

PAPER

Please note that the whole paper should be no longer than 10.000 characters (5 pages).

Title of the paper
<i>French findings regarding youth and culture and new questions</i>
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<i>Youth, cultural consumption, surveys, digital era, generationnal evolution, transmission and dissemination</i>

Text

Since 2000, the french DEPS conducts a regular research programme on childhood (people under 18) and culture to address the changes occurring in a digital era. Before that date, some surveys have been conducted that gave some elements of comprehension of the age impact on cultural consumption or about the generationnal effect, but those studies were conducted on people over the age of 15. To implement those data, surveys have recently been conducted on children under 15 (see description paper).

The on-going programme articulates statistical and qualitative works. 10 years after its launch, findings are :

-Cultural participation ad consumption of children is particularly high compared to older. It is especially important regarding digital products (computer, internet, video games, communication), but their knowledge of museum, theater etc. has also benefit from school initiation and from families "cultural goodwill". The digital natives are omnivore cultural consumers but their ways of consuming culture change the inner cultural (and social) hierarchy that prevailed in the previous generations.

-But taste does not directly emerge from consumption, and theirs seems to follow a completely different path : as their interest for communication and creation increases with age, and the digital products (software, music, etc) fits their new desire to take part in what they consume, their interest for more classic forms of culture (museum, opera, etc.) decreases.

-With the digital revolution, cultural practices are evolving particularly amongst the generations of young people known as digital natives, ie those who are familiar with information and communication technologies. Nevertheless, new cultural practices are not exclusive : amateur artistic practices, visits to cultural facilities, and media consumption remain steady amongst those young generations whose internet usage appears to be linked to a more general interest in culture and communication.

-Gender, age and social class remain significant variables. Even if scholarship homogenize the conditions of livings of children from all social back grounds (rythms, occupation, etc.), cultural participation is still socially stratified. More interesting is maybe the growing importance of gender gap : some parts of culture are feminine (their public is, so their representation..; and it shapes the creation itself, ex :

lecture), and very few are masculine (video games used to be but girls are more and more present amongst the players)

-It is amongst the transmitting authorities, such as family, school and cultural institutions that changes are most significant : they force the transmitting authorities to rethink their function, and methods : what shall mediation be?

The so-called family crises does not exist regarding culture : parents used to be part of the youth culture and the right to defend personal taste and distaste is no longer discussed. But time used can be, especially when cultural consumption appears to be contradictory to school requisite fulfilment (TV, internet, video games opposed to reading). Many transmission can be detected between generation : parents and children can share musical taste for example, even if each generation defends its own musical preferences.

Things are different with other transmitting authorities, such as school and cultural institutions. School is not considered to be one of the only legitimate actors to define culture : culture can be made on the internet, and values created without the intervention of professionals, and school is not even "the" place to learn (the web provides also knowledge, very quickly and in what seems to be a very efficient way). Cultural institution must also face the need to reinvent cultural mediation : if culture is not only about knowledge, but also about pleasure, creation and participation, can it compete with the internet?

-That brings to the necessity of investigating not only cultural participation or consumption, but also cultural representation (images, values, perimeter, etc.) : what is culture? what belongs to it or not? And for who? Those questions emerge from data gathered with different method (sociology, anthropology, etc.) as well as from the changing in cultural policy with as embraced more and more fields from the 50's. The first results show that young people have a very confused acception of culture : some reduces youth culture to digital practices, some on the contrary merge civilization and even religion (and take what looks like an anthropological point of view on culture). The public policies can not be properly understood from such different starting points and policy making should take those representations into account. As beneficiaries of school massification and cultural dissemination, the representation of culture amongst the young generation is no longer sacred and reverent.

That is what the Deps would like to discussed in the coming meeting.

Anne Jonchery and Berenice Waty, who are in charge of a research regarding cultural representation of young generation (15-25 y.o.) would like to present their firsts results in more details.

Main question to be shared :

- 1- social stratification in cultural participation and consumption in different countries in countries from the Cultural Observatories network
- 2- gender gap as a new and growing factor of cultural differentiation
- 3- digital revolution and "traditional" cultural participation : risks and opportunities
- 4- transmission : what is to reinvent (or mediation as a key point for the future)

Key questions for the next future

Each text ends with **3-5 key questions or critical elements** that the Observatory suggests as a starting point for the discussion taking place on September 5th with young people/students.