it aimed at involving academics from various disciplines: sociology, cognitive science, history, history of doctrines and a critical approach to scriptures.

¹⁵ Available on : <https://radical.hypotheses.org/2305>



5

Youths in Relation to National and International Institutions



Several surveys conducted on youth cultures have dedicated enough space to the study of the ways in which young people perceive politics and their level of commitment and engagement. Youth engagement refers here to the participation of young people in the life of the City (or the State on a larger scale) by bringing their own contribution. Sociologists identify three major areas of youth engagement and citizenship¹⁶:

- 1 the so-called «traditional» political space: that is, the engagement in political parties or in unions, and participation in elections;
- 2 associative space: generally, associations are more appreciated by young people than political parties because they are perceived as more open;
- 3 the institutional space: these are spaces of participative democracy organized by the State.

An INJEP survey shows that, regarding the political space, young people from popular neighborhoods only vote in proportion to the interest they perceive in the election in question. However, the overwhelming majority of young people that participated in this survey no longer believe in politics as a means to change their lives. In other words, the actions of the State and local authorities seem to be too disconnected from their reality¹⁷. On the other hand, still according to the same survey, young people

¹⁶ V. Becquet, Ch. De Linares (dir.). (2005). *Quand les jeunes s'engagent. Entre expérimentations et constructions identitaires*. Paris : Injep/L'Harmattan.

¹⁷ INJEP. (2011). Améliorer le rapport entre jeunes et institutions. *Cahiers de l'action*, vol. 2, no. 32, 55-68.

in these neighborhoods take initiatives and get involved in the construction and implementation of projects within the associative framework. This survey concludes that young people seem to have lost confidence in State institutions and this is the reason why they are not enough involved in the forums of debate organized locally in different structures. According to this survey, they evaluate the political sphere with a 1.9 over 6, and their government with a 2.2 over 6. Thus, professionals, youth coordinators, educators and socio-cultural animators must transform the demands of young people by changing them to other practices related to new forms of organization that are more likely to catch their interest.

At the global level, this lack of trust in institutions has also been the conclusion of a global survey of youth led by the Foundation for Political Innovation¹⁸. According to this survey, while 71% of Chinese and Indians express confidence in their government, skepticism dominates European youth: France (17%), Spain and Italy (20%). Moreover, confidence in the national parliament is usually weak in countries where young people are particularly distrustful of their government. Regarding international institutions, the survey shows that 80% of Indians, 66% of Brazilians, 64% of Chinese and South Africans, and 62% of Israelis put their trust in the United Nations. On the other hand, this is less the case with youths in Turkey and Morocco (40%), Russia (41%) and Japan (43%), where a more limited confidence is expressed.

The lack of confidence of youth, their disinterest in matters of the City and general skepticism are becoming alarming. As writes Olivier Galland, sociologist and researcher at the CNRS, “youth is the future, that is precisely where we should find enthusiasm, the desire to succeed, create and innovate”¹⁹. As an important player in the construction of youths’ awareness regarding issues related to democracy, the university is expected to provide answers to the preoccupations of young students in search of orientation and stability, and provide them with tools that allow for change and action instead of mere skepticism.

¹⁸ D. Reynié (dir). (2011). *La jeunesse du monde : une enquête planétaire de la Fondation pour l'innovation politique*. Paris : Lignes de Repères.

¹⁹ O. Galland. (2010). La crise de confiance de la jeunesse française. *Études*, vol. 412, no. 1, 31-42.

SECOND PART

CRITICAL PRESENTATION OF THE SECOND
CIRAD-IFCU GLOBAL SURVEY RESULTS

In 2012, the CIRAD-IFCU carried out its first global survey aimed at gaining knowledge of the cultures of young people attending Catholic universities, namely of the ways in which university students build meaning in their lives and adopt positions vis-à-vis their studies, work, family, religion, society, and the world at large²⁰. This knowledge should make it possible for reflections on, and perhaps revisions to, universities' institutional policies and teaching practices, with the goal of continually improving the quality of services provided.

Following the interest generated by the first survey, the CIRAD-IFCU, under the scientific direction of Pr. Dr. Rosa Aparicio Gómez (Instituto Universitario de Investigación Ortega y Gasset, Madrid, Spain), carried out a second global survey in 2017 to find out how student trends had changed at Catholic universities. This second survey was open to all IFCU members who wished to take part. Given the absence of selection criteria for the sample of universities, this second survey is not representative in the same way as the first, but does nonetheless allow us to see the changes and continuities which have come about in this five-year period.

Both surveys took the form of an online questionnaire, available in 17 languages, with 84 questions covering all aspects of young people's lives. The second survey involved 42 universities from 21 countries and a total of 17,735 students from all continents. Those surveyed were regular undergraduate students, with a maximum age of 30 years old, from all courses in a variety of disciplines, representing different fields of knowledge. It thus attempted to establish a temporally stable knowledge of the student body, while examining the diversity present in universities.

²⁰ R. Aparicio Gómez, A. Tornos Cubillo. (2014). *Youth Cultures in Catholic Universities. A Worldwide Study*. Madrid/Paris: La Quinta Tinta/CCR-IFCU.

1

USE OF DATA FROM THE STUDY



The present *working document* aims to:

1 Communicate the main results and findings of this second global survey to:

- a.** Universities affiliated to IFCU
- b.** Other Catholic universities
- c.** Non-Catholic universities
- d.** All institutions interested in young people or in the field of higher education

2 Provide suggestions as to how the results obtained can be used, so that the various institutions interested can:

- a.** Continue exploiting the data
- b.** Embark on processes of reflection based on the results
- c.** Take a view on these results
- d.** Expect to be able to make institutional adjustments or improvements

3 To encourage the universities taking part in this second survey to:

- a.** Analyse their own data in greater depth
- b.** Carry out regional analyses and comparative studies
- c.** Gain more in-depth knowledge of young people's concrete areas of interest

The process we suggest to make the best use of the results of this second survey follows the reasoning shown below:

IDENTIFY

EVALUATE

ASK QUESTIONS

DECIDE

Interested individuals or institutions should, in the first instance, identify data which stands out to them or which concerns them, and then assess the consequences they imply. This will lead them to reflect, or to a stage where they will have to consider the relevance of such consequences in light of what they thought they already knew or what they expected, and what turned out to be different. Lastly, the parties concerned will have to decide how to react to the results of the survey and what action to take in response to the discrepancies revealed by the same.

The present Document merely intends to highlight some of the main results of the survey, but we encourage readers to consult the overall report for better details and geographical nuances. Similarly, the reflections and avenues for exploration suggested are only a few of the many that come out of this study, and their relevance will depend on the individual characteristics of the university, institution or actor concerned.

2

SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WITH DATA FROM THE STUDY



2.1 What type of students attend Catholic universities?

First of all, it was necessary to identify the socio-demographic profile of the student body (age, sex, marital status), their family background (level of education and parents' occupation), and the circumstances of their life before and during their time at university (types of centres in which they undertook primary and secondary education, dependence on and/or emancipation from the family, current situation in terms of studies and the world of work). Generally speaking, we come across the same kind of students as in the previous study. The slight differences observed are fundamentally due to the fact that the participating universities and countries are not exactly the same as last time.

The majority of students are between **20 and 22 years old** (44.3%). However, it can be seen that students in certain areas of Asia attend university at a younger age and, on the contrary, join university at a later age in African countries.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION BY AGE, SEX AND MARITAL STATUS OF STUDENTS IN SAMPLE 2017

N= 16.468		AGE				SEX	
AGE		TOTAL	16-19	20-22	More than 22	FEMALE	MALE
16-19	Abs %	6.216 35,1				4.400 38,0	1.816 29,4
20-22	Abs %	7.848 44,3				5.092 44,1	2.756 44,7
More than 22	Abs %	3.671 20,7				2.072 17,9	1.599 25,9

SEX							
FEMALE	Abs %	11.564 65,2	4.400 70,8	5.092 64,9	2,072 56,4		
MALE	Abs %	6.171 34,8	1.816 29,2	2.756 35,1	1.599 43,6		
CIVIL STATUS							
SINGLE	Abs %	16.278 91,8	5.899 94,9	7.332 93,4	3.047 83,1	10.579 91,5	5.699 92,3
MARRIED	Abs %	482 2,7	34 0,5	114 1,5	334 9,1	331 2,9	151 2,5
DIVORCED/ SEPARATED	Abs %	91 0,5	15 0,2	24 0,3	52 1,4	59 0,5	32 0,5
OTHER	Abs %	884 5,0	268 4,3	378 4,8	238 6,4	595 5,1	289 4,7

More evident is the **high proportion of women** in IFCU member universities (65.2%), a far higher than average proportion in the countries and regions surveyed, and even more so in Asia. The question begs to be asked as to whether IFCU's universities have characteristics that make them particularly attractive to women: for example, providing an environment that parents or female students themselves see as being more relaxed, more personalised, or perhaps more protective.

Should the strong presence of female attendees lead certain university practices or services to be reorganised or revised, in line with needs which may be more specific to women? For example, should the syllabus incorporate a focus on gender, or particularly promote women's empowerment so as to close the gap that can be seen when women enter the labour force?

A majority of students continue to be **single** (94%) and, for the majority, do not have a stable relationship with a partner or fiancé(e)²¹. Does this mean that young university students prefer to delay making commitments? Or does it mean that they prefer to focus on their studies? It does indeed seem that this is a stage during which students prefer to be free and focus on other activities.

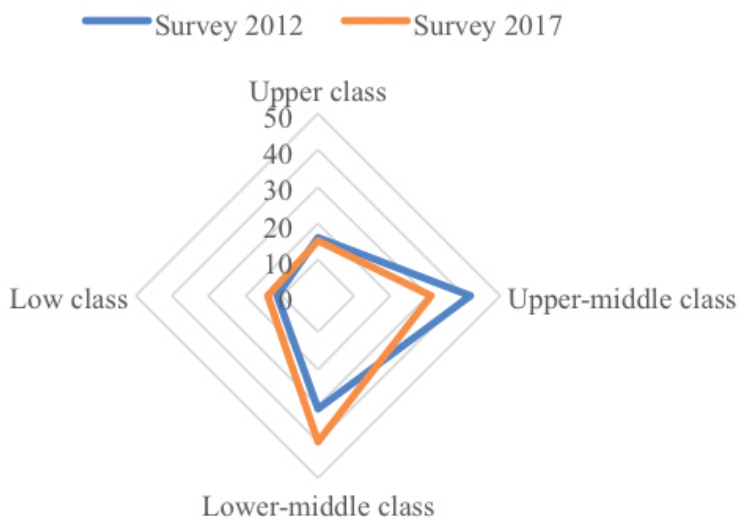
Turning to family background, what stands out is the **high level of education of both fathers and mothers**, with more than 40% of them having a degree, going beyond 50% in some regions (Africa being an exception, with a very low percentage). This means that, for a majority of students, going to university is taken for granted in the family environment, even though it is the students themselves who decide to attend university when the time comes. This undoubtedly affects the way that they approach their studies, which in many ways would be different for students who are the first members of their families to reach university. What might come across as surprising is

²¹ In France, the majority of young people (18-24 years old) is also single, only 22% declared themselves in a relationship in 2018 (while they were 29% in 2008). *In* P. Bréchon, F. Gonthier, S. Astor. (2019). *La France des valeurs*. Clamecy : Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 39.

the fact that in a majority of regions, a higher proportion of mothers than fathers received higher education. This data is important since, as we will see hereinafter, mothers have considerable influence on young students.

Although there were significant regional differences, the type of positions occupied by the majority of mothers and fathers was in line with their level of education. 54% of parents come from the **upper or upper-middle classes**, and even higher in at least four regions (Central America, Western Europe, and East and Southeast Asia). This is in contrast with Africa, where middle- or upper-middle class students are a mere 5.1%, but this is the only region where the upper classes make up fewer than 40% of students.

GRAPH 1: SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION OF THE STUDENTS' FAMILIES (%)



This suggests that students come from higher classes more than is average for society as a whole. Universities, then, with some exceptions, do not take part in change or social redistribution, but contribute to social reproduction. This is reinforced by the fact that a majority of parents have to bear the full cost of their children's studies. This situation is different only in Africa and East Asia, where significant proportions of students have access to bursaries or loans to cover the cost of their studies.

The survey again begs the question of how to counterbalance the classism which prevails in Catholic universities. Could providing a higher number of bursaries reduce this trend? Or should support programs be considered, working with secondary schools and institutions, aimed at students of merit who do not have sufficient resources to consider continuing their studies in a Catholic university?

Apart from growing up in upper-middle class families, a majority of students also **attended privately owned primary and secondary schools**, most of which are (Catholic) faith schools, although this varies considerably from region to region.

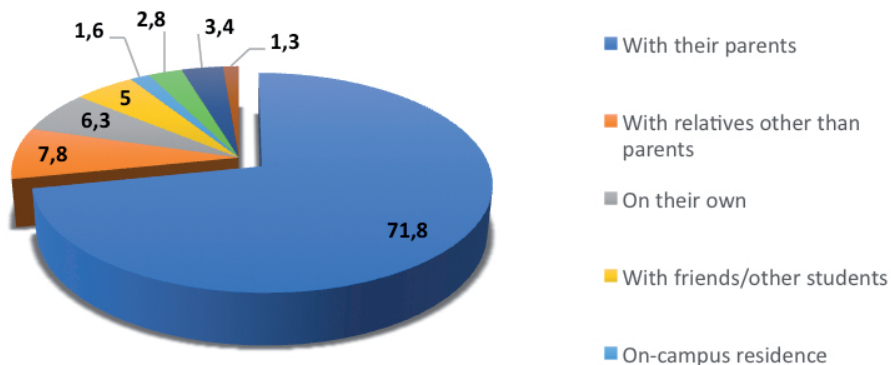
During their time at university, the vast majority of students continue **to live at home with their parents** (72%). Moreover, very few students work, even part-time, alongside their studies. The majority **only study** (72%, but only 24% in Eastern Asia). This, and as we shall see later, the fact that the students take little part in activities outside of the world of university, would suggest that their time at university does not entail leaving the "cocoon" they have been living in.

The socio-biographical, family and scholastic traits that characterise our students form a substrate which leaves its mark on the development of the "cultures" that university students bring to their lives inside and outside of university. Hence their importance and the necessity of keeping them in mind.

TABLE 2: TYPES OF CENTERS IN WHICH THEY HAVE COMPLETED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION. Survey 2017

	PRIMARY EDUCATION			SECONDARY EDUCATION		
	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	OTHERS	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	OTHERS
AFRICA	79,7	19,6	0,7	30,4	68,8	0,7
CENTRAL AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	26,7	72,9	0,4	28,2	71,3	0,5
SOUTH AFRICA	39,5	58,1	2,4	38,4	58,5	3,1
BRAZIL	27,3	71,4	1,3	32,9	65,7	1,4
WESTERN EUROPE	41,6	41,4	17	42,9	40,5	16,6
SOUTHERN ASIA	17,1	77,8	5,1	22,1	72,4	5,5
EASTERN ASIA	60,4	36,2	3,4	35,1	60,9	4
SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA	45,2	53,8	1	47,4	51,4	1,2
TOTAL	35,4	60,4	4,2	35,8	59,8	4,4

GRAPH 2: PLACE IN WHICH STUDENTS LIVE. Survey 2017

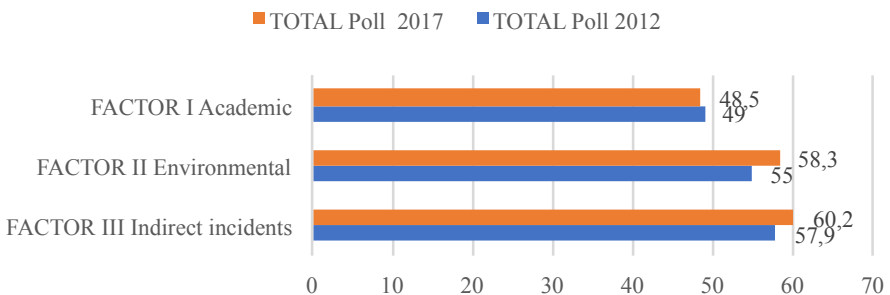


2.2 What has led students to choose our universities and with what prospects for the future have they done so?

There has been relatively little movement in the cultural standpoint of young students in the five years since the first survey. What emerges once again is that young people are conscious that **they have to autonomously make the decision to pursue studies as well as choose the discipline they should study**. Since their parents have a relatively high socio-economic status, the vast majority of students are culturally influenced in their choice of option. And, nonetheless, they continue to be **economically dependent on their parents**. **This tension between autonomy and dependence marks their sociocultural status**.

In this vein, one of the deciding factors when choosing where to study is the **learning environment** on offer, which can be seen as one of the ways in which Catholic universities are able to stand out above the rest.

GRAPH 3: TYPES OF REASONS CONSIDERED AS IMPORTANT OR VERY IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS FOR THEIR CAREER CHOICE (%)

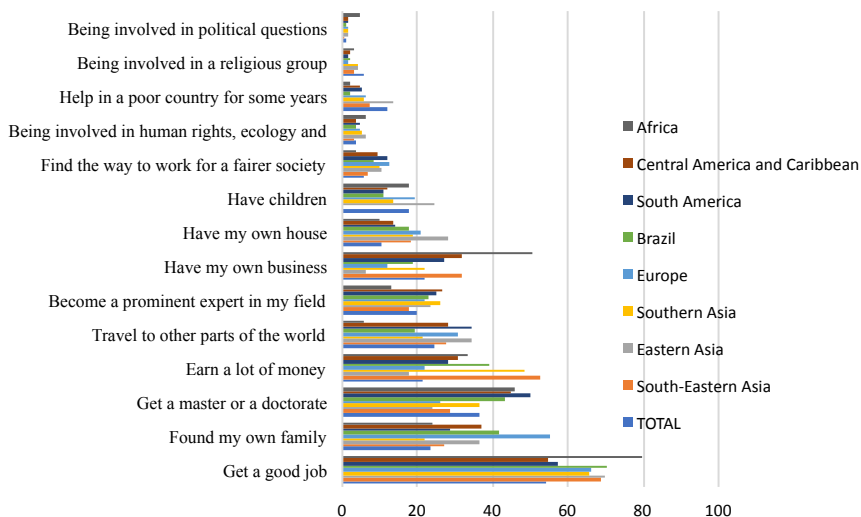


Young people are once again choosing their disciplines by taking their own profiles and existing socioeconomic advantages into account. Compared with the 2012 survey, there has been a slight increase in the importance students give to the future socioeconomic

advantages of each chosen discipline (65% in 2012; 69% in 2017), at the expense of how well it suits their individual profile (72% in 2012; 62% in 2017). Hence it would seem that the utilitarian approach is gaining ground at a sociocultural level (64% in 2012; 67% in 2017).

Young people are also taking into account what they want to do immediately after completing their studies. **Finding a good job** (54,3%) still holds first place, as in 2012, but before starting a family comes the intention of **studying for a Masters'** (36,2%) or specialised degree, or **travelling the world** (24,6%). Starting a family comes later (23,6%), further off, and this is one of the differences to 2012, when starting a family held second place in young people's intentions for the next 15 years. Does this mean that the sociocultural position of young university students has changed? Their top priority is clearly economic independence from their elders, but at the same time, does this mean that they want to cut all ties, like those entailed by starting a family? Concerning the other responses, there were many who expressed the desire to reach a good or extremely good socioeconomic position (21,1%), perhaps confirming what has already been said. Moreover, very few express altruistic aims such as contributing to the good of society as a whole (5,8%) or to its more disadvantaged members (11,8%).

GRAPH 4: STUDENTS' PROJECTS FOR THE NEXT 15 YEARS, ACCORDING TO REGIONS (%). Survey 2017



How can we use university to develop students' projects for the future, especially so that they also include initiatives dedicated to the common good?

Students value jobs, above all, because of what they can provide in terms of **self-fulfilment**. However, unlike what we saw in 2012, some now value what companies can provide in terms of being useful to society, at the expense of placing less importance on the consequences of good socioeconomic integration. This does not seem to imply a true shift in cultural outlook, since when asked about the features essential for a job offer to be accepted, those surveyed prioritise the same aspects (and with practically the same frequency) as previously.

By the same token, it is again useful to highlight the fact that 50% of them would be willing to accept a job even if it was not in line with their training and capabilities. This data suggests that there is a large pool of individuals who would not turn down a job even if initially it was not what they wanted, trusting that they will be able to adapt to it in any case. But this also suggests that many students may be training at university while being uncertain that it will finally be of use to them in terms of future work.

What type of training or accompaniment would it be appropriate to conceive so as to counter, to a certain extent, the reigning uncertainty in terms of access to today's labour market on practically all the continents?

And, how can we make our courses more versatile so that students leaving university have a wide range of skills that will give them the choice of various positions and/or fields of work? In relation to this latter question, how can we better evaluate or strengthen the skills that students use in each discipline so as to open up their professional perspectives?

TABLE 3: CHARACTERISTICS THAT A GOOD JOB MUST HAVE TO BE ACCEPTED BY STUDENTS (%)

	SURVEY 2017	SURVEY 2012
OFFER A GOOD SALARY	49,5	51,8
RELATE TO MY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS	50,7	50,7
TO BE SOMETHING I LIKE TO DO	24,5	28,8
ALLOW ME TO REALIZE AND GROW AS A PERSON	28,1	26,1
GIVE ME TIME FOR LEISURE AND PERSONAL ACTIVITIES	22,2	22,1
BE INTERESTING	21,2	21,5
OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND ADVANCE PROFESSIONALLY	14,9	21,3
PROVIDE SECURITY AND STABILITY	12,1	14,1
BE SOCIALLY USEFUL	11	10,3
PROVIDE A FRIENDLY AND COLLEGIAL ENVIRONMENT	7,8	8,6
ALLOW ME TO USE ALL MY ABILITIES	6,9	8,6
BEING CREATIVE	7,4	7,4
ALLOW ME TO HAVE A POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY	7,9	6,7
CONFER PRESTIGE	5,8	6,2
OFFER PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	3,5	4,7
GIVE QUITE A LOT OF FREEDOM FOR PERSONAL INITIATIVE	3	3,4

Young people continue to demonstrate **little or a confused understanding of what human rights consist of**. This can be seen when asking them whether they would enter a company that does not respect certain ethical issues. Generally speaking, those surveyed consider it unacceptable to accept a job in a company that does not respect human rights, but, when concrete examples are provided, almost 40% do not find it unacceptable to work for a company that accepts or practices child labour, gender discrimination, or racial discrimination.

How can we bolster young people's knowledge of values and ethics so that they will go on to implement them in practical terms in their social or working lives?

2.3 What type of student life do the students lead?

Young people **value their studies above all for what they provide in terms of *savoir faire* for their professional future** rather than what they provide in terms of (critical) knowledge. The same can be seen in the way they study, since a majority of them do not prefer to acquire the knowledge that we attempt to communicate to them, but have idiosyncratic preferences and prefer to pass exams with as little effort as possible.

How can we rethink our courses and teaching practices so that we do not merely transmit content but also provide the necessary tools for critical understanding and discernment?

In line with this, students **take part very little in activities organised by the university**, a proposal which they see as being far removed from their immediate interests. In this sense, the students of Catholic universities are scarcely any different to students from non-denominational universities. The result is that, like in 2012, **participation in religious activities organised by our universities is markedly low** (18,2%), which continues to come to our attention, given that they are Catholic universities. Accordingly, we should not forget that **only around half of the student body claims to be Catholic**²².

²² Concerning the faith, we see that only 15% of the French youth (18-29 years old) consider themselves as Catholic. In P. Bréchon, F. Gonthier, S. Astor. (2019). *La France des valeurs*. Clamecy : Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 226.

GRAPH 5: FREQUENCY WITH WHICH CATHOLIC STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MINISTRY, BY REGION (%). Survey 2017

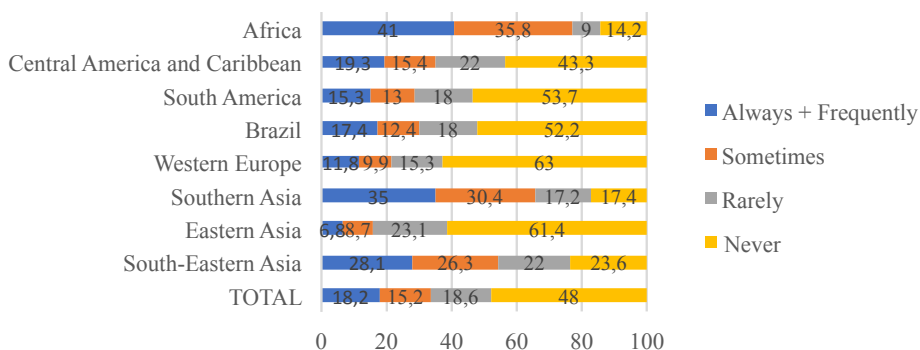


TABLE 4: STUDENTS WHO ALWAYS OR FREQUENTLY PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY UNIVERSITIES FOR STUDENTS (%)

	Survey 2017	Survey 2012
CLASSES	95,4	96,5
MEETINGS WITH TUTOR(S)	36,3	35,6
MEETINGS WITH TEACHERS	35,9	36,8
STUDY IN THE LIBRARY	40,4	39,1
GO TO CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, AND OTHER CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OFFERED OUTSIDE OF THE CURRICULAR PROGRAM	40,8	36,9
PARTICIPATE IN STUDY GROUPS	36,2	35,1
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	28,6	27,8
PARTICIPATE IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES	33,2	34,7
PARTICIPATE IN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES	18,2	17,7

How can we change this restrictive image that students have of university, which they consider almost exclusively as a provider of courses?

And how can we conceive religious activities which interest Catholic students, but which also attract those who say they are of other faiths?

Similarly, the results suggest **that the students do not show a great deal of interest in cultural activities** (40,8%) outside of university (reading the press, reading books other than textbooks, etc.), **nor do they take part in society organisations** (33,2%) (sporting, religious, artistic, political, NGO, feminist, etc.).

If students spend a great deal of their time on their studies, would it not be possible to rethink these studies so that they at least encourage students to come into contact with cultural activities outside university (following current issues in relation to the subjects studied in class, reading other books which could be of inspiration in certain courses, valuing experience in social organisations within the framework of their studies, etc.)?

Lastly, the figures on the **many changes young people say they have undergone during their time at university** would suggest there is something informally present at our centres which helps them to have their own identity. These figures relate to the climate or atmosphere created at our universities in the form of personal attention received by the student body. This is shown by the high figures the student body indicates in terms of **the influence tutors and teachers have had on the changes** they have undergone.

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE OF THOSE WHO SAID THEY HAD EXPERIENCED MANY OR QUITE A FEW CHANGES, IN TERMS OF THE ITEMS INDICATED, DURING THEIR UNIVERSITY LIFE (%). Survey 2017

	Africa	Central America & Caribbean	South America	Brazil	Western Europe	South Asia	East Asia	South east Asia	TOTAL
GOALS IN LIFE	67,2	70,8	68,7	58,2	55,1	45,2	50	49,5	62,2
SELF-CONFIDENCE	66,4	70,9	68	55,3	54,3	45,4	59,1	48,2	61,5
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS	56,0	30,3	25,2	20,6	15,8	33,2	15,2	23,2	24,6
RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT	51,5	29,9	25,5	20,8	15,4	35,9	15,2	25,5	24,9
UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL PROBLEMS	56,0	58,5	58,1	51,2	41,3	46,5	45,5	40,3	52,4
COMMITMENT TO HELPING THE UNDERPRIVILEGED	42,5	55,6	52,9	41,6	36,3	42,3	41,3	39,3	47,3

TABLE 6: WHO INFLUENCED THE CHANGES EXPERIENCED BY OUR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (%). Survey 2017

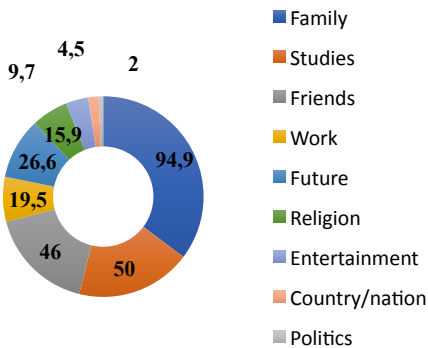
	In career choice	In goals for life	In self-confidence	In religion	In relations with others	In solidarity	In world understanding
TEACHER/TUTOR	41,1	33,4	44,9	15,5	18,4	21,1	43,5
OTHER MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITY	7,4	16,4	12,2	9,9	15,7	14,9	8,3
CLASSMATES	6,5	13,6	17,9	7,2	32,6	16,1	7
COURSES FOLLOWED	11,8	10,2	7,9	7,5	5	5	7,5
UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN	2,1	2,7	2,5	14,9	6,1	7,4	4,5
CAMPUS MINISTRY ACTIVITIES	1,6	2,8	1,7	13	3,2	7,9	4,2
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES	2,9	4	2,1	2,8	3,7	9,1	8,3
NOBODY	26,6	16,7	10,8	29,2	15,3	18,5	16,7

2.4 What image do students have of themselves?

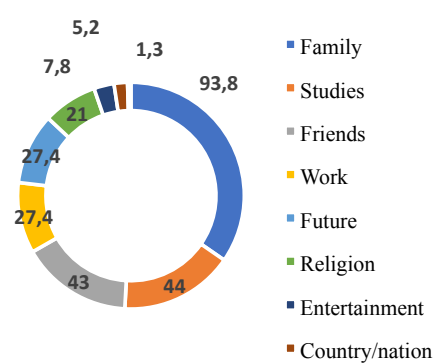
The horizon of meaning within which the students in our universities act has barely changed over the past 5 years. It is marked by a slight predominance for seeking enjoyment, though there is also room for arduous objectives. They are less interested in purposes relevant to traditional relations or traditions.

At the moment, **what matters to them most in terms of behaviour are family, studies and friends.** In other words, short-distance relationships which concern **the present time.** This impression is reinforced by the minimal importance they give to political issues and issues relating to the country they are nationals of, as well as to work and the future.

GRAPH 6a: MOST IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE. Survey 2017 (%)



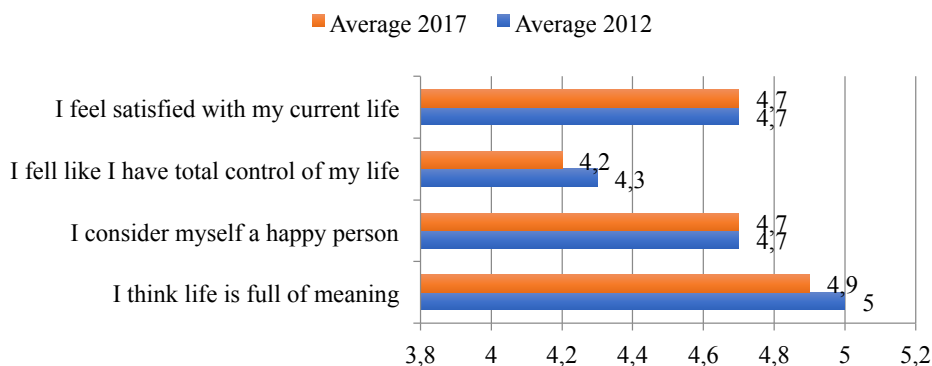
GRAPH 6b: MOST IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE. Survey 2012 (%)



How can we get students out of such closed circles and open them up to new horizons?

Students are satisfied, even highly satisfied, living with these outlooks²³. The idea of behaving any differently does not occur to the vast majority of them. Even though, for the majority, this does not provide them with security in relation to others. Quite the opposite: they place very little trust in others, particularly in countries where any kind of social tension is present. Similarly, they do not feel as though they have a great deal of control over their lives.

**GRAPH 7: FEELINGS ABOUT THEMSELVES
(SCALE 1-6)**



Nonetheless, they are able to live with these contradictions by staying primarily in the present and, perhaps, by compartmentalising their experiences. They are also able to think about possibilities in terms of their “I” (**wishful thinking**), prior to thinking in terms of objective conditions.

How can university help students to go beyond the dominant presentism?

In a nutshell: if with strangers they prefer to identify themselves by alluding to their families and current interest – and for some, to the

²³ In France, 63% of the young people (18-23 years old) feel satisfied with their life (so, a bit lower than the data above). In P. Bréchon, F. Gonthier, S. Astor. (2019). *La France des valeurs*. Clamecy : Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 69.

fact that they are students –, it is because for them this triad itself is their social identity, that is to say, the place and meaning that they give themselves in the complex system of identities which exist in the world today. This makes it easier for them, for the time being and insofar as possible, to choose the paths they take in life.

2.5 Students' close relationships

The survey looked at the relationships that young people have with their fathers and mothers, and the nature of the ties they have with their respective families. What transpired was that in truth they are **deeply close to their parents** and that, although they differ from them in the details of what they think and feel, they are very close to them in terms of overall social standpoints.

Examining the friendships between students gives us an interesting outline of the type of fellow students that get on well – and of their own accord, of course, since it is normal to seek friends who are more or less similar to oneself. Thus, according to this outline, the sort of qualities that they like are optimism, the desire to have a good and well-paid job, respect for their parents' authority – even if they frequently disagree with them –, aspirations of achieving significant social recognition, an interest in new technologies, being neither very religious nor very interested in politics, and having little commitment to important social changes.

These friendships do certainly include their “significant others” – but admittedly not in first place. In first place, and by a wide margin, are their respective mothers. Then come their fathers and, much further behind, their siblings. Teachers, priests or religious figures are mentioned very little by students as having an influence on them.

TABLE 7: CHARACTERISTICS ATTRIBUTED TO ALL OR MOST OF THEIR FRIENDS BY MORE THAN 60% AND LESS THAN 80% OF THE STUDENTS Survey 2017

	Attributed by %.
Are optimistic about their future	78,9
Respect the authority of their parents	78,3
One of their main goals in life is to get a good job and earn a lot of money	76,8
Think that their achievements are only worthwhile if they have been achieved by their own efforts	70,7
Want to live independently of their parents	69
They are very interested in all that concerns new technologies	65,6
Spend a lot of time on the internet and social networks	64,6
They like to be with fashion	62,1

TABLE 8: IN IMPORTANT SITUATIONS FOR THEM, THE STUDENTS ASK SOME ADVICE TO... (%). Survey 2017

	a) Problems with studies	b) Religious concerns	c) Financial problems	d) Sexuality-related problems	e) Feelings of meaninglessness in life	f) Plans for the future
I wouldn't trust anyone. I prefer to solve my own problems	14	19,3	9,5	18,8	15,4	15,4
Mother	23,6	17,2	29,8	15,4	21,5	21,5
Father	8,7	4,9	37	3,5	5,7	5,7
Brother/Sister	5,9	2,9	6,3	7,2	6,5	6,5
A friend	13,9	6,2	5,3	19,1	15,4	15,4
A priest or a religious	0,8	36	0,9	2,1	5,3	5,3
A teacher/tutor I had at school	6,8	1,6	1,2	1,3	2,1	2,1
A university teacher/tutor	18,1	1,7	1,1	1,4	1,6	1,6
A physician/psychologist	1,3	1,7	1,2	16,5	15,5	15,5
Boyfriend-girlfriend/ Partner /Spouse	4,6	2,9	4,7	11,9	8,5	8,5
Someone else	2,3	5,7	3,1	3	2,5	2,5

Would it be appropriate for universities to involve students' families to a greater extent?

Conversely, how can we bring students closer to university teachers and chaplains?

Though there are few differences between the two studies at this level, we can nonetheless see that there has been a change in the position of mothers as confidants. A significant number of students surveyed in 2017 **seek advice from “professionals”** such as teachers, priests and psychologists, depending on whether the question concerns their studies, religious questions or sexuality, rather than turning to their mothers. Does this contradict what was said above? Probably not, since they are talking about seeking timely advice which may or may not recur, and not so much from individuals who are points of reference for “me” but from those who are recognised as “experts” in their fields.

How do our universities contribute to appropriately orienting students who need advice or a specific kind of monitoring, be it study-related, professional, spiritual or psychological?

Finally, both studies reveal that young people, in terms of recreation and also in terms of fulfilling their interests, prefer informal contact than the more regulated relationships that predominate in different types of association. Hence their low involvement in the various types of association that exist in their respective societies.

2.6 Young people and their perception of the world

The survey also sought to identify young people's view of the world they live in, exploring the broader horizons of their lives and studies. Concretely, they were asked about global economic horizons, the dynamics of globalisation, the political contexts they inhabit, and the presence of poverty in the world.

The first point that should be highlighted is the fact that, generally speaking, a comparison of the data from the 2017 survey with that of the 2012 survey shows that little has changed in terms of the standpoints students expressed concerning the various economic, political and social situations that they have encountered in the world. Though there were some slight changes in certain geographical areas, essentially Africa and Southeast Asia, which could be the sign of changing trends, in no case was there any significant deviance from the general tendency.

Hence the profiles within our student body are, with regards to what could be termed the most ideologically charged subjects, extremely reasonable and hardly ever deviate from what is deemed to be **politically correct thinking**. They do not defend capitalism or see it as sacred, but nor do they seek radical alternatives. The same happens with the way they assess globalisation.

TABLE 9: IS NEOLIBERALISM THE ONLY WAY TO IMPROVE LIVING CONDITIONS?
(% of students by specialties of study)

	2017	2012
Humanities	40,7	36,8
Social Sciences	31,5	32,2
Economics, Business, Law	43,1	43,3
Media	32,9	35,1
Health Sciences	33,1	35,5
Exact and Experimental Sciences	42,2	39,1
Engineering and Technical Studies	36,3	39,1

Generally speaking, they are quite conscious that **the media has significant power** in the world and do not only transmit neutral information and opinions without consequence (74%).

TABLE 10: RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE AND OF THE INDIVIDUALS IN THE SATISFACTION OF THE NEEDS (average scores by zones)

1=more responsibility of the individual 7=more responsibility of the state		
	2017	2012
South-Eastern Asia	3,4	3,0
Africa	3,3	2,6
Brazil	3,2	3,0
Southern Asia	3,0	2,6
Western Europe	3,0	2,7
South America	3,0	2,7
TOTAL	3,0	2,8
Eastern Asia	2,8	2,7
Central America and Caribbean	2,5	2,6

By contrast, they are **highly critical when it comes to politics** and in relation to political parties and politicians. Their criticisms make them appear as though they are apologising for coming from a position of quite comfortable bourgeois enclaves and ideals, but with little inclination to taint this position by considering what happens beyond themselves (90%).

Regarding their views on the global problem of poverty, the questions that were asked of them make it impossible to elucidate whether their answers show what they truly think – or whether it is a subject they had not even expected to be asked about. However, what came to light previously concerning their professional ideas and expectations for the next fifteen years would suggest that the design of their lives does not give great importance to the consciousness that poverty exists and that it is not only an individual question, but an ill that is dangerous for society.

**TABLE 11: LEVEL OF COMPETITIVENESS IN WHICH THEY WOULD LIKE TO MOVE
(average score by zones)**

	7=less competitiveness	
	2017	2012
South-Eastern Asia	3,6	2,9
Western Europe	3,2	3
Africa	3,1	2,5
Southern Asia	3,1	2,9
South America	3,1	2,5
TOTAL	3,1	2,7
Eastern Asia	3	2,5
Brazil	2,9	2,9
Central America and Caribbean	2,6	2,3

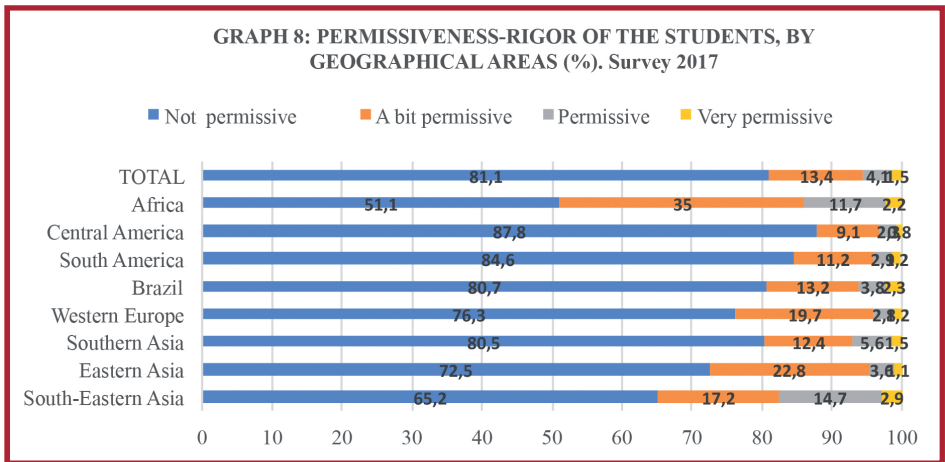
What can we do at university to make young people more aware of the poverty that exists in their societies and in other parts of the world?

Finally, we would like to highlight the fact that, although to a more moderated extent than before, young people continue to prefer contexts in which there is a high level of competitiveness, perhaps because they find such a situation stimulating.

In any case, how can young people be helped to be competitive in a positive, non-aggressive way in the future?

2.7 The values of our student body

Regarding young people’s values, the data shows that, on balance, they tend to be more **relativist** but **not very permissive in terms of moral beliefs** – or at least they would not justify certain civil or moral perspectives within the framework of their reasoning.



They consider themselves generationally different from their parents and, more generally, from the dominant lifestyles of people of their parents’ age who bear the brunt of coexistence in today’s society. However, their differences do not lead them to conflict and this is the key value which enables them to coexist.

Their habits of discernment and intellectual objectivity do not appear to lead the majority of our current students to deploy controlled objectivity concerning different opinions.

Finally, their **levels of social awareness are not generally very high**, although there are significant differences according to geographical area.

How can we rethink courses or certain university activities so that they contribute to improving young people's social awareness, beyond merely transferring knowledge about the issue?

2.8 The twofold aim of Catholic universities: Increasing knowledge and providing spaces for faith

The data from the 2017 survey brings us to the same conclusions as in 2012, namely that the students at our universities are conscious of the goals they are working towards and accept the universities' methods to achieve them. However, their youth subculture leads a majority of the student body to avoid being dedicated to their studies in the way the universities propose, as well as to reject the offer of religious vitality available to them.

How can we remodel the accompaniment of studies provided by our centres?

How can we communicate with our student body more effectively to make our wide-offering universities attractive once again?

Should we rethink pastoral care, perhaps making it more cross-sectional with the other activities which take place in university?

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CIRAD-IFCU hopes, with this Working Document, to have brought its contribution to better understanding the cultures and values of young students nowadays, in particular those attending Catholic universities. It also hopes to have inspired reflection, and perhaps helped to the ongoing improvement of certain policies or institutional practices which relate to young people today.

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